

# Cultural Integrations for Organisational Performance: Synthesising Western Liberal, Sinocentric and Ubuntu perspectives in South African Career Management Services



Shereen Sikwela<sup>1</sup>  & Melvin Diedericks<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs (AGoPa), North West University, Vanderbijlpark Campus, South Africa.

## ABSTRACT

South African public organisations intrinsically integrate diverse cultural perspectives by embracing and promoting developmental state ideals, democratic principles of equality and fairness, and communitarianism in their governance frameworks. This embrace reveals the interplay of Western Liberal principles, Sino-centric values, and Ubuntu cultural perspectives in influencing organisational performance. This paper thus explored these dynamics by examining how conflicting and integrating perspectives affect and enhance career management practices for organisational performance. Key cultural themes, including individual autonomy, hierarchy, collaboration, societal order, and communitarianism, were reviewed at the North West Province Departments of Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs, and Human Settlements through mixed methods research. Findings revealed cultural conflicts culminating in unfairness in career management practices and a lack of collaborative efforts by role players involved. These findings underscored the necessity of weakening and integrating strong ontologies through panentheism to enhance economic and employee development, societal order, hierarchy, and communal well-being through structured governance, pluralist choice, collective fingers and societal order frameworks. This research offers practical implications for improving organisational performance in African multicultural contexts, which are valuable for career management and public administration professionals.

### Correspondence

Shereen Sikwela

Email:

[shereenska@gmail.com](mailto:shereenska@gmail.com)

### Publication History

Received: 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2024

Accepted: 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

Published online:

31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024

**Keywords:** *Ubuntu, Sino-centric Values, Liberalism, Organisational Performance, Integrative Governance.*

## INTRODUCTION

South African public organisations must proactively integrate diverse cultural perspectives into governance issues and practices. Scholars have recommended an integrated, comprehensive, and reflective approach to managing this diversity.<sup>1</sup> For instance, Lutz examined the relationship between Ubuntu and non-African management traditions, including Confucian and Platonic-Aristotelian

<sup>1</sup> David W Lutz, "African Ubuntu Philosophy and Global Management," *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. Suppl 3 (2009): 313–28; M. Stout, "Competing Ontologies: A Primer for Public Administration," *Public Administration Review* 72, no. 3 (2012): 388–98; Margaret Stout and Jeannine M Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance," *Administration & Society* 47, no. 4 (2015): 447–81; M. Stout and J.M. Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration," *The American Review of Public Administration* 51, no. 6 (2021): 422–35; Lloyd G Adu Amoah, "Public Policy Formation in Africa: Toward a Grounded Ontology," *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 32, no. 4 (2010): 606–10.

traditions.<sup>2</sup> Lutz's findings indicate that integrating diverse cultural perspectives is not merely a collection of ideals but a relational connection that enhances effective management practices. Stout and Love contended that integrating Indigenous cultural values alongside Western traditions is necessary and can avoid ontological colonialism by proposing alternative frameworks distinct from Newtonian and Cartesian Western philosophies.<sup>3</sup> Amoah acknowledges Western perspectives in African contexts but suggests that borrowing such perspectives should be a deliberate and reflective process crucial for contextually grounded public policy formulation.<sup>4</sup> These studies emphasise that integrating diverse cultural perspectives requires more than the superficial adoption of different traditions; it involves creating relational connections that promote mutual understanding and effective management practices. By advocating for frameworks that combine Indigenous, Western, and Sino-centric values, they highlight the potential to develop contextually grounded approaches that can strengthen public service outcomes and avoid cultural dominance, thus enriching performance management strategies.

The South African public service is pivotal in exploring this integration, as it draws from Sino-centric and Western models to meet its National Development Plan (NDP) goals of reducing poverty, inequality, and unemployment by 2030.<sup>5</sup> This approach combines Western Liberal values of diversity, inclusivity, and individual rights enshrined in the Constitution<sup>6</sup> with Confucian norms, traditionally associated with Sinocentric governance, to promote economic growth, stability, and social cohesion.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Ubuntu's communitarian values are incorporated to foster unity and harmony, balancing Western individualism with the collective ethos of African humanism. This synthesis enables South Africa to construct a distinctive governance model that leverages varied cultural principles to support its broader developmental goals and address complex socio-economic challenges. Despite ongoing challenges like sluggish economic growth and high unemployment, as highlighted in the State of the Nation addresses of 2020, 2022, and 2024, this synthesis enables South Africa to craft a unique governance model that addresses complex socio-economic issues. The integration of diverse management traditions ranging from Ubuntu's communitarian ethos to structured governance initiatives from Classical Liberalism and Modern Liberalism's emphasis on autonomy and decentralisation and societal order principles projected by Sino-centric values —offers a unique governance framework.<sup>8</sup> This blend of African humanism<sup>9</sup> and liberal principles provides a structured yet adaptable model that underscores democratic governance, accountability, and personal independence, making the South African public service a valuable context for exploring culturally inclusive public service strategies.<sup>10</sup>

Despite extensive research on integrating cultural values like Ubuntu, Liberalism and Confucianism in the South African context, a critical gap remains in applying this integration to career management strategies.<sup>11</sup> The study addresses this gap by exploring this integration because its

<sup>2</sup> David W. Lutz, "African Ubuntu Philosophy and Global Management," *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. S3 (February 8, 2009): 313–28, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0204-z>.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Stout and Jeannine M Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration," *The American Review of Public Administration* 51, no. 6 (2021): 422–35.

<sup>4</sup> Amoah, "Public Policy Formation in Africa: Toward a Grounded Ontology."

<sup>5</sup> Republic of South Africa (R.S.A.), *National Development Plan (N.D.P.). 2030: Our Future - Make It Work. National Planning Commission (N.P.C.)* (Pretoria: Government printers, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Republic of South Africa (RSA), *Final Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1996); Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration," 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Thandika Mkandawire, "From Maladjusted States to Democratic Developmental States in Africa," *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges*, 2010, 59–81; O. Edigheji, *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges* (Cape Town: HRSC Press, 2010); V. Gumede, "South Africa as a Developmental State in the Making," *Development Studies*, University of Johannesburg, 2010,

[https://www.vusigumedthinkers.com/pages/acpapers\\_log/sadevelop.html](https://www.vusigumedthinkers.com/pages/acpapers_log/sadevelop.html); Hung Hung. Pham, "The Developmental State, the Evolving International Economic Order, and Vietnam" (University of Birmingham, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration," 5.

<sup>9</sup> P.L. Berger and B. Godsell, *A Future South Africa: Visions, Strategies, and Realities* (Cape Town: Human & Rousseau., 1988), 176; E.D. Prinsloo, "Ubuntu Culture and Participatory Management," in *The African Philosophy Reader*, ed. P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux (London: Routledge, 1998), 42; P. Lenta, "The Changing Face of the Law: Ubuntu, Religion and the Politics of Postcolonial Legality," in *Explorations in Contemporary Continental Philosophy of Religion*, ed. D.-P. Baker and P. Maxwell (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2003), 156; Mazo Sybil T. Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers in KwaZulu/Natal-1920-2000* (Trafford Publishing, 2004), 129.

<sup>10</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration."

<sup>11</sup> C.W. Du Toit, "The Integrity of the Human Person in an African Context. Perspectives from Science and Religion.," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the South African Science and Religion Forum (SASRF) of the Research Institute for Theology and Religion Held at the University of South Africa, Pretoria on 28 & 29 August 2003.*, 2004; M. Motsei, *The Kanga and the Kangaroo Court: Reflections on*

significance is evident in its potential to improve economic development, inclusivity, responsiveness, and equality. Furthermore, as South Africa strives to become a developmental state.<sup>12</sup> by adopting Confucian norms to enhance socio-economic progress, Ubuntu could serve as a powerful tool for establishing social order principles from developmental states, thus facilitating a public service that appreciates cultural differences while promoting unity and harmony of career management practices.<sup>13</sup>

This study addresses the gap by exploring the integration of Western, Confucian and Ubuntu cultural values into career management practices within the North West Province Department of Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements. This diversity is explored through a mixed methods research approach by distributing questionnaires to skilled technicians and professionals and conducting in-depth interviews with 26 line managers, senior managers and human resources practitioners. This methodology captured the dynamics of integrating diverse cultural perspectives into career management and its effects on departmental performance. It provided insights into the impact of cultural integrations on departmental performance, highlighting areas where cultural diversity either facilitated or hindered organisational effectiveness, collaboration, and employee satisfaction. By gathering data from multiple stakeholders, the methodology identified patterns, conflicts, and synergies from blending varied cultural perspectives, offering a comprehensive view of the practical implications of integration. The research findings revealed a departure from Ubuntu principles and a clash between liberal ideals of autonomy and fairness. These conflicts manifest through unfair career management practices, leading to turnover intentions and a lack of collaboration from managers, employees and both departments, compromising the communal well-being of both departments and departmental performance.

These findings underscore the importance of integrating cultural dynamics. The study emphasises the need for an integrative governance model that harmonises diverse cultural perspectives to enhance public service performance. It proposes using *panentheism's relationality* as a foundational framework, which emphasises interconnectedness and shared values across cultures.<sup>14</sup> This approach synthesises Western, Confucian, and Ubuntu philosophies to create a governance model that blends Classical Liberalism, Sino-centric values, Modern Liberalism, and Ubuntu, promoting a democratic, developmental, and inclusive public service through structured governance, pluralist choices, and a cohesive social order. The study further recommends fostering a collaborative organisational culture where senior managers work alongside line managers, skilled technicians, and professionals to align career management with organisational goals. This collaboration would build a cohesive environment that mitigates conflict and promotes unity. By incorporating structured career paths, competitive recruitment, job rotation, and regulated probation periods drawing on Sino-centric and Ubuntu perspectives such practices would support career stability and transparency and align career development with broader developmental goals, ultimately enhancing organisational performance.

Subsequent sections of this paper will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of integrating diverse cultural perspectives, detail the methodological approach adopted, present and analyse the empirical findings and provide recommendations for public organisations in South Africa and other developing countries. This research aims to expand and test integrative governance principles in public administration by exploring diverse cultural trajectories within the South African public service and other developing countries, thereby enhancing borrowing and synthesising perspectives to optimise public service performance and socio-economic outcomes.

---

*the Rape Trial of Jacob Zuma* (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2007), 10; Christian B N Gade, "The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu," *South African Journal of Philosophy= Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif Vir Wysbegeerte* 30, no. 3 (2011): 303–29; Stout, "Competing Ontologies: A Primer for Public Administration"; Keqian Xu and Guoming Wang, "Confucianism: The Question of Its Religiousness and Its Role in Constructing Chinese Secular Ideology," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 17, no. 50 (2018): 79–95; D. E. Miller and N. Perrino, "So to Speak Podcast Transcript: John Stuart Mill's 'On Liberty' with Professor Dale E. Miller," 2019, 6. <https://sotospeak.libsyn.com/john-stuart-mills-on-libert>.

<sup>12</sup> Mkandawire, "From Maladjusted States to Democratic Developmental States in Africa"; Edigheji, *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges*; Gumede, "South Africa as a Developmental State in the Making"; Peter Meyns, "The Developmental State in Africa: Problems and Prospects," 2010; Damianu C Ukwandu, "South Africa as a Developmental State-Is It a Viable Idea?," *African Journal of Public Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2019): 41–62; Tom Lodge, *South African Politics since 1994* (David Philip, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Nussbaum, "African Culture and Ubuntu," *Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 1–12, 2; Cornelius Ewuoso and Susan Hall, "Core Aspects of Ubuntu: A Systematic Review," *South African Journal of Bioethics and Law* 12, no. 2 (2019): 93–103, 93.

<sup>14</sup> M. Stout and J.M. Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance," *Administration & Society* 47, no. 4 (2015): 447–81.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review explores the intersection of Ubuntu, Liberalism, and Sino-centric values, emphasising their contrasting perspectives on communalism, individual autonomy, and hierarchical order and how these can be integrated within the South African context.

### Cultural Perspectives within South Africa

The post-apartheid South African reflects a solid commitment to establishing a democratic and developmental state that prioritises inclusive development while preserving Ubuntu's collectivism and unity cultural values.<sup>15</sup> Ubuntu's integration into democratic frameworks, as outlined in the Epilogue of the Interim Constitution,<sup>16</sup> represents a deliberate effort to restore African values undermined by colonialism and apartheid.<sup>17</sup> This approach is crucial for strengthening democracy, overcoming historical divisions, and promoting inclusivity. Furthermore, the developmental state model can potentially align these democratic and inclusive governance structures, enabling rapid socio-economic transformation in South Africa.<sup>18</sup> This strategic integration underscores the value of incorporating Sinocentric, Western, and Indigenous perspectives to offer diverse insights and innovative solutions to the complex challenges facing the South African public service.

### Ubuntu Cultural Perspectives

Ubuntu, a cornerstone of South African communal culture, exemplifies resilience, interconnectedness, and collective humanity.<sup>19</sup> It stems from the Zulu or Xhosa expression "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu," meaning a person is a person through others,<sup>20</sup> reflecting a deeply rooted African worldview.<sup>21</sup> Early references to Ubuntu, such as Gabriel Setiloane's mention at a 1960 conference in Durban<sup>22</sup> and Jordan Kush Ngubane's article in *African Drum* during the 1950s, demonstrate its historical and philosophical significance. Wim van Binsbergen noted that the earliest known publication focusing on Ubuntu was Samkange's *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwean Indigenous Political Philosophy* (1980).<sup>23</sup> Roux and Coetzee, Reuel Khoza and Mbigi & Maree have examined various concept dimensions, further highlighting the impact of Ubuntu on cultural and academic discourse.<sup>24</sup> Such early discussions illustrate Ubuntu's endurance and evolution over time.

### Evolution of Ubuntu

The evolution of Ubuntu is comprehensible through five distinct phases, each representing a deepening integration into African cultural and philosophical contexts. In Phase 1, Ubuntu is a human quality embodying virtues such as kindness, greatness of spirit, and moral excellence.<sup>25</sup> Phase 2 associates Ubuntu with ethics, emphasising the common good, community rebuilding, and strengthening social relations.<sup>26</sup> Phase 3 frames Ubuntu as African humanism, prioritising compassion, respect, and mutual support for fostering harmonious societal relationships.<sup>27</sup> In Phase 4, Ubuntu evolves into a global worldview, gaining

---

<sup>15</sup> Leepo J Modise, "The Notion of Participatory Democracy in Relation to Local Ward Committees: The Distribution of Power," *In Die Skriflig* 51, no. 1 (2017): 1–8, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Republic of South Africa, *Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Gade, "The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu."

<sup>18</sup> Mkandawire, "From Maladjusted States to Democratic Developmental States in Africa."

<sup>19</sup> Nussbaum, "African Culture and Ubuntu," 2; Ewuoso and Hall, "Core Aspects of Ubuntu: A Systematic Review," 93.

<sup>20</sup> Bolden R., "Ubuntu," in *Encyclopedia of Action Research*, ed. M Brydon-Miller and D Coghlan (London: Sage, 2014), 111–17.

<sup>21</sup> A P J Roux and Peter Hendrik Coetzee, "Beyond the Question of African Philosophy.," 1999.

<sup>22</sup> M.J. Bhengu, *Ubuntu: The Essence of Democracy* (Cape Town: Novalis Press, 1966), 10.

<sup>23</sup> Wim Van Binsbergen, "Ubuntu and the Globalisation of African Thought and Society," 2001,82.

<sup>24</sup> Roux and Coetzee, "Beyond the Question of African Philosophy"; Reuel Khoza, *Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass* (Penguin Random House South Africa, 2012); Lovemore Mbigi and Jenny Maree, *Ubuntu, the Spirit of African Transformation Management* (Knowledge Resources, 1995).

<sup>25</sup> A. Paton, *Ah, but Your Land Is Beautiful* (New York: Scribner, 1983), 62.

<sup>26</sup> Du Toit, "The Integrity of the Human Person in an African Context. Perspectives from Science and Religion," 33; Motsei, *The Kanga and the Kangaroo Court: Reflections on the Rape Trial of Jacob Zuma*, 10; Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Routledge, 2016),33.

<sup>27</sup> Prinsloo, "Ubuntu Culture and Participatory Management," 42; Lenta, "The Changing Face of the Law: Ubuntu, Religion and the Politics of Postcolonial Legality,"156; Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers in KwaZulu/Natal-1920-2000*, 129.

international recognition and influencing prominent leaders like Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu.<sup>28</sup> Finally, Phase 5 crystallises Ubuntu's core principle, "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (a person is a person through others),<sup>29</sup> highlighting the significance of communal values and interconnectedness.<sup>30</sup> Each phase marks a transformative stage, showcasing Ubuntu's adaptability and enduring relevance across diverse socio-political contexts.

The evolution of Ubuntu represents a transcendent source with a dynamic and plural state of existence.<sup>31</sup> A dynamic state implies that existence is constantly changing, allowing for continuing changes<sup>32</sup> but through transient truths.<sup>33</sup> Transcendent means that the source of being is beyond that which exists. The pluralist representation of existence implies various origins of existence.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Dynamic State of Ubuntu***

Ubuntu continually adapts and redefines across its five distinct phases, exemplifying its dynamic state. Each phase ranging from Ubuntu as a human quality (Phase 1) to a comprehensive framework of African humanism (Phase 3) and finally as a global worldview (Phase 4 and 5)—demonstrates the concept's ability to respond to changing socio-cultural and political realities. This dynamism relies on transient truths that stay relevant as contexts change.<sup>35</sup> For example, its early conceptualisation as an individual moral quality evolved to encompass broader communal and ethical dimensions as it gained political and social prominence. This ongoing evolution reflects the philosophical idea that Ubuntu is not a static or fixed entity but an ever-shifting, fluid construct shaped by historical and contextual changes.

### ***Transcendent Source of Ubuntu***

Suppose transcendent means that the source of being is beyond that which exists.<sup>36</sup> Then Ubuntu's transcendent nature means its source is beyond specific cultural, temporal, or geographical existence. Philosophically, this transcendent quality indicates that Ubuntu is not confined to a single point of origin or definition but instead represents a foundational principle of being that exists "beyond" the immediate.<sup>37</sup> As it evolved from a locally rooted African philosophy into a framework influencing global discourses (Phase 4),<sup>38</sup> Ubuntu showed its capacity to transcend its origins in the Zulu and Xhosa languages. The phrase "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" captures a metaphysical truth about human interdependence that surpasses the specificities of African communities and resonates universally.<sup>39</sup> This transcendence positions Ubuntu as a source of being beyond material existence and temporal boundaries, capable of informing diverse philosophical and ethical inquiries.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Plural State of Existence of Ubuntu***

Ubuntu's pluralist nature is evident in its capacity to incorporate and integrate diverse origins and interpretations, making it applicable across various contexts while maintaining its essence.<sup>41</sup> The evolution shows that Ubuntu absorbed multiple perspectives (individual morality, communal ethics,

<sup>28</sup> C. McEachern, *Narratives of Nation Media, Memory and Representation in the Making of the New South Africa* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 31; A. E. Ansell, "Two Nations of Discourse: Mapping Racial Ideologies in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *The New Black: Alternative Paradigms and Strategies for the 21st Century*, ed. R.D. Coates and R.M. Dennis (Oxford: Elsevier, 2007), 318.

<sup>29</sup> Gade, "The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu," 318.

<sup>30</sup> S. Bangstad, *Global Flows, Local Appropriations: Facets of Secularisation and Re-Islamisation Among Contemporary Cape Muslims* (Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 49; D.M. Swanson, "Values in Shadows: A Critical Contribution to Values Education in Our Times," in *International Research Handbook on Values, Education and Student Well-Being*, ed. T., Lovat, R. Toomey, and N. Clement (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 147.

<sup>31</sup> Stout and Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance," 6.

<sup>32</sup> Stout and Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance," 27.

<sup>33</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration," 2.

<sup>34</sup> Stout and Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance," 2.

<sup>35</sup> Gade, "The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu."

<sup>36</sup> Stout and Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance."

<sup>37</sup> McEachern, *Narratives of Nation Media, Memory and Representation in the Making of the New South Africa*; 31, Ansell, "Two Nations of Discourse: Mapping Racial Ideologies in Post-Apartheid South Africa," 318.

<sup>38</sup> McEachern, *Narratives of Nation Media, Memory and Representation in the Making of the New South Africa*; 31, Ansell, "Two Nations of Discourse: Mapping Racial Ideologies in Post-Apartheid South Africa," 318.

<sup>39</sup> Gade, "The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu," 318.

<sup>40</sup> Stout and Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance."

<sup>41</sup> Stout and Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance," 2.

humanism and governance).<sup>42</sup> In this respect, the evolution added a new layer to comprehending the concept without negating previous ones, illustrating the plural state of existence, encompassing a multiplicity of values, expressions, and applications while reflecting the diverse realities and experiences of African and global communities. Holistically, Ubuntu harmonises ethical, social, political and philosophical aspects.<sup>43</sup> Ubuntu evolves from a human quality to a global principle, driven by its dynamic state, grounded in its transcendent source, and expressed through its plural nature.

### Western Cultural Perspectives

Liberalism is the dominant Western cultural philosophy, with Classical Conservative and Modern variants that demonstrated adaptability in the post-World War II era.<sup>44</sup> However, Liberalism shifts towards communitarian compromises over time,<sup>45</sup> leading to confrontations with Ubuntu, prioritising individuals' communal well-being and interdependence within a society.<sup>46</sup>

### Classical Liberalism

Classical Liberalism posits that the primary role of authority is to prevent individuals from harming one another.<sup>47</sup> Prominent thinkers such as John Locke, Adam Smith, Montesquieu, Friedrich Hayek, and John Stuart Mill emphasised the protection of individual freedom against coercive interference.<sup>48</sup> Central to this philosophy is the concept of the social contract, which binds individuals under the authority of the state, law, or a constitutional framework.<sup>49</sup> Originating from the Enlightenment period,<sup>50</sup> Classical Liberalism is founded on the belief that the universe is governed by objective natural and societal laws to which human behaviour must conform.<sup>51</sup>

Rooted in Enlightenment principles, Classical Liberalism upholds ideals of reason, natural rights, and universal truths that transcend cultural and historical contexts.<sup>52</sup> John Locke, for instance, argued that natural rights are endowed by a Creator, rendering them inviolable and universally applicable. Thus, the tenets of Classical Liberalism are not merely human conventions but derive their legitimacy from a higher, transcendent source, enhancing their validity and applicability across different societies. This framework operates on a singular and static conception of existence, wherein rights and liberties are derived from an immutable natural law.<sup>53</sup> The notion of a singular source implies a unified and bounded origin of these principles, aligning with Enlightenment beliefs that the cosmos operates according to fixed laws.<sup>54</sup>

### Modern Liberalism

Modern Liberalism advocates for a balance between state intervention and individual freedom, promoting policies that support positive liberty—enabling individuals to pursue their good if they do not infringe upon the rights of others.<sup>55</sup> John Stuart Mill, often considered a precursor to Modern Liberalism, championed this principle by arguing that true freedom lies in the ability to choose one's path, provided it

<sup>42</sup> Paton, *Ah, but Your Land Is Beautiful*, 62; Prinsloo, "Ubuntu Culture and Participatory Management," 42; Lenta, "The Changing Face of the Law: Ubuntu, Religion and the Politics of Postcolonial Legality," 156; Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers in KwaZulu/Natal-1920-2000*, 129.

<sup>43</sup> Paton, *Ah, but Your Land Is Beautiful*, 62; Prinsloo, "Ubuntu Culture and Participatory Management," 42; Lenta, "The Changing Face of the Law: Ubuntu, Religion and the Politics of Postcolonial Legality," 156; Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers in KwaZulu/Natal-1920-2000*, 129.

<sup>44</sup> Rupert Brown, "Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems and Future Challenges," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30, no. 6 (2000): 745–78.

<sup>45</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration," 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ewuoso and Hall, "Core Aspects of Ubuntu: A Systematic Review," 93.

<sup>47</sup> E. Butler, *Classical Liberalism - A Primer* (London: London Publishing Partnership, 2015), 7.

<sup>48</sup> O. Çaha, "The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey," *Journal of Economic & Social Research* 3, no. 2 (2001): 35–50; K. Harrison and T. Boyd, *Understanding Political Ideas and Movements* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 199.

<sup>49</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration," 11.

<sup>50</sup> D. Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 115.

<sup>51</sup> Margaret Stout, *Logics of Legitimacy: Three Traditions of Public Administration Praxis* (Routledge, 2017), 84.

<sup>52</sup> Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 115.

<sup>53</sup> Stout and Love, "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance," 6.

<sup>54</sup> Stout, *Logics of Legitimacy: Three Traditions of Public Administration Praxis*, 84.

<sup>55</sup> Leonard O Goenaga and Political Ideologies POT3302, "A Comparison Between Modern and Classical Liberalism: Is Modern Liberalism Truly Liberal?," 5; Miller and Perrino, "So to Speak Podcast Transcript: John Stuart Mill's 'On Liberty' with Professor Dale E. Miller," 6.

does not harm others.<sup>56</sup> While early modern liberals like Jeremy Bentham focused on utilitarian principles, later thinkers such as John Maynard Keynes and John Rawls expanded this framework to advocate for the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to ensure social justice and equality.<sup>57</sup>

Unlike Classical Liberalism, which emphasises universal natural rights and a more static view of freedom, Modern Liberalism is grounded in the practical realities of human experience and social conditions. Its principles are derived from an *immanent* source, meaning that values and rights emerge within social contexts rather than from abstract, transcendent concepts. This approach recognises the importance of adapting policies to evolving social dynamics while maintaining a stable foundation of core values such as equality and fairness. Modern Liberalism also embraces a pluralistic approach, acknowledging individuals' diverse identities, experiences, and aspirations. This pluralism promotes inclusivity by supporting diversity and equality management, uplifting minority rights, and ensuring that all individuals can thrive regardless of their background.<sup>58</sup> Although its core values remain stable, this pluralist and immanent orientation allows Modern Liberalism to remain flexible and responsive to changing social needs, as demonstrated by its adaptability during the post-World War II era.<sup>59</sup> While Modern Liberalism values individuality and diversity, this pluralism can sometimes create tension when balancing collective goals with individual aspirations, particularly in career management and organisational policies. Nonetheless, its commitment to inclusivity and equity remains a defining feature, distinguishing it from the more rigid frameworks of Classical Liberalism.

### Sino-Centric Cultural Values

Successful developmental states have emerged in the Sino-centric region, including North and South East Asia and China.<sup>60</sup> Confucianism serves as the dominant cultural philosophy, providing a framework for civil service administration, organisational bureaucracy, respect for elders, and social etiquette.<sup>61</sup> Unlike a religion, Confucianism is a humanistic philosophy, centred around five core virtues: *Ren* (humanity and goodwill), *Yi* (righteousness), *Li* (politeness), *Zhi* (wisdom), and *Xin* (trustworthiness and responsibility).<sup>62</sup> Among these, *Ren* is the root of all virtues, shaping an individual's ethical character and promoting moral development.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, five key components underpin Confucian values: hierarchy and harmony, group orientation, *Guanxi* (personal networks), *Mianzi* (face-saving), and time orientation.<sup>64</sup> These elements collectively influence interpersonal relationships and organisational practices in the region, making Confucianism integral to both cultural and socio-economic structures.

The foundational values of Confucianism establish a societal order based on a fixed, transcendental hierarchy rooted in paternalism, where individuals must act according to rank and social status to achieve harmony.<sup>65</sup> This hierarchy is more than a social construct; it represents a metaphysical system that upholds collective stability. Core values such as responsibility, loyalty, decency, and reciprocity reinforce this structure, rendering any challenge to the established order unacceptable.<sup>66</sup> The hierarchy thus forms a collective consciousness that subsumes personal identity within group roles, reflecting a static philosophical stance that limits individual autonomy. Confucian collectivism is not merely a social norm but a guiding metaphysical principle that defines the 'self' through relationships and interdependence.<sup>67</sup> This principle requires prioritising group harmony over individual desires, as seen in the concepts of

<sup>56</sup> Goenaga and POT3302, "A Comparison Between Modern and Classical Liberalism: Is Modern Liberalism Truly Liberal?"; Miller and Perrino, "So to Speak Podcast Transcript: John Stuart Mill's 'On Liberty' with Professor Dale E. Miller," 6.

<sup>57</sup> E. Ongaro, *Philosophy and Public Administration: An Introduction* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017).

<sup>58</sup> A. M. G. Schreuder and M. Coetzee, *Careers: An Organisational Perspective*, 5th ed. (Cape Town: Juta, 2016).

<sup>59</sup> Brown, "Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems and Future Challenges," 153.

<sup>60</sup> Pham, "The Developmental State, the Evolving International Economic Order, and Vietnam," 60.

<sup>61</sup> Xu and Wang, "Confucianism: The Question of Its Religiousness and Its Role in Constructing Chinese Secular Ideology," 80.

<sup>62</sup> Lutz, "African Ubuntu Philosophy and Global Management," 5.

<sup>63</sup> Xu and Wang, "Confucianism: The Question of Its Religiousness and Its Role in Constructing Chinese Secular Ideology."

<sup>64</sup> Pham, "The Developmental State, the Evolving International Economic Order, and Vietnam," 60; Xu and Wang, "Confucianism: The Question of Its Religiousness and Its Role in Constructing Chinese Secular Ideology," 87.

<sup>65</sup> Eunjung Choi and Jongseok Woo, "Confucian Legacies and the Meaning of Democracy in South Korea: A Cultural Interpretation," *Korea Observer* 49, no. 3 (2018): 493–515, 494–495.

<sup>66</sup> Malcolm Warner, "Comparing Human Resource Management in China and Vietnam: An Overview," *Human Systems Management* 32, no. 4 (2013): 217–29.

<sup>67</sup> Kaye Chon and Fei Hao, "The Five Constants: A Confucian Business Model for the Hospitality Industry," *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 44, no. 7 (September 29, 2020): 1051–71, 1056. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020936342>.

*Mianzi* (maintaining social face) and *Guangxi* (networking and interpersonal relationships), which oblige individuals to act in ways that sustain their social standing and fulfil group expectations.<sup>68</sup> Through *Mianzi*, Confucianism negates individual expression, as maintaining group harmony is paramount.

*Guanxi* networks, integral to Chinese society since the Confucian era, exemplify Confucian philosophy's relational nature. Reciprocal obligations and favours form the foundation of these networks, serving as metaphysical expressions of interconnected identities rather than mere social customs. *Guanxi*, *Mianzi*, and *Renqing* (human reciprocity) embody overlapping social ties that shape ethical conduct within the collective, highlighting a pluralistic social order that transcends individualism.<sup>69</sup> The Confucian temporal orientation, being past-focused, reflects a static view of time as a continuum that preserves traditions and eschews materialism.<sup>70</sup> This outlook contrasts with Western future-oriented ideologies prioritising progress and individual agency. Confucianism, instead, perceives the present as an extension of the past, adhering to eternal values such as *Ren* (humanity) and *Yi* (righteousness), which provide consistent ethical guidance across generations.<sup>71</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

The researchers conducted a mixed methods approach at the North West Province Departments of Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements. The North West Provincial Department of Human Settlements (NWPDHS) provides decent housing and social amenities for the North West Province. It is instrumental in ensuring that all South Africans can access this fundamental right.<sup>72</sup> To further enhance the fulfilment of the NWPDHS's core mandate, the researchers also sought insights from the North West Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (NWPDCOGTA). Employees of the NWPDCOGTA provide support functions to the NWPDHS, and their perspective on realising the Department's mission and vision would strengthen the study's conclusions, making them feel involved and valued in the research process.

The researcher conducted interviews and distributed questionnaires to various directorates, including Administration, Housing Development, Cooperative Services, Local Governance, Housing Needs, Planning and Technical Services, Traditional Affairs, and Financial Management Services.<sup>73</sup> These directorates hold significant implications for the operations and management of these departments, providing a valuable resource for decision-making and strategic planning. Twenty-six line managers, senior managers and H.R. practitioners were interviewed. Questionnaires were distributed to skilled technicians and professionals, including administrative professionals, engineers, architects, town planners, building inspectors, project managers specialists, middle management, and senior management. Consequently, 110 functional and comprehensive questionnaires were analysed using SPSS and the interviews using Atlas ti, ensuring the reliability and validity of our findings. The following sections provide a more detailed explanation of the examined variables.

## Investigated Variables

Exploring cultural dynamics within the North West Province's key governmental departments requires examining variables critical in comprehending the effectiveness of career management in public service

<sup>68</sup> Malcolm Warner, "Comparing Human Resource Management in China and Vietnam: An Overview," *Human Systems Management* 32, no. 4 (2013): 217–29; Yuanhui Shi, "Contemporary Contexts of Confucianism," *Comparative Civilizations Review* 80, no. 80 (2019): 101.

<sup>69</sup> K. Chon and F. Hao, "The Five Constants: A Confucian Business Model for the Hospitality Industry," *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 44, no. 7 (2020): 1051–71, 1052.

<sup>70</sup> Christian Yao, Zheng Duan, and Yehuda Baruch, "Time, Space, Confucianism and Careers: A Contextualized Review of Careers Research in China—Current Knowledge and Future Research Agenda," *International Journal of Management Reviews* 22, no. 3 (2020): 222–48, 230.

<sup>71</sup> Jia Wang et al., "Confucian Values and the Implications for International HRD," *Human Resource Development International* 8, no. 3 (2005): 311–26; Xu and Wang, "Confucianism: The Question of Its Religiousness and Its Role in Constructing Chinese Secular Ideology."

<sup>72</sup> North West Provincial Government, "Annual Report 2019/20. North West Province Department of Human Settlements (NWPDHS)," 2020, 17. [http://www.nwpg.gov.za/HumanSettlements/site/documents/Strategic Planning/DHS Annual Report - Performance Info 2019-20-merged.pdf](http://www.nwpg.gov.za/HumanSettlements/site/documents/Strategic%20Planning/DHS%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Performance%20Info%202019-2020-merged.pdf).

<sup>73</sup> North West Provincial Government, "Annual Report 2019/20. North West Province Department of Human Settlements (NWPDHS)," 18; North West Provincial Government, *Annual Report: Final Year 2019/2020. North West Province Department of Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements (NWPDCOGTA)* (North West, 2020), <https://provincialgovernment.co.za/departments/annual/942/2020-north-west-cooperative-governance-and-traditional-affairs-annual-report.pdf>.

delivery and development initiatives. The principle of Ubuntu underscores the importance of collaboration and mutual support for fostering harmonious societal relationships.<sup>74</sup> Classical Liberalism promotes a steadfast commitment to organisational goals and perspectives. Modern Liberalism advocates for individual autonomy, ensuring career satisfaction and aspirations of employees. Sino-centric values can examine the imbalance of systems between organisational goals and personal objectives. With that consideration, career satisfaction is the investigated dependent variable. In contrast, collaboration, organisational goals and objectives, the role of the Department, career development, aspirations and choice are independent variables examined to review essential precepts in the cultural perspectives mentioned. To eliminate bias and improve validity, the study controlled for challenges, turnover intentions, and motivation to guarantee that any observed influence on career satisfaction ascribes to independent variables.

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This study investigated relationships between career satisfaction and motivation, organisational goals and objectives, collaboration, aspirations, challenges, turnover intentions, career choice and the Department, as presented in Table 1. The objective of the investigation was to determine whether such relationships exist. The study developed the following hypotheses to examine associations:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** This study has no monotonic association between career satisfaction and other independent variables.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** This study has a monotonic association between career satisfaction and other variables. The following table proves the hypothesis above.

**Table 1: Correlation Findings**

	CASAT	MOT	COLL	ORG	ASP	CHALL	TURN	CHOICE	DEPART
CASAT	1.000								
MOT	.089	1.000							
COLL	.265**	.171	1.000						
ORG	.521**	.104	.198*	1.000					
ASP	.044	-.014	.266**	-.217*	1.000				
CHALLENGE	.240*	.198*	.243*	.115	.037	1.000			
TURN	.352**	-.137	-.026	-.134	.215*	-.069	1.000		
CHOICE	-.451**	-.043	-.014	-.201*	.109	.125	.130	1.000	
DEPART	-.261**	.074	-.141	-.198*	-.071	-.020	.153	.193*	1.000

\* Mot: Motivation; COLL: collaboration; ORG: organisational goals; ASP: aspirations; CHA: challenges; TURN: turnover; CHOICE: career choices; DEPART: Department

<sup>74</sup> Nonceba Nolundi Mabovula, "The Erosion of African Communal Values: A Reappraisal of the African Ubuntu Philosophy," *Inkanyiso: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2011): 38–47, 40.

**\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

The Spearman's correlation test investigated the association between career satisfaction and other variables illustrated in the table. The correlations revealed that collaboration, organisational goals and objectives, and departmental challenges positively influence career satisfaction. In contrast, turnover intentions, career choices, and career development opportunities negatively impact career satisfaction. In this context, motivation and career aspirations do not significantly influence career satisfaction. Career satisfaction and collaboration were moderately positive and statistically significant ( $r = 0.265$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The mentioned implies that teamwork increases career satisfaction. A significant positive association ( $r = 0.521$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) exists between career satisfaction and organisational goals and objectives. This substantial positive suggests that clear and matched organisational goals and objectives boost career satisfaction. The correlations between career satisfaction and challenges were relatively favourable and significant ( $r = 0.240$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The mentioned suggests that challenges enhance career satisfaction and provide possibilities for career progression. A substantial negative correlation ( $r = -0.352$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) exists between career satisfaction and turnover intentions. This negative association shows that career satisfaction reduces turnover intentions, meaning satisfied employees are less inclined to leave the Department. The correlation was moderately negative and significant ( $r = -0.261$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The mentioned shows that limited Departmental career growth opportunities impair employee career satisfaction. Based on the results above, the  $H_1$  was supported. However, there was no statistical significance between career satisfaction and motivation and aspiration as both variables recorded an alpha value above 0.05, with the former recording 0.360 and the latter recording 0.649.

These findings reveal the necessity of triangulating quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively understand challenges and turnover intentions within the North West Province Departments of Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs (NWPDCOGTA) and Human Settlements (NWPDHS). Challenges experienced by employees stem from poor employee-management relations, characterised by a lack of respect, responsibility, and trust. Employees are not working collectively but rather against each other, as highlighted by Participant 24, who stated:

*"Employees and managers are working against each other rather than working together."*

To reinforce the above statements, skilled technicians and professional engineers expressed dissatisfaction with their managers, particularly regarding mentoring and coaching, appointments for promotional posts, and performance ratings. Some employees reported being overburdened by colleagues despite having clear and precise job descriptions.

Other concerns included perceptions of favouritism, friendship-based appointments, gender inequalities, and being mentored by inexperienced managers. Explicitly, Participant 21 stated:

*"Imagine someone, who is a teacher in Potchefstroom getting a director position in the Department just because they are friends with someone."*

In agreement with Participant 15 states that:

*"As an HR professional, we do not have the right to question the directors or politicians because maybe it's a friend, politician, or family member related to him or her, so per your question, you are out of your position just like that."*

Regarding turnover intentions, research findings indicate that a lack of experiential learning for engineers, architects and other skilled technicians significantly causes a massive turnover at the North West Provincial Department of Human Settlements. Participants 5, 8, and 20 attest that the Department struggles to attract and retain valuable employees due to uncompetitive salaries, making competing with the private sector difficult.

## **DISCUSSION**

The research findings highlight the significance of collaboration and the establishment of clear organisational goals in creating a conducive work environment, aligning closely with the Ubuntu philosophy. Ensuring that employees understand and commit to clear departmental objectives resonates with the classical Liberalism principles of systematic governance and the rule of law. Sino-centric

principles complement the above by promoting an organised, accountable and respectful work environment. Incorporating these principles into career management fosters a unified and supportive public service environment while enhancing career satisfaction which is consistent with modern Liberalism's focus on individual well-being within the organisational framework.

Consequently, the prevalence of challenges in career development underscores the prevalence of conflicting perspectives stemming from limited career advancement opportunities. These constraints negatively impact career satisfaction and fuel competition and conflicts between organisational and employee development goals, managers and employees, senior and junior staff, and gender divisions (male vs female). Such dynamics deviate from the Ubuntu and Sino-centric emphasis on collective unity, group solidarity and communalism.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, job-hopping trends, indicative of modern Liberalism's emphasis on individual responsibility, further complicate career management perspectives. These challenges highlight the incompatibility of diverse perspectives because, in a globalised society, cultural viewpoints either compete with or dominate one another.<sup>76</sup>

The analysis reveals that conflicting perspectives persist due to the rigid adherence to fixed principles embedded in strong ontologies (Sino-centric, Ubuntu, and Western Liberalism). For instance, Classical Liberalism's universal hierarchical principles conflict with Ubuntu's emphasis on communalism. At the same time, Modern Liberalism's focus on autonomy and individualism marginalises collective perspectives. Within the South African context, hierarchical principles in Sino-centric frameworks can maintain order but will lack the necessary adaptability. Career management challenges and turnover intentions remain persistent as these cultural perspectives exhibit characteristics of solid ontologies prone to dominating one another. The mentioned has led to Western Liberalism becoming the dominant perspective in career management, overshadowing the values of Ubuntu and Sino-centric principles. Stout and Love identified this problem as cultural dominance, which pushes towards standardisation, conformity and uniformity of Western ideologies despite superficial attention to diversity based on indigenous principles of Ubuntu and South Africa aspiring to become a developmental state.<sup>77</sup> Addressing these conflicting dynamics requires a nuanced approach that accommodates diverse cultural perspectives while maintaining effective governance structures, as recommended in the following section.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can address the identified challenges and turnover intentions by improving employee-management relations, strengthening career development opportunities and reinforcing retention strategies within South African public service departments.

### Theoretical recommendations for Integrative governance

An integrative governance model should be adopted to harmonise plural cultural viewpoints within the public service. Stout's integrative synthesis model supports this synthesis by contending that it can bridge competing perspectives by incorporating relational process ontology and panentheism.<sup>78</sup> This pragmatic approach can embrace dynamic and interdependent relationships among cultural perspectives. Panentheism, which acknowledges the interconnectedness of diverse perspectives, should be used as a foundational framework for integrating Ubuntu's communal values, Sino-centric hierarchical order, and Liberalism's structured governance. This integration will ensure a balanced approach to career management, promoting coherence, adaptability, and inclusivity in the public service. Additionally, policymakers should address the dominance of Western Liberalism by adopting weak ontologies that accommodate flexibility and adaptability in foundational governance principles, as White and Lehtinen advocate.<sup>79</sup> These principles should be further examined from the African perspective to ensure the development of contextually relevant solutions to the myriad challenges faced by the region.

---

<sup>75</sup> Mabovula, "The Erosion of African Communal Values: A Reappraisal of the African Ubuntu Philosophy," 40.

<sup>76</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration."

<sup>77</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration."

<sup>78</sup> Stout and Love, "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration."

<sup>79</sup> Mattias Lehtinen, "Political Ontology and Imagination: Contours of a Democratic Imaginary," 2023; S. K. White, *Sustaining Affirmation: The Strengths of Weak Ontology in Political Theory* (Princeton University Press, 2000).

The integrative governance framework should affirm the legitimacy and authority of indigenous African philosophies like Ubuntu by highlighting their unique contributions to organisational values, employee relations, and development. The integrative governance model must promote Ubuntu's dynamic, plural and transcendent nature, ensuring its ethical principles of communalism and human interdependence are central to the global organisational culture. Such an approach would resist the ontological colonisation of Western paradigms by positioning Ubuntu as an equal contributor in shaping organisational practices.

### **Practical recommendations for career management and organisational culture**

Improving career management through structured governance and pluralist choice principles involves balancing Classical Liberalism's emphasis on rule-based career paths with Modern Liberalism's focus on autonomy and employee self-management. This can be achieved by integrating career planning methodologies (e.g., boundaryless and protean career models) that support structured growth while accommodating individual aspirations.

Promoting a collaborative organisational culture using Ubuntu and Sino-centric principles is essential. Ubuntu's collective approach should be integrated with Sino-centric hierarchical models to foster a harmonious and collaborative work environment. Utilising frameworks such as Mbigi and Maree's Collective Fingers Framework, senior managers should work collaboratively with line managers, skilled technicians, and professionals to align career management practices with organisational goals, fostering a family-like organisational culture that mitigates fragmentation and conflict.<sup>80</sup>

Building on Sino-centric and Ubuntu principles, public service departments should implement a developmental state model characterised by structured career paths, competitive recruitment, job rotation, and regulated probation periods. Such practices promote career stability, reduce corruption, and enhance organisational performance by aligning career development with broader developmental goals.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study explored the significance of integrating diverse cultural perspectives into career management practices within public service departments, particularly focusing on how Ubuntu, Sino-centric, and Western Liberalism principles influence organisational performance and career satisfaction. The findings revealed a strong relationship between cultural perspectives and effective career management, underscoring the importance of collaboration and clear organisational goals in fostering a conducive work environment. Incorporating these principles into career management practices improves career satisfaction and nurtures a unified and supportive public service environment. This study further highlights the need for a systematic governance approach that aligns employees with clear departmental objectives, thus promoting structured organisational management.

This research is among the first to examine the dynamics between these cultural perspectives in career management within South Africa's public service. The findings contribute to improving career management practices and performance in public service departments through integrative governance, promoting a more inclusive and culturally aware approach. While the study focused on the North West Province Departments of Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs, and Human Settlements, its implications apply to other public service departments in South Africa and across Africa. Future research should continue to investigate how integrating strong cultural perspectives can enhance governance frameworks and career management practices in the public service.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Amoah, Lloyd G Adu. "Public Policy Formation in Africa: Toward a Grounded Ontology." *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 32, no. 4 (2010): 606–10.
- Ansell, A. E. "Two Nations of Discourse: Mapping Racial Ideologies in Post-Apartheid South Africa." In *The New Black: Alternative Paradigms and Strategies for the 21st Century*, edited by R.D. Coates and R.M. Dennis. Oxford: Elsevier, 2007.
- Bangstad, S. *Global Flows, Local Appropriations: Facets of Secularisation and Re-Islamisation Among*

---

<sup>80</sup> Mbigi and Maree, *Ubuntu, the Spirit of African Transformation Management*.

- Contemporary Cape Muslims*. Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2007.
- Berger, P.L., and B. Godsell. *A Future South Africa: Visions, Strategies, and Realities*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau., 1988.
- Bhengu, M.J. *Ubuntu: The Essence of Democracy*. Cape Town: Novalis Press, 1966.
- Binsbergen, Wim Van. "Ubuntu and the Globalisation of African Thought and Society," 2001.
- Bolden R. "Ubuntu." In *Encyclopedia of Action Research*, edited by M Brydon-Miller and D Coghlan, 111–17. London: Sage, 2014.
- Brown, Rupert. "Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems and Future Challenges." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30, no. 6 (2000): 745–78.
- Buthelezi, Mazo Sybil T. *African Nurse Pioneers in KwaZulu/Natal-1920-2000*. Trafford Publishing, 2004.
- Butler, E. *Classical Liberalism - A Primer*. London: London Publishing Partnership, 2015.
- Çaha, O. "The Inevitable Coexistence of Civil Society and Liberalism: The Case of Turkey." *Journal of Economic & Social Research* 3, no. 2 (2001): 35–50.
- Choi, Eunjung, and Jongseok Woo. "Confucian Legacies and the Meaning of Democracy in South Korea: A Cultural Interpretation." *Korea Observer* 49, no. 3 (2018): 493–515.
- Chon, K., and F. Hao. "The Five Constants: A Confucian Business Model for the Hospitality Industry." *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 44, no. 7 (2020): 1051–71.
- Chon, Kaye, and Fei Hao. "The Five Constants: A Confucian Business Model for the Hospitality Industry." *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 44, no. 7 (September 29, 2020): 1051–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348020936342>.
- Edigheji, O. *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges*. Cape Town: HRSC Press, 2010.
- Ewuoso, Cornelius, and Susan Hall. "Core Aspects of Ubuntu: A Systematic Review." *South African Journal of Bioethics and Law* 12, no. 2 (2019): 93–103.
- Gade, Christian B N. "The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu." *South African Journal of Philosophy= Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif Vir Wysbegeerte* 30, no. 3 (2011): 303–29.
- Goenaga, Leonard O, and Political Ideologies POT3302. "A Comparison Between Modern and Classical Liberalism: Is Modern Liberalism Truly Liberal?," n.d.
- Gumede, V. "South Africa as a Developmental State in the Making." *Development Studies*, University of Johannesburg, 2010. [https://www.vusigumedethinkers.com/pages/acpapers\\_log/sadevelop.html](https://www.vusigumedethinkers.com/pages/acpapers_log/sadevelop.html).
- Harrison, K., and T. Boyd. *Understanding Political Ideas and Movements*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018.
- Khoza, Reuel. *Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as Compass*. Penguin Random House South Africa, 2012.
- Lehtinen, Mattias. "Political Ontology and Imagination: Contours of a Democratic Imaginary," 2023.
- Lenta, P. "The Changing Face of the Law: Ubuntu, Religion and the Politics of Postcolonial Legality." In *Explorations in Contemporary Continental Philosophy of Religion*, edited by D.-P. Baker and P. Maxwell. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2003.
- Lodge, Tom. *South African Politics since 1994*. David Philip, 1999.
- Lutz, David W. "African Ubuntu Philosophy and Global Management." *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. S3 (February 8, 2009): 313–28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0204-z>.
- Lutz, David W. "African Ubuntu Philosophy and Global Management." *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. Suppl 3 (2009): 313–28.
- Mabovula, Nonceba Nolundi. "The Erosion of African Communal Values: A Reappraisal of the African Ubuntu Philosophy." *Inkanyiso: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2011): 38–47.
- Mbigi, Lovemore, and Jenny Maree. *Ubuntu, the Spirit of African Transformation Management*. Knowledge Resources, 1995.
- McEachern, C. *Narratives of Nation Media, Memory and Representation in the Making of the New South Africa*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002.
- Meyns, Peter. "The Developmental State in Africa: Problems and Prospects," 2010.
- Miller, D. E., and N. Perrino. "So to Speak Podcast Transcript: John Stuart Mill's 'On Liberty' with Professor Dale E. Miller," 2019. <https://sotospeak.libsyn.com/john-stuart-mills-on-libert>.

- Mkandawire, Thandika. "From Maladjusted States to Democratic Developmental States in Africa." *Constructing a Democratic Developmental State in South Africa: Potentials and Challenges*, 2010, 59–81.
- Modise, Leepo J. "The Notion of Participatory Democracy in Relation to Local Ward Committees: The Distribution of Power." *In Die Skriflig* 51, no. 1 (2017): 1–8.
- Motsei, M. *The Kanga and the Kangaroo Court: Reflections on the Rape Trial of Jacob Zuma*. Johannesburg: Jacana, 2007.
- North West Provincial Government. "Annual Report 2019/20. North West Province Department of Human Settlements (NWPDHS)," 2020.  
[http://www.nwpg.gov.za/HumanSettlements/site/documents/Strategic Planning/DHS Annual Report - Performance Info 2019-20-merged.pdf](http://www.nwpg.gov.za/HumanSettlements/site/documents/Strategic%20Planning/DHS%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Performance%20Info%202019-20-merged.pdf).
- . *Annual Report: Final Year 2019/2020. North West Province Department of Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements (NWPDCOGTA)*. North West, 2020.  
[https://provincialgovernment.co.za/department\\_annual/942/2020-north-westcooperative-governance-and-traditional-affairs-annual-report.pdf](https://provincialgovernment.co.za/department_annual/942/2020-north-westcooperative-governance-and-traditional-affairs-annual-report.pdf).
- Nussbaum, Barbara. "African Culture and Ubuntu." *Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 1–12.
- Ongaro, E. *Philosophy and Public Administration: An Introduction*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017.
- Outram, D. *The Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Paton, A. *Ah, but Your Land Is Beautiful*. New York: Scribner, 1983.
- Pham, Hung Hung. "The Developmental State, the Evolving International Economic Order, and Vietnam." University of Birmingham, 2012.
- Prinsloo, E.D. "Ubuntu Culture and Participatory Management." *In The African Philosophy Reader*, edited by P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Republic of South Africa. *Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers, 1993.
- Republic of South Africa (R.S.A.). *National Development Plan (N.D.P.). 2030: Our Future - Make It Work. National Planning Commission (N.P.C.)*. Pretoria: Government printers, 2011.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). *Final Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)*. Pretoria: Government Printers, 1996.
- Roux, A P J, and Peter Hendrik Coetzee. "Beyond the Question of African Philosophy.," 1999.
- Schreuder, A. M. G., and M. Coetzee. *Careers: An Organisational Perspective*. 5th ed. Cape Town: Juta, 2016.
- Shi, Yuanhui. "Contemporary Contexts of Confucianism." *Comparative Civilizations Review* 80, no. 80 (2019): 7.
- Shore, Megan. *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Routledge, 2016.
- Stout, M. "Competing Ontologies: A Primer for Public Administration." *Public Administration Review* 72, no. 3 (2012): 388–98.
- Stout, M., and J.M. Love. "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration." *The American Review of Public Administration* 51, no. 6 (2021): 422–35.
- . "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance." *Administration & Society* 47, no. 4 (2015): 447–81.
- Stout, Margaret. *Logics of Legitimacy: Three Traditions of Public Administration Praxis*. Routledge, 2017.
- Stout, Margaret, and Jeannine M Love. "Competing Ontologies: A Redux Primer for Public Administration." *The American Review of Public Administration* 51, no. 6 (2021): 422–35.
- . "Relational Process Ontology: A Grounding for Global Governance." *Administration & Society* 47, no. 4 (2015): 447–81.
- Swanson, D.M. "Values in Shadows: A Critical Contribution to Values Education in Our Times." *In International Research Handbook on Values, Education and Student Well-Being*, edited by T., Lovat, R. Toomey, and N. Clement. Dordrecht: Springer, 2010.
- Toit, C.W. Du. "The Integrity of the Human Person in an African Context. Perspectives from Science

and Religion.” In *Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the South African Science and Religion Forum (SASRF) of the Research Institute for Theology and Religion Held at the University of South Africa, Pretoria on 28 & 29 August 2003.*, 2004.

Ukwandu, Damianu C. “South Africa as a Developmental State-Is It a Viable Idea?” *African Journal of Public Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2019): 41–62.

Wang, Jia, Greg G Wang, Wendy E A Ruona, and Jay W Rojewski. “Confucian Values and the Implications for International HRD.” *Human Resource Development International* 8, no. 3 (2005): 311–26.

Warner, Malcolm. “Comparing Human Resource Management in China and Vietnam: An Overview.” *Human Systems Management* 32, no. 4 (2013): 217–29.

White, S. K. *Sustaining Affirmation: The Strengths of Weak Ontology in Political Theory*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

Xu, Keqian, and Guoming Wang. “Confucianism: The Question of Its Religiousness and Its Role in Constructing Chinese Secular Ideology.” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 17, no. 50 (2018): 79–95.

Yao, Christian, Zheng Duan, and Yehuda Baruch. “Time, Space, Confucianism and Careers: A Contextualized Review of Careers Research in China—Current Knowledge and Future Research Agenda.” *International Journal of Management Reviews* 22, no. 3 (2020): 222–48.

## **ABOUT AUTHORS**

Dr. Shereen Sikwela is an integrative governance researcher currently undertaking a postdoctoral fellowship within the research entity, Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs (AGoPA) at the North-West University. Her work focuses on exploring collaborative frameworks that enhance public administration and governance structures, with particular interest in fostering more inclusive, effective policy implementation across diverse socio-political contexts. Dr. Sikwela recently completed her PhD, where she developed insights into integrative governance practices and their impact on public service efficacy, positioning her as a rising scholar in this field.

Prof. Melvin Diedericks is an Associate Professor employed by the North-West University in the research entity, Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs (AGoPA). He has published/co-published peer reviewed articles and book chapters. In addition, he has also delivered Post-Graduate students successfully. Melvin’s research interests include Water Services Management and related planning; as well as Local Government and Service delivery. He is also well-read on issues of Public Policy analysis. He is a reviewer mostly for South African accredited academic journals in his scholarly field. Melvin acts both as internal and external examiner of theses and dissertations. He is a member of IASIA, SAAPAM and ASSADPAM.