

## Gerontocracy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the Public Sector Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Perennial Problem

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected a proliferation of countries in an unimaginable way and South Africa is no exception. This outbreak demands a shift in knowledge, power and governance – particularly in how the public sector delivers public goods and services. The pandemic exposed the reluctance of aging government officials to adopt new ways of governance aimed at expediting service delivery. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced governments across the spectrum to introduce policies, adaptations, and innovations to meet the demands brought about by the pandemic. Government departments are required to be dynamic in response to the changing needs of the citizenry. Its failure reaffirms the decline in the running of the affairs of the state. The public sector is designed to be a fruitful agent of change and development in society. To remain as such, it is pivotal that it adapts to the dynamic environment that presents unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic and the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). The paper uses a literary analysis approach to explore the readiness of aging public servants in embracing the 4IR. The context of its consideration is the South African public sector amid the COVID-19 pandemic period. A theoretical framework on the phenomenon is explored. Summation and recommendations are provided.

**Keywords:** gerontocracy, 4IR, public sector, COVID-19 pandemic, aging public servants

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