



Governance

Conceptualising governance

Jakkie Cilliers

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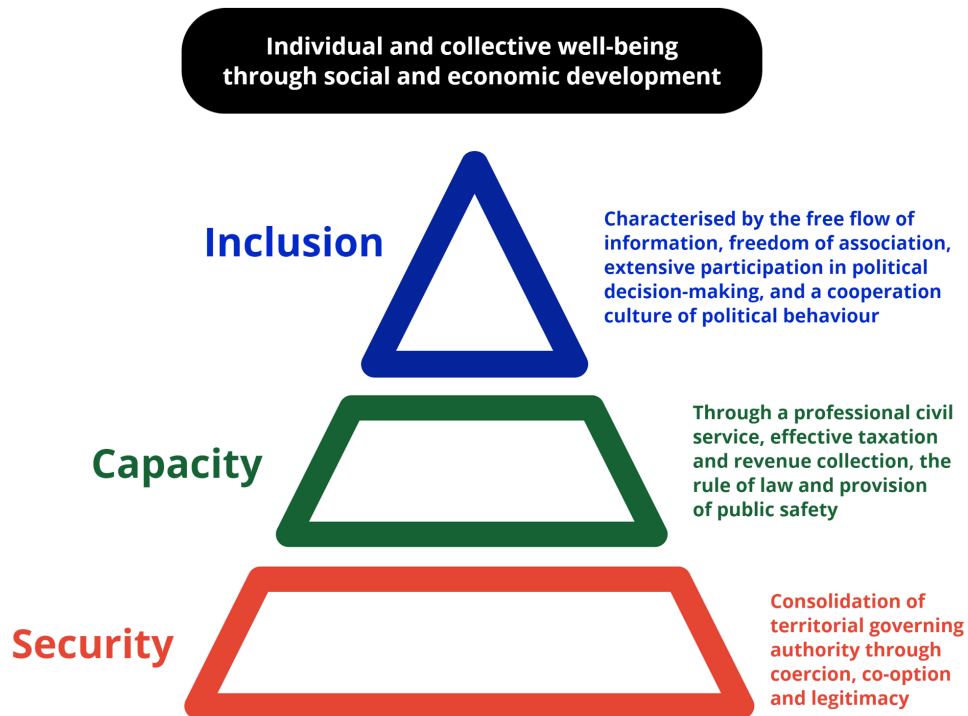
This theme focuses on the three fundamental transitions that deliver a functioning, well-governed state: the development of a legitimate monopoly of the use of force within a territory (the security transition[1]), the expansion and extension of government capacity,[2] and broader and deeper inclusion[3] as part of the subsequent social contract. The analysis is necessarily presented in broad brushstrokes, given the diversity of Africa. The approach is in accordance with that adopted by Barry Hughes and others at the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures that developed and hosts the International Futures (IFs) forecasting platform that is extensively used for forecasting on this website.[4]

These three transitions — security, capacity and inclusion — have historically occurred sequentially and over extended periods, meaning that the establishment of security was a prerequisite for the extension of capacity, which eventually saw the demand for greater inclusion as a condition for further development.

In much of the world, ‘war’, in the classic framing by Charles Tilly, ‘made the state, and the state made war.’[5] As population density in favourable locations increased, families and tribes competed over limited resources, as well as opportunities elsewhere. Competition meant that tribes eventually were required to stand together if they were to survive against external enemies. These developments characterised the city-states of Greece and the Roman, Gallic and Frankish empires as much as the civilizations that had already started to emerge in what we today know as China and India. Development was a bloody and messy affair, but less so in sub-Saharan Africa, where nature was humanity’s main protagonist.

This process of inward-outward state formation took different forms in different regions. Larger populations, competition and expansion drove development, which was periodically constrained and even reversed by plagues, drought and other calamities. It is depicted in Chart 1. In this way, nationalism came to accompany and generally precede development.

Chart 1: The sequential evolution of governance transitions globally



Source: Adapted from BB Hughes et al, Patterns of potential human progress: Strengthening governance globally, Boulder: Oxford University Press, 2014

Thinking of governance in terms of security, capacity and inclusion provides a useful lens to examine how countries progressed over time, to compare the state of governance between countries and groups of countries, and is a basis to forecast its likely future evolution. To this end, IFs include an index (0 to 1) for each dimension, with higher scores indicating improved outcomes. A composite governance index is a simple average of the three.[6]

Endnotes

1. In IFs, security is driven by a performance and risk index and state failure from internal event occurrence. Each is in turn driven by a variety of other indicators. For example, state failure from an internal event occurrence depends on levels of development (poor countries evidence more conflict), infant mortality (often used as a proxy for government capacity), size of the youth bulge (a larger youth bulge indicates greater propensity for turbulence), nature of the governance system (mixed regime types are more prone to instability), levels of education and integration into the global system (relationship of exports to GDP).
2. The IFs capacity index combines data on tax collection from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank's World Development Indicators project, and uses the Corruption Perception Index from Transparency International as a proxy for capacity to manage those resources.
3. Once governments achieve a minimum degree of security and have developed appropriate capacity, pressure mounts for greater inclusion in political and economic structures and processes as part of an emerging social contract between a government and its citizens. The IFs model forecasts its inclusion index based on regime type (using Polity V data) and a measure for gender empowerment as a proxy for horizontal inclusion.
4. See BB Hughes et al, *Strengthening governance globally: Forecasting the next 50 years*, Patterns of Potential Human Progress, volume 5, Boulder: Oxford University Press, 2014, 6–18.
5. C Tilly, Reflections on the history of European state-making, in C Tilly (ed.), *The formation of national states in Western Europe*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975, 3–89.
6. BB Hughes et al, *Strengthening governance globally: Forecasting the next 50 years*, Patterns of Potential Human Progress, volume 5, Boulder: Oxford University Press, 2014, 6. IFs also forecasts several indices related to governance, including the World Bank measurement of government effectiveness and regulatory quality, but these do not drive the forecasts.

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About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director of the ISS. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees and head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the ISS. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

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