

South African Rural Municipalities' Innovation Lessons in Anti-poverty Policy Formulation, Assessment and Implementation



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ABSTRACT

Rural municipalities across the globe have endured an unprecedented wave of unforeseen disasters from floods, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural challenges associated with poor infrastructure and weak leadership in poor and developing countries to innovatively implement relevant policies meant to respond to disasters have often led to excessive poverty after such disasters. The objective of this article is to suggest processes and draw lessons of local and rural innovation in anti-poverty policy formulation, assessment and implementation from the two South African municipalities. The study utilized a qualitative research methodology, adhering to the interpretative paradigm. Social Network Analysis (SNA) and individual interviews were selected as the primary instruments for data collection from two rural municipalities. Data analysis was conducted using NVivo 12 software. The findings reveal that national policies are only as good (in their provision of resources during disasters and poverty alleviation) as their interpretations and implementation by the collective. The collective is the various institutions locally (e.g. local municipalities, local chiefs/traditional authority), nationally (e.g. DEDEAT) and internationally (e.g. Accenture). Thus, rural-based institutions such as local municipalities and NGOs are key in leading the policy assessment and implementation to manage disasters and alleviate poverty. This study's contribution lies in the suggested rural innovative regulative processes (suggested rural innovative regulative processes that serve as lessons for other rural municipalities). Suggested regulative processes that other rural municipalities within South Africa and beyond may implement in responding to disasters that threaten the sustainability of local rural livelihoods.

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INTRODUCTION

Rural municipalities across the globe have endured an unprecedented wave of unforeseen disasters from floods, drought and the Covid-19 pandemic.¹ Zhou et al. corroborate and assert that such disasters from

¹ Uzma Khan et al., "Educational Paradigm Shift: Long-Term Ramifications of COVID-19 in the Indian Context," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 8, no. 8 (August 5, 2024): 4629, <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i8.4629>; Tshililo R Farisani,

natural and unnatural origins impact livelihoods negatively and exacerbate poverty that is prevalent in most world rural areas.² Khomo, Farisani and Mashau affirm and point out that such disasters have been more effective in rural areas around the globe due to prevalent rural challenges.³ Rural challenges associated with poor infrastructure and weak leadership in poor and developing countries to innovatively implement relevant policies to respond to disasters. Soriano Jr et al., authenticate and highlight the need for further research into innovative policymaking and implementation to sustain livelihoods during disasters.⁴

South Africa was not spared from such disasters and challenges, and suffered greatly under such disasters.⁵ Nevertheless, pockets of South African municipalities have displayed rural wisdom and courage in responding to such disasters with rural innovative local regulations and laws. Such rural local wisdom (displayed in the form of local innovative regulations) and implementation are in line with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) and Institutional Theory. The contribution of this study is to draw innovative lessons and contribute to the knowledge that other rural municipalities can use during disasters. Therefore, the objective of this article is to suggest processes and draw lessons from local and rural innovation in anti-poverty policy formulation and assessment from the two South African municipalities.

The rural municipalities which we draw lessons from based on the collected data in the area are situated in two provinces on the eastern coast of South Africa and border three neighbouring countries. Such provinces are KwaZulu Natal (border with Swaziland and Mozambique) and Eastern Cape (border with Lesotho). The citizens of these two provinces have been victims of floods, droughts and various pandemics between 2019 and 2023. As already mentioned above, their innovative and timely response using locally agreed-upon rules and regulations had a positive impact. Had a positive impact in alleviating total disaster and increased poverty, an approach which can be better understood in detail from the SLF and Institutional Theory perspective. The literature review subsections (pro-poor policies in South Africa, the innovative policy-making during disasters and the role of local rural regulations in innovatively mobilizing resources during disasters) and theoretical framework subsections (SLF and Institutional Theory) outline the path that is needed to achieve the objective of the study mentioned above.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review starts by reviewing the pro-poor policies in South Africa, then the innovative policymaking during disasters and finally the role of local rural regulations in innovatively mobilizing resources during disasters.

Pro-poor policymaking in South Africa Koma argue that, since the dawn of democracy (i.e since the 1994 April national elections of the democratic South African government), South African lawmakers have tried to address the challenges of poor communities living in rural municipalities areas, bypassing several laws and implementing empowerment policies.⁶ Farisani and Malakwane corroborate and associate the approach of reconstructive policies to respond to disasters and poverty with the first well-respected and successful policy under the late President Nelson Mandela known as the Reconstruction

“Assessing the Impact of Policies in Sustaining Rural Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises during COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa,” *The Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management* 14, no. 1 (2022): 505; Gul Afshan, Subhan Shahid, and Muhammad Nawaz Tunio, “Learning Experiences of Women Entrepreneurs amidst COVID-19,” *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship* ahead-of-print (May 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-09-2020-0153>; R. Cortez and W. Johnston, “The Coronavirus Crisis in B2B Settings: Crisis Uniqueness and Managerial Implications Based on the Social Exchange Theory,” *Industrial Marketing Management* 88 (2020): 125-135.

² Li Zhou et al., “Asset Smoothing and Consumption Smoothing: Disaster-coping Strategies in Noncontiguous and Contiguous Destitute Areas,” *China & World Economy* 31, no. 2 (2023): 223–50.

³ Sandile M Khomo, Tshililo R Farisani, and Pfano Mashau, “The Financial Legislative Role and Capacity of Municipal Councillors at Ulundi Municipality,” *Africa’s Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 11, no. 1 (2023): 691.

⁴ Mario A Soriano Jr et al., “Public Discourses and Personal Narratives of Learning from Disaster,” *Npj Climate Action* 4, no. 1 (2025): 20; Daniel Nohrstedt and Charles F Parker, “Revisiting the Role of Disasters in Climate Policy-Making,” *Climate Policy* 24, no. 3 (2024): 428–39.

⁵ Tshililo R Farisani, “The Impact of Social and Institutional Networks in Sustaining South African Rural Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises during the Crisis,” *Acta Commercii* 22, no. 1 (2022): 1–14.

⁶ Samuel Bogalebjapoo Koma, “Local Economic Development in South Africa: Policy Implications,” 2012.

and Development Program (RDP).⁷ Farisani and Malakwane also describe RDP as a pro-poor policy that ticks the right boxes by outlining a comprehensive plan to reduce poverty and inequality while prioritising service delivery and human resource development for the poor within the rural municipalities.⁸ Nevertheless, all the above-mentioned authors either did not contribute to innovative pro-policymaking during disasters or left gaps. Soriano Jr et al., corroborate and point to the gap of pro-poor policies that are implementable during disasters.⁹ Soriano Jr et al., further asserted that “the consequences of disasters have long been discussed within the disaster research community, yet gaps remain in our understanding of links”.¹⁰ Links that enable communities and relevant institutions to innovatively respond to disasters and sustain livelihoods.

Innovative Policymaking during disasters Innovative policy-making is a social process. According to Kawane et al., social innovation refers to the novel solutions and practices developed by communities, encompassing the formulation and execution of innovative concepts pertaining to the structuring of interpersonal dynamics or social engagements to attain collective objectives.¹¹ Thus, innovative policy-making is a collaborative exercise that needs all stakeholders to be involved. Nohrstedt and Parker ratify and contend that identifying policy designs that lead to positive outcomes is key to innovative policymaking during disasters¹². Nohrstedt et al. and Haque, Choudry and Sikder, validate and point to the lack of research in innovative policy-making during disasters.¹³

The role of local rural regulations in innovatively mobilizing resources during disasters. Albright and Crow contend that in the event of disasters, communities exhibit varied responses, characterized by mechanisms that mirror the severity of the impact, the resources at their disposal, and the requirements of involved stakeholders.¹⁴ Choudry and Haque certify and maintain that decision-making is predominantly influenced by localized processes.¹⁵ Such processes are then put in the form of localized regulations to be easily implemented by the relevant stakeholders. Institutional Theory sheds light on regulative processes while sustainable livelihood framework sheds light on local institutions, their resources and processes when dealing with a disaster.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework below introduces the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and the Institutional Theory as lenses to suggest the implementation of anti-poverty policies through local regulative approaches in rural areas.

Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Khomo, Farisani, and Mashau, along with Toner and Franks, assert that the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) is among the most effective frameworks for comprehending poverty and associated policies.¹⁶ Farisani corroborates this view, highlighting that the SLF facilitates the examination of the

⁷ Farisani, “Assessing the Impact of Policies in Sustaining Rural Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises during COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa.”

⁸ Farisani, “Assessing the Impact of Policies in Sustaining Rural Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises during COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa.”

⁹ Soriano Jr et al., “Public Discourses and Personal Narratives of Learning from Disaster.”

¹⁰ Soriano Jr et al., “Public Discourses and Personal Narratives of Learning from Disaster.”

¹¹ Tomo Kawane et al., “Social Innovation and Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan: Challenges and Opportunities,” *Disaster Prevention and Resilience* 3, no. 3 (2024): N-A.

¹² Nohrstedt and Parker, “Revisiting the Role of Disasters in Climate Policy-Making.”

¹³ Daniel Nohrstedt et al., “Assessing the Myth of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Wake of Catastrophic Floods,” *Npj Natural Hazards* 1, no. 1 (2024): 5; C. Emdad Haque, Mahed-Ul-Islam Choudhury, and Md Sawayib Sikder, “‘Events and Failures Are Our Only Means for Making Policy Changes’: Learning in Disaster and Emergency Management Policies in Manitoba, Canada,” *Natural Hazards* 98 (2019): 137–62.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Albright and Deserai Crow, “Capacity Building toward Resilience: How Communities Recover, Learn, and Change in the Aftermath of Extreme Events,” *Policy Studies Journal* 49 (May 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12364>.

¹⁵ Mahed Choudhury and C. Emdad Haque, “Disaster Management Policy Changes in Bangladesh: Drivers and Factors of a Shift from Reactive to Proactive Approach,” *Environmental Policy and Governance* 34, no. 5 (October 7, 2024): 445–62, <https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.2094>.

¹⁶ Anna Toner and Tom Franks, “Putting Livelihoods Thinking into Practice: Implications for Development Management,” *Public Administration and Development* 26, no. 1 (February 17, 2006): 81–92, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.395>.

effects of institutions, their policies, and processes on individuals' livelihoods.¹⁷ This perspective is further validated by researchers such as Scoones, Sseguya et al., and Baffoe and Matsuda, who emphasize the distinctive capabilities of the SLF (see Figure 1 below).¹⁸ The ability of SLF to contextualise various aspects of poverty and the livelihood strategies adopted in recent history, and to offer solutions to challenges in complex rural settings that breed zones of poverty and exclusion.

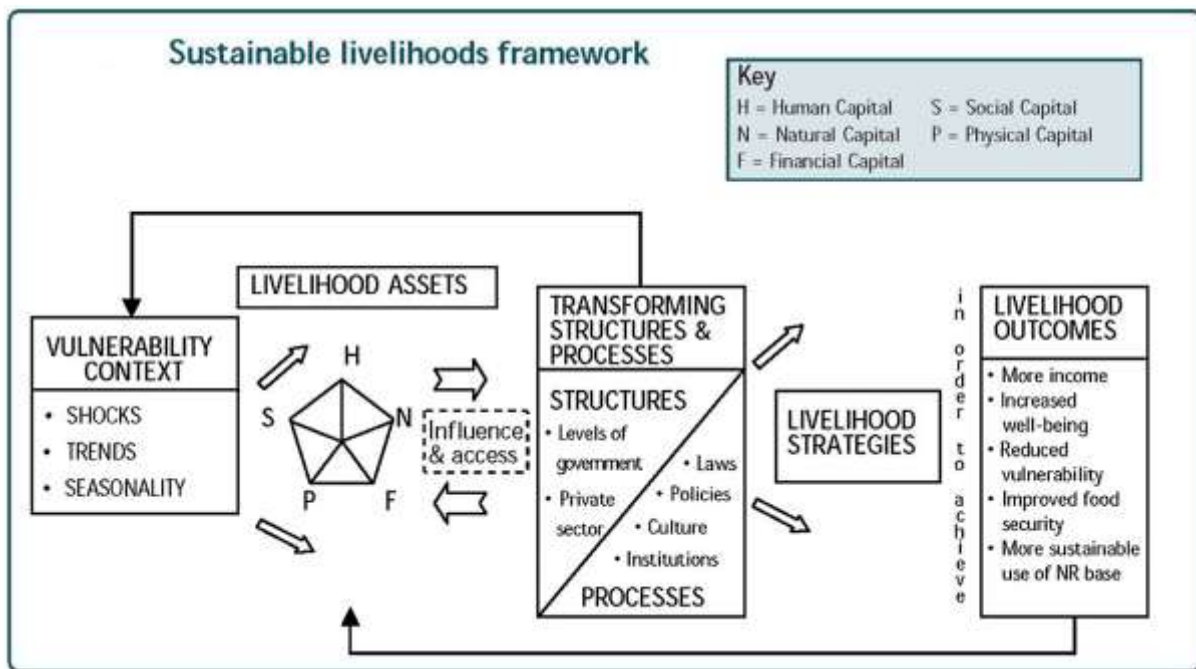


Figure 1: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.
Source: DFID (1999-2001)

SLF makes it easy to understand the impact of disasters (see vulnerability context in figure 1), and the role of local rural leadership from different institutions (see Transforming Structures & processes in figure 1). The role of local rural leadership of different institutions in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating different laws and policies meant to sustain livelihoods and prevent imminent poverty as a result of the disaster. Sustain livelihoods and prevent imminent poverty as a result of the disaster by ensuring that local laws, regulations and policies facilitate innovation and streamline vital resources/assets in areas of need.

Institutional Theory

Scott and Meyer elucidate that institutional theory aims to investigate the rules and regulative processes to which organizations must adhere.¹⁹ Scott supports this assertion, emphasizing that the primary focus of institutional theory is the analysis of an organization's subjection to institutional processes.²⁰ Ramabodu, Mashau, and Farisani, along with Palthe, affirm that institutional theory is instrumental in revealing the implications of institutional laws and policies.²¹

¹⁷ Tshililo Ruddy Farisani, "Empowering South African Rural Stakeholders to Participate in the Legal Cannabis Market: A Sustainable Livelihoods Approach," in *Rapid Innovation and Development in the Global Cannabis Market* (IGI Global, 2023), 139–58.

¹⁸ Ian Scoones, "Livelihoods Perspectives and Rural Development," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 36, no. 1 (January 7, 2009): 171–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820503>; Haroon Sseguya, Robert E. Mazur, and Dorothy Masinde, "Harnessing Community Capitals for Livelihood Enhancement: Experiences From a Livelihood Program in Rural Uganda," *Community Development* 40, no. 2 (June 12, 2009): 123–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330903012239>; Gideon Baffoe and Hirotaka Matsuda, "Why Do Rural Communities Do What They Do in the Context of Livelihood Activities? Exploring the Livelihood Priority and Viability Nexus," *Community Development* 48, no. 5 (October 20, 2017): 715–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2017.1366927>.

¹⁹ Richard Scott, "The Organization of Societal Sector," *Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality*, 1983, 129–53. P. 140

²⁰ W Richard Scott, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities* (Sage publications, 2013).

²¹ Busisiwe Ramabodu, Pfano Mashau, and Tshililo Ruddy Farisani, "Assessing Innovation and Entrepreneurship Transformations in Two South African Universities amidst the COVID-19 Crisis," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development; Vol. 8, Issue 14, 2024*; Jennifer Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations: Implications for Managing Change," *Management and Organizational Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): 59–66.

Institutional Theory encompasses three fundamental elements that influence institutions: the regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars.²² To achieve the objective of this paper, we only draw from the regulative and cultural cognitive elements (see Table 1) to suggest strategies that rural municipalities around the globe can implement during disasters.

Table 1: Comparison between regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements of Institutional Theory (adopted from Palthe, 2014)

Elements	Regulative	Normative	Cognitive
Legitimacy	Legal systems	Moral and ethical systems	Cultural systems
Central Rudiments	Policies, legislation, and rules	Work role, habits and norms	Values, beliefs, and assumptions
System Transformation Drivers	Legal obligation	Moral obligation	Transformation values are internalized
System Transformation Sustainers	Fear and coercion	Duty and responsibility	Social identity and personal desire
Behavioural Reasoning	Have to	Ought to	Want to

The Institutional Theory's combination of regulative and cultural cognitive elements takes into consideration the various local contexts and local cultures that differ from country to country.²³ Thus, the unique local partnerships and traditions are not ignored but considered with the view to drawing local strength. To draw local strength in sustaining livelihoods and end the poverty associated with the aftermath of disasters, using innovative local legal and cultural systems.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design and Sampling

A qualitative research methodology was employed in this study. An interpretive paradigm was selected for this study, following the guidance of Chilisa and Mertens regarding research aimed at understanding individuals' lived experiences.²⁴ Under this paradigm, Social Network Analysis (SNA) and one-on-one interviews were employed as research instruments to collect data from Jozini Local Municipality (JLM) and Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM). Conducted as part of a PhD research project, the study spanned two years, during which both primary and secondary data were gathered. Secondary data collection occurred throughout the study period, while primary data were collected over six months from two municipalities approximately 800 kilometres apart. This necessitated allocating specific time for each local municipality, particularly the two border-sharing municipalities of Jozini and Matatiele, where many participants confirmed their availability.

Purposive sampling was employed in this study. Given the nature of rural areas, where institutions are often undocumented and dispersed, it was essential to utilize snowball sampling to complement purposive sampling. Snowball sampling facilitated the identification of institutions that could provide additional relevant information, as well as other rural Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMME)-supportive institutions unknown to the researcher but familiar to other participants due to their collaborative efforts in local SMME sustainability. The Social Network Analysis tool proved crucial in

²² Samuel Stroope, Scott Draper, and Andrew L. Whitehead, "Images of a Loving God and Sense of Meaning in Life," *Social Indicators Research* 111, no. 1 (March 21, 2013): 25–44, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9982-7>; Scott, "The Organization of Societal Sector."

²³ Farisani Thomas Nephawe, "Approaches for Deviant English Competence Repair in Written Research Proposals at a Rural-Based University," *Journal of English Language Studies* 8, no. 2 (2023): 269–84; Stroope, Draper, and Whitehead, "Images of a Loving God and Sense of Meaning in Life."

²⁴ N Goduka and B Chilisa, "Locating African Voices and Worldviews within the Academy. EZiko SiPheka SiSophula: National Library of South Africa's Centre for the Book," 2016; Donna M Mertens, "Transformative Mixed Methods Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 6 (2010): 469–74.

this context, owing to its capacity to identify existing and potential institutions (connections) vital for SMME sustainability in rural areas.²⁵

Data Collection and Research Instruments

A total of 69 participants, representing all stakeholders in the study areas, were interviewed (see Table 2). Specifically, 18 participants from MLM and 16 participants from JLM were interviewed using SNA. The remaining participants were interviewed using semi-structured interviews to ensure representation of all institutions and structures (see Table 3) as per Jensen and Jankowski.²⁶ All stakeholders who made themselves available to represent their institutions were interviewed in both municipalities.

According to Chilisa, secondary data is equally important and provides qualitative researchers with the opportunity to access a broader range of information.²⁷ Valuable secondary data were obtained from the following sources: the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) website, the JLM website, the MLM website, and the MLM Local Economic Development (LED) unit operating documents.

Table 2: Interview table showing participants and tools used in this study (Researcher's own compilation)

Institutions interviewed	No of the participants interviewed	Tools used to collect data
Jozini Local Municipality	5 (2 councillors and 3 from the LED unit)	Semi-structured Interviews
Matatiele Local Municipality	3 (All from LED unit)	Semi-structured Interviews
Jozini rural SMME cooperatives	18 (2 separate cooperatives, 9 from each)	Social Network Analysis
Matatiele rural SMME Cooperatives	16 (1 cooperative)	Social Network Analysis
Jozini public companies	1	Semi-structured Interviews
Matatiele public companies	0	None
Jozini private companies	2	Semi-structured Interviews
Matatiele private companies	1	Semi-structured Interviews
Jozini individual rural SMMEs	13	Semi-structured Interviews
Matatiele rural SMMEs	5	Semi-structured Interviews
Jozini local traditional council	1	Semi-structured Interviews
Matatiele local traditional council	0	None
Jozini local NGOs	0 (the only former NGO employee has already been recorded as an SMME owner)	None
Matatiele local NGOs	4	Semi-structured Interviews

Data Analysis

The researcher employed Grounded Theory (GT) analysis as delineated by Strauss and Corbin.²⁸ According to Strauss and Corbin, the GT analysis process involves "organizing data into discrete categories based on their properties and dimensions, using descriptions to elucidate those categories, and

²⁵ Edward Agbai, Ebiye Agbai, and Emmanuel Sunday Oko-Jaja, "Bridging Culture, Nurturing Diversity: Cultural Exchange and Its Impact on Global Understanding," in *International Dialogue Of Civilization And Tolerance Conference-Abu Dhabi 2024*, 2024; Thulisile Ennie, and Thuli Nhlapho. Nhlapho, *Imbali Yemangcamane*. Maskew Miller Longman,., 1996.

²⁶ Nicholas W Jankowski and Klaus Bruhn Jensen, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research* (Routledge, 2002).

²⁷ Goduka and Chilisa, "Locating African Voices and Worldviews within the Academy. EZiko SiPheka SiSophula: National Library of South Africa's Centre for the Book."

²⁸ Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Sage publications, 2014). P. 7

subsequently theorizing, conceiving, or intuiting ideas-concepts, and formatting them into a logical, systematic, and explanatory scheme." NVivo 12 was utilized to analyze the extensive data collected, owing to the software's capability to handle various types of data. Bazeley and Jackson affirm this by noting that "the efficiencies afforded by software release some of the time used to simply 'manage' data and allow an increased focus on ways of examining the meaning of what is recorded."²⁹

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical clearance policy of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Consequently, all participants signed consent forms and participated voluntarily. Participants who needed to pause the interview to attend to their customers were permitted to do so, with the researcher waiting as necessary. Respondents were assured of anonymity, and it was emphasized that the information collected would be used solely for research purposes.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The findings are presented in line with the objective of this article. The objective of this article is to suggest processes and draw lessons of local and rural innovation in anti-poverty policy formulation, assessment and implementation from the two South African municipalities. Thus, the findings and analysis will provide details of the institutions, stakeholders, or structures and the type of resources they provided in line with their policies, laws, or regulations. The type of resources they provided in line with their policies, laws, or regulations to innovatively counter poverty in the face of disasters. Thus, the chapter will show the link between the locally collaborative innovativeness (to enable easy implementation) to policies, laws, or regulations of an institution, stakeholder, or structures to enable the flow of crucial resources they provide to innovatively fight poverty.

Figures 2 and 3 will be crucial in detailing the structures of the institutions involved in the two municipalities while Table 4 will assist in summarising the links between policies, laws, and regulations to the resources they provide in both municipalities of JLM and MLM. The first part of this section will provide short versions that are key to innovatively sustaining livelihoods in the face of disasters and poverty. The second part will present the local municipalities' institutional networks responsible for policymaking and implementation in the form of Figures 2 and 3. The third and final part of this section will provide a summary in the form of a table summarising the links between policies, laws, and regulations to the resources institutions provide in both municipalities of JLM and MLM to counter poverty in the face of disasters.

The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) Act 107 of 1998

NEMA is meant to enforce section 24 of the Bill of Rights, which guards against environmental pollution and abuse. Environmental pollution and abuse are detrimental to the livelihood of the population that lives (both now and in the future) in that environment. This study is particularly interested in NEMA's impact on local livelihood strategies, that is, SMMEs.

Local Traditional Livestock Grazing Rules (LTLGR) and Local Irrigation Rules (LIR)

The local grazing and irrigation rules in both MLM and JLM are crucial rules developed over time and are meant to manage and use limited natural resources in the two municipalities. Water and grazing land are scarce resources that the locals have learned to protect to sustain their livelihoods. The interviews with the respondents from both municipalities have revealed that the communities that fall within the study areas have created rules that respond to most of their livelihood needs. As a result, MLM rules are mostly informed by the need of the local community to protect the grazing land while JLM rules are informed by their need to protect the water resources they need for most of their livelihood strategies, like vegetable farming SMMEs.

²⁹ Kristi Jackson and Pat Bazeley, *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2019), 22.

Jozini Traditional Land Regulations (JTLR)

These are unique local municipalities' land regulations confined to an area. JLM respondents were able to provide insight into their land regulations. Only JLM respondents gave enough information that has been included in this study. That is because at JLM the traditional authority sat down for the interview to provide details that are needed for a well-informed analysis.

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) legislation of 2004 and The National Strategy on the Development and Promotion of Small Business (NSDPSB) in South Africa (1995)

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) and the National Strategy on the Development and Promotion of Small Business (NSDPSB) were enacted to empower previously disadvantaged communities to engage in the local and national economy. Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in the Jozini Local Municipality (JLM) and Matatiele Local Municipality (MLM) have also been influenced by these national legislative measures.

National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Franchising (NSDPF) in SA (2000) and the National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy (NIBUS) (2013)

The National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Franchising (NSDPF) and the National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy (NIBUS) are pivotal legislative measures that facilitate market access for rural Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), irrespective of their size or prior economic participation. Consequently, small informal businesses are not only acknowledged but also empowered to prosper.

Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)'s hotel, lodges and B&B grading regulations; and the Community Tourism Strategy (CTS)

TGCSA and CTS are the regulations and strategies that respondents are convinced have impacted the sustainability of the SMMEs in the rural municipalities of MLM and JLM. MLM tourism officials and the tourism stakeholders interviewed mainly confined their opinions and experiences to the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa's hotel, lodges and B&B grading regulations. JLM officials and tourism stakeholders mainly confined their opinions and experiences to their Community Tourism Strategy.

National Development Plan (NDP)

The NDP strategy is crucial for the implementation of all South African government policies. The analysis of respondents' views and opinions is grounded in their experiences regarding the sustainability of rural SMMEs. This encompasses the NDP's stance on key issues such as job creation, economic growth, and mitigating the impact of inequality on the sustainability of rural SMMEs.

The Industrial Policy Action Plan and the Industrial Policy Action Framework (IPAPF) (2007); Local Government Municipal Systems Act (LGMSA), (Act 32 of 2000) and the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA), (Act 41 of 2003)

The analyses of these policies and regulations are critical in ensuring decisions are taken by the collective in sustaining rural SMMEs. The emphasis is on collective and inclusive governance by all stakeholders within the local government and national government when rendering services to the public.

Disaster Risk Management Act 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002)

This subsection presents an analysis of respondents' shared opinions and experiences regarding the implementation of their local municipality's Disaster Risk Management Act 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002). The respondents' perspectives are based on their experiences concerning the sustainability of rural SMMEs, specifically how key stakeholders are involved in the implementation of the legislation.

Local municipalities are tasked with drafting their Disaster Management policy frameworks, which delineate the roles and resources required. District municipalities and the national government are responsible for ensuring compliance and providing additional resources, such as funding, when necessary. Respondents from both JLM and MLM frequently mentioned the district municipality's role in water provision during recurrent disasters in their respective areas.

Institutional networks for policy making and implementation in local municipalities
Figures 2 and 3 below present the local municipalities' institutional networks responsible for policymaking and implementation.

Table 3: Key definitions for institutions, stakeholders and structures in Figures 2 and 3(Researcher's own compilation)

ANDM: Alfred Nzo District Municipality
B&B: Bed and Breakfast
CSA: Conservation South Africa
DEDEAT: Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DESRAC: Department of Sports Recreation, Arts and Culture
DPE: Department of Public Enterprises
DPW: Department of Public Works
DSBD: Department of Small Business Development
DSBD: Department of Small Business Development
DTI: Department of Trade and Industry
DWA: Department of Water Affairs
ECP DRDAR: Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform
ECP: Eastern Cape Province
ECPTA: Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency
ERS: Environment Rural Solutions
JLM: Jozini Local Municipality
KZN DARD: KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
MLM: Matatiele Local Municipality
SEDA: Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEFA: Small Enterprise Finance Agency
SLA: Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SLF: Sustainable Livelihood Framework
SMME: Small Medium and Macro Enterprise
UDM: Umkhanyakude District Municipality

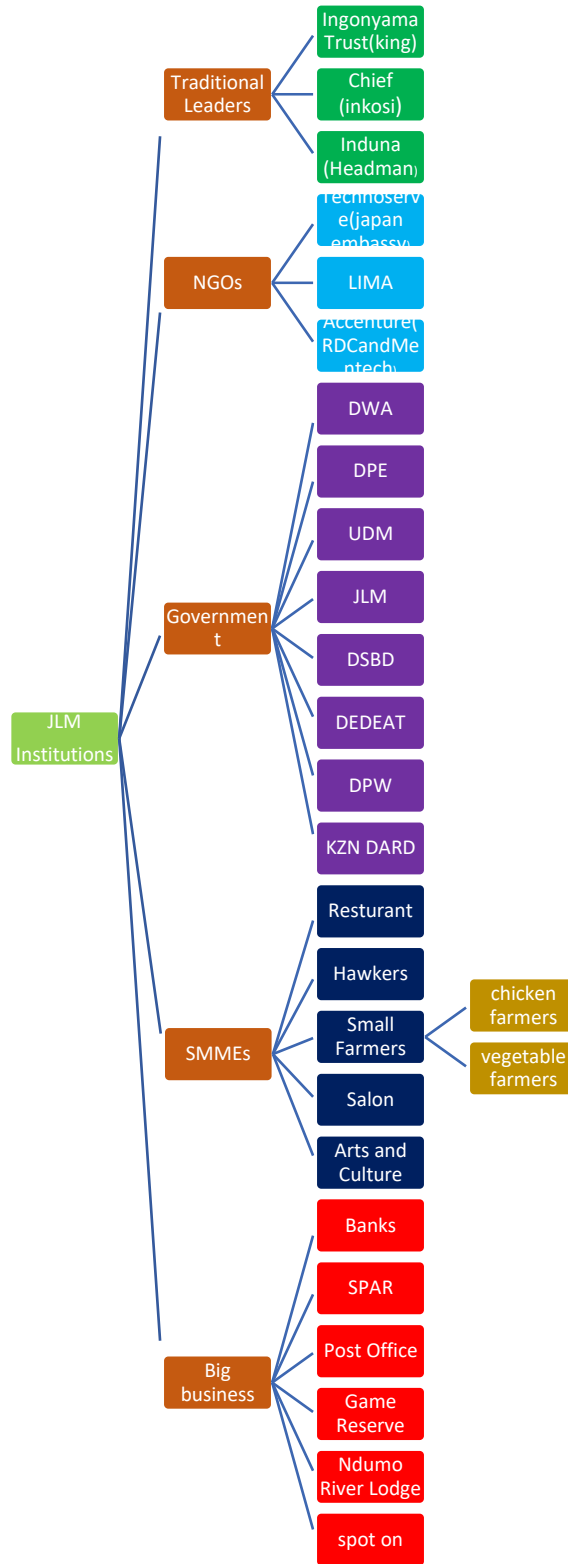


Figure 2. Summary of JLM's institutional networks
 Source: Researcher's analysis

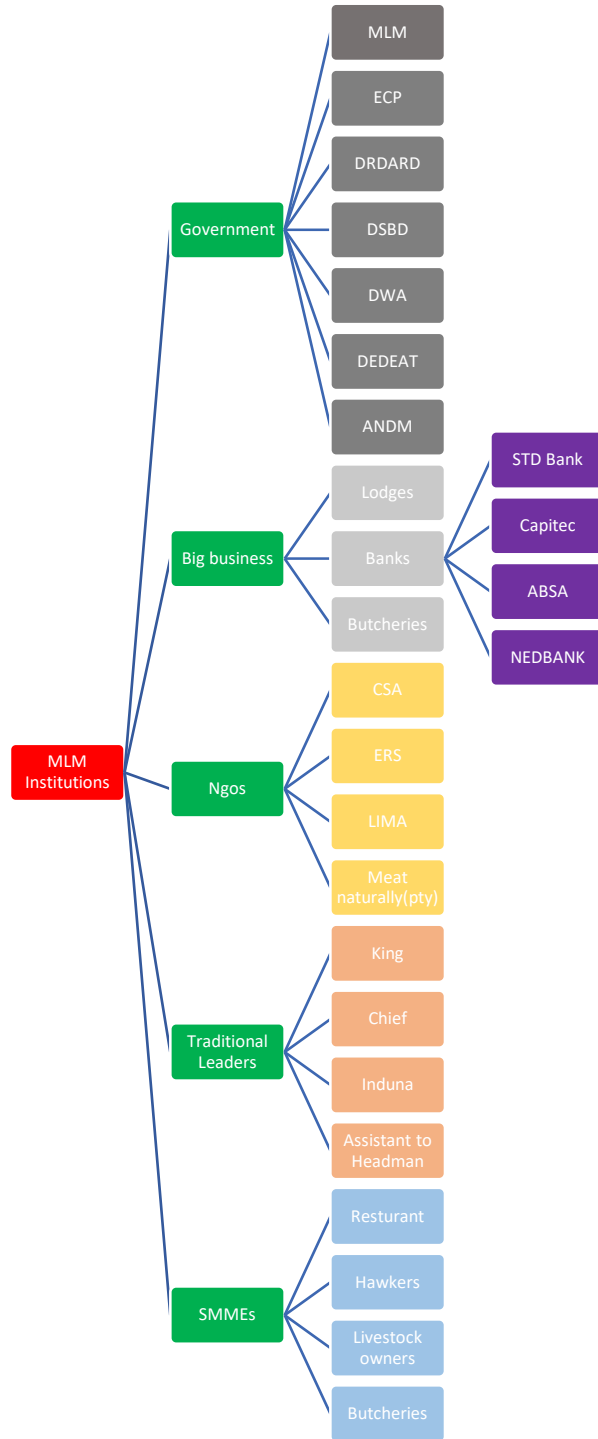


Figure 3: Summary of MLM's institutional networks
 Source: Researcher's analysis

Summary of the links

The summary of the links between institutions, stakeholders or structures as well as the type of resources they provide in line with their policies, laws or regulations is presented below in the form of a diagram.

Table 4. Summary of the links between institutions, stakeholders or structures as well as the type of resources they provide in line with their policies, laws or regulations (Researcher’s own compilation)

Municipality	Leading Institutions, stakeholders or structures	Policy	Key innovative suggestions to enable policymaking and implementation	Main Resource/s provision
MLM	Government (DEDEAT, DRDAR MLM); NGOs (CSA, Lima, Meat Natural PTY and ERS); Traditional Authorities (Local Chief and assistants), Local SMMEs and Local big businesses	NEMA	Introduction of new locally-inspired amendments that give all stakeholders enforcement powers enabling better monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance.	Land/ Natural resource. Equipment and training/physical resource and human resource
MLM and JLM	Concerning LIR: Local small-scale farmers, local chiefs and NGOs (Mnothophansi, Technoserve, LIMA, Accenture sponsored NGOs (i.e., RDC and Mentech) and DARD Concerning LTLGR: Livestock owners, local chiefs and NGOs (CSA, LIMA, ERS and Meat Naturally PTY)	LTLGR and LIR	A clear process to align the LTLGR and LIR processes with those of national departments to attract available grants.	Loans/financial resources. Auction/financial resource
JLM	Local traditional chiefs’ representatives (Induna and Inkosi), citizens (prospective SMME owners), the local municipality (JLM), SMMEs (existing rural SMMEs), existing and prospective big businesses and local NGOs	Jozini Traditional Land Regulations	Collaborative governance that amends local regulations to allow equal opportunities in the allocation of natural resources.	Land/ Natural resource
MLM and JLM	DSBD, DPE, MLM, JLM (local business chambers), SMME representative institutions (these differ in each municipality), Traditional Authorities and NGOs.	BBBEE and NSDPSB	Prior examination and preparations of the beneficiary’s ability to successfully participate in the prospective economic empowerment opportunity.	Training/human resource. Equipment/physical resource

MLM and JLM	DTI, DSBD, SEDA, SEFA, MLM, JLM, SMME representative institutions, NGOs and local retailers.	NSDPF and NIBUS	Inclusive agreements that sustain existing markets and maintain donated physical resources critical for running the local businesses.	Equipment and training/physical resource and human resource
MLM and JLM	DEDEAT, ECPTA, DESRAC, SEDA, ERS (Partly NGO and the private company providing consultancy services), CSA, Mehloing Community Trust, Seed Matat Athletic Club, 56 Tourism Organisation, Matat two point bikers, Women and Tourism, Crafters Association, Local Artists Association, Matatiele Business Chamber.	TGCSA and CTS	Thorough local stakeholder consultations to amend TGCSA and strengthen the CTS of every municipality.	Market/financial resource
MLM and JLM	DEDEAT, ECP DRDAR, KZN DARD, DSBD, MLM, JLM, local NGOs, local SMME representatives and Traditional Authorities	NDP	Step-by-step collaboration guidelines between stakeholders on NDP's three objectives are identified above.	Collaborations /Social resource. Indirect Market/Social and financial resource
MLM and JLM	National and Provincial Government, District municipalities, LG, Traditional Authorities, Local Citizens, local SMMEs' representatives, local big businesses (private and public) and NGOs.	IPAPF, LGMSA and TLGFA	Inside out approach, that is, the rural local municipality must inform the relevant departments about deliberations and suggested amendments to policies	Collaborations /Social resource.
MLM and JLM	All the stakeholders presented from the beginning of this chapter are considered key in ensuring there is enough participation.	LMDRM A	Stop the rural municipalities' practice of outsourcing the drafting of the Disaster Management policy framework and enable all stakeholders to participate in the drafting.	Collaborations /Social resource.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of the findings and analysis is in line with the objective of the article. The objective of this article is to suggest processes and draw lessons from local, rural Innovation in anti-poverty policy formulation, assessment and implementation from the two South African municipalities. Thus, the findings and analysis will provide details of the institutions, stakeholders or structures and the type of resources they provided in line with their policies, laws or regulations. Type of resources they provided

in line with their policies, laws or regulations to innovatively counter poverty in the face of disasters. The discussion draws from the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (with emphasis on the Asset/resources base, see Figure 1) and Institutional Theory's regulative and Cultural Cognitive element to provide lessons that could be useful in other similar rural environments or areas globally. Starting with the provision of financial resources by various institutions, stakeholders or structures to sustain livelihoods in the face of poverty after and during disasters.

The regulative link between the provision of financial resources through institutions and their policies

The findings and analysis in Table 4 show that at both MLM and JLM, various institutions (see Figures 2 and 3 together with Table 4) innovatively provided resources in line with their specific assessment of a national policy or policies; law or laws; and local regulation or regulations. The findings show that to avail financial resources from relevant institutions, stakeholders and structures, various policies were identified and assessed (i.e. their implementation process) to enable them to avail of much-needed loans and grants during disasters. To release much-needed loans and grants from various national and international institutions to enable local businesses to sustain themselves and local livelihoods during disasters. One such example is clear when we examine the processes associated with the LTLGR and LIR (see Table 4). A clear regulative process to align the LTLGR and LIR processes with those of national departments to attract available grants was drafted after many consultations between relevant institutions, stakeholders and structures such as local small-scale farmers, livestock owners, local chiefs and NGOs (CSA, LIMA, ERS, Meat Naturally PTY, Mnothophansi, Technoserve, Accenture sponsored NGOs, which are RDC and Mentech) and DARD.

The local regulatory approach by the institutions that participated in the LTLGR and LIR ensured that available policies, laws and regulations are assessed and channelled in a way that assists small businesses in the area to sustain themselves and their livelihoods in the face of disasters and poverty. The local regulative approach is not only exemplary but is in line with both the SLF (see Figure) and Institutional Theory's regulative and cultural cognitive elements (see Table 1). Toner and Franks, Baffoe and Matsuda attest and argue that the provision of financial resources is vital to the rejuvenation of local livelihoods and poverty alleviation in the face of disasters.³⁰ Khomo, Farisani and Mashau corroborate and add that such provision of financial resources must align with both local and national policies of supporting institutions to be sustainable.³¹

The regulative link between the provision of human resources through institutions and their policies

The findings and analysis in Table 4 show that at both MLM and JLM, various institutions (see figures 2 and 3 together with Table 4) innovatively provided resources in line with their specific assessment of BBBEE and NSDPSB. The findings show that to avail human resources from relevant institutions, stakeholders and structures, BBBEE and NSDPSB policies were amongst those identified and assessed (i.e. their implementation process). They were identified and assessed by the collaborating stakeholders with the view to enabling them to avail much-needed human resources amongst relevant rural active institutions during disasters. To avail much-needed human resources from various national and international institutions to enable local businesses to sustain themselves and local livelihoods during disasters. Key stakeholders such as DSBD, DPE, MLM, JLM (local business chambers), SMME representative institutions (these differ in each municipality), and Traditional Authorities and NGOs (e.g LIMA at MLM and RDC at JLM) were tasked. They were tasked with prior examination and preparations of the beneficiary's ability to successfully participate in the prospective economic empowerment opportunities provided by BBBEE and NSDPSB policies to counter poverty in the face of disasters.

³⁰ Farisani, "The Impact of Social and Institutional Networks in Sustaining South African Rural Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises during the Crisis."

³¹ Toner and Franks, "Putting Livelihoods Thinking into Practice: Implications for Development Management"; Baffoe and Matsuda, "Why Do Rural Communities Do What They Do in the Context of Livelihood Activities? Exploring the Livelihood Priority and Viability Nexus." Khomo, Farisani, and Mashau, "The Financial Legislative Role and Capacity of Municipal Councillors at Ulundi Municipality."

The local regulatory approach by the participating institutions enabled rural small businesses to have the required human resources. To have the required human resources to successfully participate in the prospective economic empowerment opportunities provided by BBBEE and NSDPSB policies to innovatively counter poverty in the face of disasters. The approach is consistent with Farisani's arguments that associate the approach of reconstructive policies with effective responses to disasters and poverty in rural areas.³² Moreover, the approach by the participating institutions is in line with both the SLF (see Figure 1) and Institutional Theory's regulative and cultural cognitive elements (see Table 1).

The regulative link between the provision of natural resources through institutions and their policies

Both Jozini Traditional Land Regulations and The NEMA Act 107 of 1998 provide crucial information about how natural resources are managed in line with South African local rural regulations and national policies. Jozini Traditional Land Regulations are unique local municipalities' land regulations confined to JLM while NEMA is meant to enforce section 24 of the Bill of Rights which guards against environmental pollution and abuse. Environmental pollution and abuse are detrimental to the livelihood of the population that lives (both now and in the future) in that environment.

The summary of findings and analysis presented in Table 4 show that at both MLM and JLM, various institutions (see figures 2 and 3 together with Table 4) innovatively provided natural resources in line with their specific assessment of Traditional Land Regulations and NEMA policy. Traditional Land Regulations and NEMA policy were identified and assessed by the collaborating stakeholders with the view of enabling them to avail and maintain much-needed natural resources in the form of land. The rural land is mainly owned by the Traditional Authority/Ingoyama Trust at JLM; the local chiefs and to some extent the local municipality at MLM during disasters. The three above-mentioned institutions led the provision of land while the other national departments and NGOs participated in maintaining the land to ensure its sustainability and the sustainability of livelihoods during disasters. Government departments provided vaccines while NGOs subcontracted and acted as implementation partners. NGOs were able to implement and maintain due to their vast presence in rural areas as opposed to government departments. Key national stakeholders such as the Government (DEDEAT, DRDAR MLM); NGOs (CSA, Lima, Meat Natural PTY and ERS); Traditional Authorities (Local chiefs and assistants), Local SMMEs and Local big businesses participated.

The approach by the participating institutions, structures and relevant stakeholders enabled rural small businesses to have the required natural resources to successfully avail the land and maintain it during disasters. Avail the land and maintain it during disasters, thereby sustaining themselves together with local livelihoods in the face of disasters and imminent poverty. Zhou et al. affirm and posit that such disasters, if not mitigated, do impact livelihoods negatively and exacerbate poverty prevalent in most world rural areas.³³ The approach is in line with both the SLF (see Figure 1) and Institutional Theory's regulative and cultural cognitive elements (see Table 1).

The regulative link between the provision of physical resources through institutions and their policies

The NSDPF in South Africa (2000) and the NIBUS (2013) are pivotal legislative measures. They facilitate market access for rural SMMEs, irrespective of their size or prior economic participation. Consequently, small informal businesses are not only acknowledged but also empowered to prosper. The findings show that such empowerment to informal rural small businesses often requires physical resources donations such as tractors and cold rooms (to store harvested vegetables before being transported to the market in good conditions). Such physical resources often need local NGOs and local municipalities to properly maintain them since the informal small businesses might not be able to carry out the maintenance themselves at first.

³² Farisani, "Assessing the Impact of Policies in Sustaining Rural Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises during COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa."

³³ Zhou et al., "Asset Smoothing and Consumption Smoothing: Disaster-coping Strategies in Noncontiguous and Contiguous Destitute Areas."

The findings and analysis in Table 4 show that at both MLM and JLM, various institutions (see figures 2 and 3 together with Table 4) innovatively provided physical resources in line with their specific assessment of NSDPF and NIBUS policies. NSDPF and NIBUS policies were identified and assessed by the collaborating stakeholders with the view of enabling them to avail and maintain much-needed physical resources amongst relevant rural active institutions during disasters. To avail and maintain much-needed physical resources from various local, national and international institutions to enable local businesses to sustain themselves and local livelihoods during disasters. Key stakeholders such as DTI, DSBD, SEDA, SEFA, MLM, JLM, SMME representative institutions, NGOs, as well as local retailers, participated.

The local regulatory approach by the participating institutions, structures and relevant stakeholders enabled rural small businesses to have the required physical resources. To have the required physical resources to successfully trade and sustain themselves together with local livelihoods in the face of disasters and encroaching poverty. The local regulative approach is in line with both the SLF (see Figure 1) and Institutional Theory's regulative and cultural cognitive elements (see Table 1). Farisani attests and points out that SLF allows for the examination of the impact of institutions, their policies, and processes on the livelihoods of people.³⁴ Ramabodu., Mashau., & Farisani; Palthe affirm and assert that Institutional Theory assists, in that it lays bare the implications of institutional laws and their policies.³⁵

The regulative link between the provision of social resources through institutions and their policies

The findings and analyses section reveals (see Table 4) the significance of various local regulations and national policies in the provision of social resources from participating institutions during disasters and poverty alleviation undertakings. Such various local regulations and national policies include the Disaster Risk Management Act 2002 (Act no.57 of 2002); The Industrial Policy Action Plan and the IPAPF (2007); LGMSA (Act 32 of 2000) and the TLGFA (Act 41 of 2003); and the NDP.

For this article and in line with the study's objective as outlined above, the findings show that the emphasis is on the availability of social resources (in the form of physical meetings and other forms of communications) in the implementation of the local municipality's Disaster Risk Management Act 2002 (Act No.57 of 2002). For the three interconnected policies and regulations (IPAPF; LGMSA and the TLGFA), the emphasis is on the collective and inclusive governance by all stakeholders within the local government and national government when rendering services to the public. Finally, the NDP's position in institutional collaborative efforts such as job creation, growing the economy and reducing the impact of disasters on rural SMMEs and livelihoods is of primary importance. The summary of the findings and analysis presented in Table 4 shows that at both MLM and JLM, various institutions (see figures 2 and 3 together with Table 4) innovatively provided social resources in line with their specific assessment. Their specific assessment of relevant legislation and policies to enable excellent service delivery during disasters. Moreover, the social resources tools and processes employed by relevant institutions in line with relevant regulations and policies were widely credited by the respondents with local job creation, growing the economy and reducing the impact of disasters on rural SMMEs and livelihoods.

The approach by the participating institutions, structures and relevant stakeholders enabled rural small businesses to have the required social resources. To have the required social resources to successfully avail the other resources mentioned above and to sustain the provision during and after disasters. The approach is consistent with those of Smyth and Vancly concerning SLF and Scott's writings concerning Institutional Theory's regulative and cultural cognitive elements.³⁶ Amongst those

³⁴ Nephawe, "Approaches for Deviant English Competence Repair in Written Research Proposals at a Rural-Based University."

³⁵ Ramabodu, Mashau, and Farisani, "Assessing Innovation and Entrepreneurship Transformations in Two South African Universities amidst the COVID-19 Crisis"; Palthe, "Regulative, Normative, and Cognitive Elements of Organizations: Implications for Managing Change."

³⁶ Eddie Smyth and Frank Vancly, "The Social Framework for Projects: A Conceptual but Practical Model to Assist in Assessing, Planning and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects," *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 35, no. 1 (2017): 65–80; Rebecca Rogers et al., "Critical Discourse Analysis in Education: A Review of the Literature, 2004 to 2012," *Review of Educational Research* 86, no. 4 (2016): 1192–1226.

who corroborate and highlight the exemplary innovative nature of social resources displayed in the collaborative efforts by the above-mentioned institutions are Farisani, Khomo, et al. and Zhou et al.³⁷

Discussion Summary

The findings revealed that national policies are only as good (in their provision of resources during disasters and poverty alleviation) as their interpretations and implementation by the collective. The collective is the various institutions locally (e.g. local municipalities, local chiefs/traditional authority), nationally (e.g. DEDEAT) and internationally (e.g. Accenture). Thus, rural-based institutions such as local municipalities and NGOs are key in leading the policy assessment and implementation to manage disasters and alleviate poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the SLF (see Figure 1), it is recommended that structures such as local municipalities and NGOs in poverty and disaster-ravaged rural areas be given the bulk of the resources when fighting local rural disasters. As has been revealed in the South African rural municipalities, these two institutions or structures know their communities better than national governments and most international donors. Future research should focus on the use of Artificial Intelligence to strengthen rural data sharing between relevant structures or stakeholders. Relevant structures or stakeholders work together during and post-disaster to determine the extent of the resources needed during and post-disaster to effectively avert poverty ravaging rural areas afterwards.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this article is to suggest processes and draw lessons of local, and rural innovation in anti-poverty policy formulation, assessment and implementation from the two South African municipalities. In drawing such lessons, we assessed the provision of resources by various institutions in line with local regulations and national policies. SLF and Institutional Theory's regulative and cultural cognitive elements were critical in understanding the local rural-led innovative processes in the provision of resources in line with relevant regulations and policies to avert the sting of poverty due to disasters. Therefore, it is clear that local regulative processes are the best innovative approach to avail resources (needed during disasters) and implement national and local laws or regulations that are crucial during disasters. Other rural municipalities within and outside South Africa (especially developing countries) can learn from the approaches presented in this article and sustain their livelihoods during disasters.

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³⁷ Farisani, "Empowering South African Rural Stakeholders to Participate in the Legal Cannabis Market: A Sustainable Livelihoods Approach"; Khomo, Farisani, and Mashau, "The Financial Legislative Role and Capacity of Municipal Councillors at Ulundi Municipality"; Zhou et al., "Asset Smoothing and Consumption Smoothing: Disaster-coping Strategies in Noncontiguous and Contiguous Destitute Areas."

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