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## The intersection of Maslow's theory and African public policy implementation: Insights and perspectives

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### Abstract

This study examines the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to public policy formulation and implementation in African nations, with a focus on Rwanda, South Africa, and Kenya. It analyzes how these countries have aligned their policies with different levels of Maslow's hierarchy, from addressing basic physiological needs to fostering self-actualization and societal progress. The research explores Rwanda's comprehensive post-genocide policy framework, South Africa's efforts to address apartheid legacies, and Kenya's struggle to balance economic growth with basic needs fulfillment. Through these case studies, the study demonstrates the value of applying Maslow's theory to guide policymakers in prioritizing and addressing diverse societal needs while pursuing broader development goals. The analysis reveals both successes and persistent challenges in areas such as social cohesion, economic inequality, and rapid urbanization. The study concludes by offering recommendations for a more holistic, context-specific, and sustainable approach to need-based policy formulation in African countries, emphasizing the importance of inclusive governance, long-term vision, and regional cooperation.

**Keywords:** Maslow's Theory; Hierarchy of Needs; African Public Policy Implementation; Nudges; Psychological Theories

### 1. Introduction

The intersection of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and African public policy implementation offers a unique lens through which to examine the complex challenges and innovative solutions emerging in the continent's development landscape. This study explores the integration of Maslow's theoretical principles into policy frameworks across African nations, with a particular focus on Rwanda, Kenya, and South Africa. It investigates how these countries have addressed fundamental human needs while simultaneously pursuing economic growth and social progress.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a seminal psychological theory proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943, posits that human needs are organized in a hierarchical structure, progressing from basic physiological requirements to higher-order needs such as self-actualization (Maslow, 1943; 1954). This theoretical framework has transcended its original psychological domain, influencing diverse fields including management, education, and public policy (Kaur, 2013; Milheim, 2012; Zalenski & Raspa, 2006). In the African context, where nations grapple with the dual imperatives of meeting basic needs and fostering economic development, Maslow's paradigm provides a valuable heuristic for comprehending and addressing these multifaceted challenges.

This research examines the adaptation and application of Maslow's theory within localized African contexts, analyzing policies that concurrently address multiple tiers of needs. The study focuses on case studies from Rwanda, Kenya, and

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South Africa, nations that have demonstrated significant policy innovation while confronting distinct historical and socio-economic challenges. Through a comprehensive analysis of policies in domains such as food security, public safety, governance, education, and economic development, this investigation aims to elucidate the implicit and explicit incorporation of Maslow's theoretical principles into African public policy.

The study critically evaluates the successes, challenges, and ongoing debates surrounding these policy implementations. It examines the evolutionary trajectory of Maslow's theory in African public policy, considering its responsiveness to dynamic social, economic, and political landscapes. Furthermore, it explores the inherent tension between addressing immediate basic needs and pursuing long-term development objectives, a balance that many African nations strive to achieve (Seekings, 2014; Kimenyi et al., 2016).

This research seeks to contribute substantively to the broader discourse on development in Africa, offering nuanced insights into innovative policy approaches that holistically address human needs and societal progress. It aims to highlight the unique perspectives that emerge from the adaptation of Western psychological theories to African contexts, potentially yielding valuable lessons for other developing regions and contributing to global discussions on sustainable development and human-centered policymaking (Shafir, 2013; Oliver, 2013; Bhargava & Loewenstein, 2015).

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## 2. Brief Overview of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, first proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation," is a psychological theory that describes human needs in a hierarchical format (Maslow, 1943). The theory posits that individuals are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to more advanced needs. Maslow initially conceptualized five levels of needs: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Later, he expanded the model to include cognitive, aesthetic, and transcendence needs (Maslow, 1970).

At the base of the hierarchy are physiological needs, which include basic survival requirements such as food, water, shelter, and sleep. Once these are satisfied, individuals become concerned with safety needs, encompassing personal security, financial stability, health, and well-being. The third level involves love and belonging needs, reflecting the human desire for interpersonal relationships, friendships, and a sense of connection with others. Esteem needs, the fourth level, relate to the desire for respect, self-esteem, status, and recognition (McLeod, 2007).

The highest level in the original hierarchy is self-actualization, which refers to the realization of one's full potential and the pursuit of personal growth and peak experiences. Maslow described this level as "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1954, p. 92). It's important to note that while the hierarchy is often depicted as a rigid pyramid, Maslow himself never used this representation and acknowledged that the order of needs might vary based on individual circumstances (Bridgman et al., 2019).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has gained widespread popularity and influence across various fields since its introduction in 1943. Its intuitive nature and broad applicability have led to its adoption in psychology, management, education, healthcare, and social work, among others (Kenrick et al., 2010). In business and organizational psychology, the theory has been used to understand employee motivation and develop management strategies (Kaur, 2013). Educators have applied the hierarchy to understand student motivation and create more effective learning environments (Milheim, 2012). In healthcare, the theory has informed patient care approaches and health promotion strategies (Zalenski & Raspa, 2006). Marketing professionals have utilized the hierarchy to understand consumer behavior and tailor advertising strategies (Tikkanen, 2007). Even in fields such as urban planning and public policy, Maslow's theory has been applied to understand community needs and prioritize development initiatives (Scheller, 2016).

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## 3. The Relevance of Psychological Theories in Public Policy

The integration of psychological theories into public policy formulation and implementation has garnered significant attention in recent years, reflecting a growing recognition of the pivotal role human behavior and motivation play in policy efficacy (Shafir, 2013). This interdisciplinary approach, often termed "behavioral public policy," leverages insights from cognitive and social psychology to enhance policy design, implementation, and evaluation (Oliver, 2013). The emergence of this field represents a paradigm shift in policy-making, moving beyond traditional economic models of rational choice towards a more nuanced understanding of human decision-making processes (Bhargava & Loewenstein, 2015). Policymakers aim to create more targeted, effective, and sustainable interventions that account for the complexities of human behavior in real-world contexts, leveraging psychological principles (John et al., 2011). This

approach has been particularly influential in areas such as health promotion, environmental conservation, and financial decision-making, where individual choices significantly impact societal outcomes (Halpern, 2016). Moreover, the application of psychological theories in public policy has fostered a more empirical approach to governance, emphasizing evidence-based interventions and rigorous evaluation methods (Sunstein, 2020).

The intersection of psychology and public policy has been particularly salient in the domain of behavioral economics, a field that has significantly influenced policy formulation and implementation strategies. A seminal contribution to this area is Kahneman and Tversky's prospect theory (1979), which has fundamentally altered our understanding of decision-making processes under conditions of risk and uncertainty. This theoretical framework has challenged traditional economic models of rational choice by elucidating systematic biases in human judgment and decision-making. The theory's applications in public policy have been far-reaching, informing interventions across diverse sectors such as healthcare, retirement planning, and environmental conservation (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

One of the most prominent policy tools to emerge from behavioral economics is the concept of "nudges," which has gained considerable traction among policymakers globally. Nudges are interventions designed to alter behavior in predictable ways without forbidding any options or significantly changing economic incentives (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). This approach represents a paradigm shift in policy design, offering a middle ground between laissez-faire approaches and more coercive regulatory measures. Governments worldwide have increasingly adopted nudge strategies to promote desirable behaviors while preserving individual autonomy (Benartzi et al., 2017). The efficacy of nudges has been demonstrated across various policy domains.

In healthcare, for instance, nudges have been employed to promote healthier food choices and increase vaccination rates (Matjasko et al., 2016). An example can be drawn from the United Kingdom. UK has been at the forefront of adopting nudge strategies in public policy, particularly through its Behavioral Insights Team (BIT), colloquially known as the "Nudge Unit," established in 2010 (Halpern, 2015). This pioneering initiative has implemented numerous behavioral interventions across various policy domains, with notable success in healthcare. For instance, in addressing the challenge of missed hospital appointments, the BIT redesigned appointment letters to include the specific costs incurred by the National Health Service (NHS) for each missed appointment. This simple nudge reduced missed appointments by 25%, potentially saving the NHS millions of pounds annually (Hallsworth et al., 2015). In another healthcare application, the team tackled the issue of antibiotic over prescription by sending letters to general practitioners who were prescribing antibiotics at higher rates than their peers. This intervention led to a significant reduction in unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions, demonstrating the power of social norms in influencing professional behavior (Hallsworth et al., 2016). The UK's approach has not been limited to healthcare; similar nudge strategies have been successfully applied in areas such as tax compliance, organ donation, and energy conservation (Service et al., 2014). The success of these initiatives has not only improved policy outcomes in the UK but has also inspired other countries to establish their own behavioral insight units, exemplifying the growing global influence of behavioral economics in public policy.

Further, in the realm of financial decision-making, nudges have been utilized to enhance retirement savings through strategies such as automatic enrollment in pension plans (Chetty et al., 2014). The United States provides a compelling example of how nudges have been utilized to enhance retirement savings, particularly through the implementation of automatic enrollment in 401(k) pension plans. This policy shift was largely influenced by the findings of behavioral economists and was codified in the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (Madrian & Shea, 2001). Prior to this legislation, employees typically had to actively choose to participate in their employer-sponsored retirement plans. However, recognizing the power of default options, the Act encouraged employers to automatically enroll employees in 401(k) plans unless they explicitly opted out. This nudge strategy leverages the behavioral tendency towards inertia, making saving the path of least resistance. The impact of this policy has been substantial. A study by Vanguard (2018) found that participation rates in 401(k) plans with automatic enrollment were 92%, compared to 57% in plans with voluntary enrollment. Moreover, the policy has been particularly effective in increasing participation among younger, lower-income workers who were previously less likely to save for retirement (Chetty et al., 2014). The success of this approach has led to its expansion, with some states implementing auto-enrollment Individual Retirement Account (IRA) programs for workers whose employers do not offer retirement plans (Iwry & John, 2009). The U.S. experience with automatic enrollment in retirement savings plans exemplifies how behavioral insights can be effectively translated into policy to address significant societal challenges, such as inadequate retirement savings.

Additionally, environmental policy has also benefited from nudge interventions, with applications ranging from energy conservation to waste reduction (Allcott & Mullainathan, 2010). Japan offers a noteworthy example of how nudge interventions have been successfully applied to environmental policy, particularly in the realm of energy conservation. In the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, Japan faced significant energy shortages, prompting the

government to implement innovative strategies to reduce energy consumption. One of the most successful initiatives was the "Cool Biz" campaign, which can be considered a large-scale nudge intervention (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). The campaign encouraged businesses to set air conditioning temperatures higher (around 28°C or 82°F) and promoted more casual, cooler attire in the workplace during summer months. By changing the social norm around office attire and thermostat settings, the government effectively nudged both individuals and organizations towards more energy-efficient behaviors without mandating specific actions (Ida et al., 2021). Furthermore, Japan has implemented nudge strategies in waste reduction. The city of Fukuoka, for instance, introduced clear garbage bags, making household waste visible to neighbors. This social nudge leveraged peer pressure to encourage proper waste sorting and recycling (Nomura et al., 2011). On a national scale, Japan has also employed nudges in its efforts to reduce plastic bag usage. Rather than an outright ban, many retailers initially asked customers if they needed a bag and charged a small fee, nudging consumers towards bringing their own reusable bags (Zen et al., 2013). These interventions demonstrate how Japan has effectively integrated behavioral insights into its environmental policies, achieving significant reductions in energy consumption and waste production through subtle changes to the choice architecture faced by citizens and businesses.

However, the widespread adoption of behavioral economics principles in public policy is not without controversy. Critics argue that nudges may be paternalistic and potentially undermine individual autonomy (Rebonato, 2014). Moreover, questions have been raised about the long-term efficacy of nudge interventions and their potential for unintended consequences (Loewenstein & Chater, 2017). Despite these debates, the influence of behavioral economics on public policy continues to grow, fostering a more nuanced and empirically grounded approach to governance.

Social psychology theories have become powerful catalysts for shaping public policy, particularly in addressing complex societal issues. A prime example is Allport's contact hypothesis, which has significantly influenced policymaking aimed at reducing intergroup conflict and fostering social cohesion (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This theory, which suggests that meaningful interpersonal contact between different groups can mitigate prejudice, has been a cornerstone in crafting policies for diverse societies. In post-apartheid South Africa, policymakers directly translated this theory into action, demonstrating the profound impact social psychology can have on governance. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1996 was a bold policy move, rooted in the principles of the contact hypothesis. Policymakers operationalized the theory's core tenets through the creation of a formal, government-sanctioned platform for victims and perpetrators to interact. This policy not only facilitated healing but also served as a national-scale experiment in intergroup contact. The influence of social psychology extended further into education policy. South African lawmakers guided by research, on early formation of racial attitudes, mandated school desegregation. This policy decision was a direct application of the contact hypothesis, aiming to create daily opportunities for interracial interaction among youth. Policymakers sought to break down stereotypes and cultivate understanding from an early age through structuring the educational environment to foster diverse student bodies.

In education policy, theories of motivation and learning, such as Dweck's growth mindset theory, have influenced teaching practices and curriculum design (Rattan et al., 2015). Dweck's growth mindset theory has significantly shaped education policy, demonstrating the profound impact psychological research can have on public sector decision-making. This theory, which holds that effort and learning can develop intelligence and abilities, has influenced policy at various levels of government. For instance, in the United States, several states have incorporated growth mindset principles into their educational standards and teacher training programs. The California Department of Education, for example, has integrated growth mindset concepts into its social-emotional learning guidelines, mandating that schools foster environments that encourage effort and perseverance. At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education has funded research and initiatives to promote growth mindset interventions in schools nationwide. In the United Kingdom, the Education Endowment Foundation, a government-backed charity, has invested in large-scale trials of growth mindset interventions, directly influencing how schools approach student motivation and achievement. These policy decisions reflect a shift from traditional fixed ability-based approaches to more dynamic, effort-focused educational strategies.

Moreover, in the realm of health policy, psychological theories have been instrumental in developing effective public health campaigns and interventions. The Health Belief Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior have been widely used to design strategies for promoting healthy behaviors and disease prevention (Glanz et al., 2008). These theories help policymakers understand the factors that influence health-related decisions and behaviors, enabling more targeted and effective interventions. The application of psychological theories in health policy has significantly shaped public health campaigns and interventions globally (Glanz et al., 2008). A prime example is Australia's "Slip! Slop! Slap!" (later expanded to "Slip! Slop! Slap! Seek! Slide!") skin cancer prevention campaign, launched in 1981 by Cancer Council Victoria. This campaign, firmly grounded in the Health Belief Model, addressed key psychological factors influencing sun protection behaviors (Glanz et al., 2015). It educated Australians about their susceptibility to skin cancer, highlighted its severity, emphasized the benefits of protection, minimized perceived barriers to action, provided

memorable cues, and fostered self-efficacy. The campaign's success led to nationwide adoption and influenced multi-level policies, including school "No Hat, No Play" rules, increased shade in public spaces, and strengthened sunscreen regulations. Its impact was substantial, with melanoma rates decreasing by 5% in men and 10% in women between 1982 and 2010, with even steeper declines in younger age groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Rattan et al., 2015).

Environmental policies have significantly benefited from psychological insights, particularly in addressing climate change and promoting sustainable practices. Theories of pro-environmental behavior, such as Stern's Value-Belief-Norm Theory, have informed policy design by highlighting the complex interplay between personal values, beliefs about environmental threats, and the activation of personal norms (Stern, 2000). To illustrate this, let me once more refer to Japan's "Cool Biz" campaign. This initiative, grounded in psychological principles of social norms and behavior change, aimed to reduce energy consumption in offices during summer months. The campaign encouraged businesses to set air conditioning temperatures at 28°C (82.4°F) and promoted a more casual dress code, allowing employees to forgo suits and ties. The policy effectively shifted norms around workplace attire and energy use through leveraging social influence and addressing cultural barriers. The government led by example, with high-profile politicians, including the Prime Minister, adopting the casual dress code. This visibility helped normalize the behavior change. The campaign's success was notable: in its first year, it resulted in a reduction of 460,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, equivalent to the yearly emissions of about 1 million households.

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#### **4. Applying Maslow's Theory to African Public Policy Sectors**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a seminal theory in psychology, offers a valuable framework for understanding human motivation and well-being that can be applied to various sectors of public policy in Africa. This theory, first proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943, suggests that human needs are organized in a hierarchical structure, ranging from basic physiological needs to higher-level needs for self-actualization (Maslow, 1943; 1954). When applied to African public policy, Maslow's theory can provide insights into prioritizing and addressing the diverse needs of populations across the continent.

##### **4.1 Health and Food Security Policies (Physiological Needs)**

Applying Maslow's Theory to African Public Policy Sectors, particularly in Health and Food Security Policies, demonstrates how addressing physiological needs forms the foundation for societal development. In Ethiopia, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) initiated in 2005, stands as a prime example of Maslow's theory applied to address physiological needs through public policy. This innovative program offers food and cash transfers to chronically food-insecure households, effectively tackling immediate nutritional requirements while simultaneously fostering long-term food security and resilience (Berhane et al., 2014). The PSNP's multi-layered approach combines direct assistance with capacity-building initiatives, enabling beneficiaries to gradually transition from aid dependence to self-sufficiency. Through its targeted interventions, the program has significantly reduced vulnerability to food shortages, improved dietary diversity, and enhanced overall household well-being. Moreover, the PSNP has demonstrated a ripple effect on local economies, stimulating agricultural productivity and market development. This comprehensive strategy aligns seamlessly with Maslow's emphasis on fulfilling basic physiological needs as a prerequisite for higher-level personal and societal development, showcasing how well-designed policies can address immediate survival needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable progress in food security and socio-economic stability.

Similarly, Rwanda's community-based health insurance scheme, Mutuelle de Santé, exemplifies the application of Maslow's theory to public health policy, addressing fundamental physiological needs through improved healthcare access. This innovative program has revolutionized Rwanda's healthcare landscape, significantly expanding medical service availability to a broader population segment (Nyandekwe et al., 2014). Mutuelle de Santé operates on a principle of community solidarity, pooling resources to provide affordable health coverage for all members. The scheme's implementation has led to dramatic increases in healthcare utilization rates, substantial reductions in out-of-pocket expenses, and marked improvements in overall population health outcomes. Notably, the program has contributed to decrease maternal and child mortality rates, enhanced management of chronic diseases, and improved preventive care practices. This comprehensive approach to healthcare provision aligns perfectly with Maslow's emphasis on fulfilling basic health needs as a crucial foundation for individual and societal development. The success of Mutuelle de Santé demonstrates how targeted health policies can effectively address physiological needs, creating a solid base for citizens to pursue higher-level aspirations and contribute more fully to national development.

Nigeria's National Food Security Programme exemplifies the application of Maslow's theory to address fundamental physiological needs through strategic agricultural policy. This comprehensive initiative aims to bolster food availability and accessibility across the nation, tackling the core issue of nutritional security (Olomola & Nwafor, 2018). The

program adopts a multifaceted approach, encompassing efforts to enhance agricultural productivity, streamline food distribution networks, and improve storage facilities. Through the introduction of advanced farming techniques, provision of high-yield crop varieties, and modernization of irrigation systems, the initiative has significantly boosted crop yields. Simultaneously, it has revamped transportation infrastructure and market linkages, ensuring efficient delivery of produce from farms to consumers. The program's holistic strategy extends to addressing post-harvest losses through improved storage technologies and practices. This approach aligns seamlessly with Maslow's hierarchy, addressing basic physiological requirements as a foundation for broader societal development and individual self-actualization. The program's success demonstrates how well-crafted policies can effectively tackle fundamental human needs, creating a stable platform for national progress and individual well-being.

Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP) stands as a testament to effective policy implementation addressing fundamental nutritional needs, aligning with Maslow's emphasis on physiological requirements. This innovative initiative has revolutionized food security in Malawi through strategic support for smallholder farmers (Dorward & Chirwa, 2012). The FISP provides subsidized agricultural inputs, including fertilizers and improved seed varieties, enabling resource-constrained farmers to significantly boost their crop yields. This approach has led to remarkable increases in maize production, Malawi's staple food, transforming the country from a net food importer to achieving self-sufficiency in favorable years. The program's impact extends beyond immediate food availability, fostering economic growth in rural areas and reducing vulnerability to climate-related shocks. This comprehensive strategy not only addresses the pressing issue of food insecurity but also lays a solid foundation for addressing higher-level needs in Maslow's hierarchy. The success of Malawi's FISP illustrates the profound impact of targeted agricultural policies in fulfilling basic physiological needs, thereby creating a springboard for broader societal development and individual well-being.

In conclusion, these case studies from Ethiopia, Rwanda, Nigeria, and Malawi demonstrate the powerful application of Maslow's theory to African public policy, particularly in addressing fundamental physiological needs through health and food security initiatives. Each program showcases how well-designed policies can effectively tackle basic human requirements while simultaneously laying the groundwork for broader societal development. The Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia, Mutuelle de Santé in Rwanda, the National Food Security Programme in Nigeria, and the Farm Input Subsidy Program in Malawi all illustrate the transformative potential of targeted interventions that align with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. These examples underscore the importance of a holistic approach to policy-making in Africa, one that recognizes the interconnectedness of basic needs fulfillment and long-term societal progress, ultimately paving the way for sustainable development and improved quality of life across the continent.

#### **4.2 Safety and Security Policies (Safety Needs)**

The application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to African public policy sectors, particularly safety and security policies, illuminates the critical role of addressing safety needs in fostering societal stability and facilitating developmental progress. Within conflict resolution and peacekeeping initiatives, law enforcement and judicial system, numerous African nations have implemented policy frameworks aligning with Maslow's emphasis on safety as a fundamental human requirement. These interventions demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship between security and societal advancement, recognizing that a stable environment is prerequisite for pursuing higher-order needs. Such safety-oriented policies reflect a sophisticated adaptation of Maslow's theory to complex, post-conflict scenarios, often integrating local cultural contexts and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms with modern peacekeeping strategies. This approach not only aims to mitigate immediate security concerns but also strives to create conditions conducive to long-term peace and stability, laying the groundwork for addressing higher-level needs within Maslow's hierarchy. The incorporation of this theoretical framework into African safety and security policies underscores a paradigm shift towards more holistic, human-centered approaches to conflict resolution and peacekeeping, contributing to broader objectives of sustainable peace, social reconstruction, and national development.

In Sierra Leone, the post-civil war Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) program exemplifies this approach. Launched in 1999, the program focused on disarming combatants, dismantling command structures, and reintegrating ex-fighters into civilian life. This comprehensive strategy not only addressed immediate security concerns but also contributed to long-term peace and stability (Solomon & Ginifer, 2008). Similarly, Rwanda's post-genocide justice and reconciliation efforts, exemplified by the Gacaca courts (established in 2001) and the Abunzi mediation committees (introduced in 2006), demonstrate an innovative application of Maslow's safety needs principle in African public policy. These initiatives represent a comprehensive approach to addressing both immediate safety concerns and long-term societal cohesion. The Gacaca courts, community-based tribunals designed to expedite the trial of genocide suspects, balanced justice with reconciliation by involving local communities directly in the judicial process (Clark, 2010). Building on this foundation, the Abunzi mediation committees further refined Rwanda's approach to community-

level justice by blending traditional dispute resolution methods with formal legal processes (Mutisi, 2012). This integrated system not only addressed immediate needs for justice and conflict resolution but also contributed to long-term healing, unity, and community harmony, offering an accessible and culturally appropriate alternative to conventional courts while fostering sustainable peace.

In Somalia, the Joint Security Committee (JSC) established under the Djibouti Peace Agreement of 2008 illustrates efforts to address safety needs in a fragile state context. The JSC coordinates security efforts between the government and international partners, focusing on rebuilding national security institutions and improving overall safety (Williams, 2020). South Sudan's 2018 revitalized peace agreement demonstrates the application of safety-focused policies in ongoing conflict resolution. The agreement includes provisions for security sector reform, cessation of hostilities, and power-sharing arrangements, aiming to create a foundation of safety upon which further development can occur (Vhumbunu, 2018). In South Africa, the post-apartheid transformation of the police force exemplifies this approach. The South African Police Service Act of 1995 initiated comprehensive reforms, focusing on community-oriented policing and human rights protection. This shift aimed to restore public trust and ensure citizen safety, addressing both immediate security concerns and long-term societal cohesion (Rauch, 2000).

Kenya's judicial reforms, initiated by the 2010 Constitution, demonstrate another application of safety-focused policies. The reforms included measures to enhance judicial independence, improve access to justice, and streamline court processes. These changes aimed to strengthen the rule of law and public confidence in the justice system, thereby contributing to overall societal safety and stability (Ghai & Cottrell, 2013; Kirkby & Murray, 2013). In Nigeria, the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) of 2015 represents a significant effort to reform the criminal justice system. The Act introduced measures to ensure speedy trials, protect victims' rights, and modernize law enforcement procedures. This comprehensive approach addresses both immediate justice delivery concerns and long-term improvements in the legal system's effectiveness (Kekere, 2020).

The application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, particularly the focus on safety needs, in African public policy has led to innovative and comprehensive approaches in post-conflict reconstruction, justice delivery, and security sector reform across various nations. From Sierra Leone's DDR program to Rwanda's Gacaca courts and Abunzi committees, Somalia's Joint Security Committee, South Sudan's peace agreement, South Africa's police reforms, Kenya's judicial transformations, and Nigeria's criminal justice system overhaul, these initiatives demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the critical role of safety in fostering societal stability and facilitating developmental progress. These diverse examples illustrate how African nations have adeptly integrated Maslow's theory with local cultural contexts and traditional mechanisms, creating holistic, human-centered policies that address both immediate security concerns and long-term societal cohesion. These countries have laid crucial foundations for sustainable peace, social reconstruction, and national development, paving the way for addressing higher-level needs within Maslow's hierarchy and contributing to broader objectives of progress and stability across the continent.

#### **4.3 Social Welfare and Community Development Policies (Belonging Needs)**

Further, the application of Maslow's theory of belonging needs to African public policy sectors, particularly in social welfare and community development, has led to innovative approaches that bridge traditional and modern methodologies. These policies aim to foster social cohesion while addressing the complex challenges of rapidly changing societies. For instance, in Ghana, the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) program exemplifies this approach. LEAP provides bi-monthly cash transfers and free national health insurance to extremely poor households, with a particular focus on those caring for elderly members, persons with severe disabilities, and orphaned and vulnerable children. The program's design uniquely blends modern social protection mechanisms with traditional Ghanaian communal support systems. LEAP addresses immediate physiological needs while simultaneously strengthening social bonds. The community-based targeting approach involves local leaders and community members in identifying beneficiaries, reinforcing existing social structures (Roelen et al., 2017). Moreover, LEAP incorporates complementary services such as skills training and financial literacy programs, aiming to build long-term resilience. The program's success has led to its expansion, covering over 330,000 households across all districts in Ghana by 2021. This comprehensive approach not only alleviates poverty but also enhances social inclusion, reinforces community ties, and contributes to broader national development goals, demonstrating the effective application of Maslow's theory in African public policy (Ragno et al., 2016).

Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), initiated in 2005, stands as a landmark initiative in African social welfare policy, exemplifying an innovative application of Maslow's belonging needs principles. The PSNP provides food and cash transfers to chronically food-insecure households in exchange for their participation in public works projects, effectively addressing both immediate sustenance needs and long-term community development. This dual-purpose

approach is particularly noteworthy for its scale and impact, reaching over 8 million beneficiaries across food-insecure regions of Ethiopia. The program's design ingeniously blends modern social protection mechanisms with traditional Ethiopian communal work practices, known as "debo" or "wenfel." This collective labor approach strengthens social bonds, fosters a sense of community ownership, and promotes social cohesion. Moreover, the PSNP includes a Direct Support component for those unable to participate in public works, ensuring comprehensive coverage. The program's success in reducing food insecurity, improving agricultural productivity, and enhancing community resilience has made it a model for other African nations, demonstrating the effectiveness of policies that address both immediate needs and social belonging in the context of chronic poverty and environmental vulnerability (Berhane et al., 2014).

Senegal's Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale (PNBSF), launched in 2013, represents an innovative approach to social welfare that adeptly combines modern social protection mechanisms with traditional family support structures. This conditional cash transfer program targets vulnerable families, offering financial assistance contingent on children's school attendance and regular health check-ups. The PNBSF's design reflects a nuanced understanding of Senegalese society, where family networks have historically played a crucial role in social support. The PNBSF has reached over 300,000 households, significantly impacting poverty reduction and social inclusion. Its implementation involves local communities in beneficiary selection and monitoring, reinforcing existing social ties and promoting community engagement. Moreover, the program's focus on children's education and health aligns with traditional values of family responsibility while adapting them to modern development goals. This approach has shown promising results in improving school enrollment rates, enhancing access to healthcare services, and strengthening family resilience. The PNBSF thus exemplifies how public policies can effectively bridge traditional social structures with contemporary welfare mechanisms, fostering social cohesion while addressing critical development challenges (Raza et al., 2019)

Tanzania's Community Health Fund (CHF), established in 2001, represents an innovative blend of traditional and modern approaches to healthcare financing. This community-based health insurance scheme pools resources at the district level, promoting community ownership and social solidarity while providing access to modern healthcare services. Maluka et al. (2014) highlight the CHF's role in fostering community engagement, noting how it addresses belonging needs by involving local communities in healthcare provision and decision-making. Their research reveals that this approach has strengthened social ties and improved healthcare access, particularly in rural areas. Mtei et al. (2014) contribute to this understanding by analyzing the CHF's progress towards universal health coverage, emphasizing its impact on reducing out-of-pocket health expenditures and improving health outcomes. Their work underscores the scheme's potential in bridging the gap between traditional communal support systems and modern healthcare financing. Despite challenges such as low enrollment rates in some areas, both studies affirm the CHF's significance in integrating Maslow's concept of belonging needs into healthcare policy, demonstrating how community-based approaches can enhance both health outcomes and social cohesion in African contexts.

The application of Maslow's theory of belonging needs in African public policy sectors, particularly in social welfare and community development, has led to innovative approaches that effectively blend traditional and modern methodologies. The case studies from Ghana (LEAP), Ethiopia (PSNP), Senegal (PNBSF), and Tanzania (CHF) demonstrate how these policies address immediate needs while fostering long-term social cohesion and community resilience. These programs showcase a nuanced understanding of local contexts, integrating traditional communal support systems with modern social protection mechanisms. Despite challenges, these approaches have shown promising results in improving access to healthcare, education, and social services, while reinforcing community ties. These examples highlight the potential of policies that address both immediate needs and social belonging, offering valuable lessons for other African nations in designing effective, culturally-appropriate social welfare and community development programs that contribute to broader national development goals.

#### **4.4 Education and Economic Empowerment Policies (Esteem Needs)**

Moreover, the application of Maslow's theory of esteem needs to African public policy sectors, particularly in education and economic empowerment, has led to innovative approaches focusing on skill development and job creation initiatives. These policies aim to foster self-esteem and societal recognition while addressing the complex challenges of unemployment and economic growth in rapidly changing African economies. For instance, in South Africa, the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) exemplifies this approach. Implemented in 2001 and now in its third iteration, the NSDS aims to increase access to high-quality education and training, improve workplace skills, and promote employment growth. The strategy incorporates learnerships, a unique form of apprenticeship that combines theoretical learning with practical work experience, addressing both skill development and job creation (Kraak, 2008). This program has shown success in improving employability and self-esteem among participants, particularly young people and previously disadvantaged groups (Allais, 2012).



Rwanda's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy, launched in 2008, represents another innovative application of esteem needs principles in education and economic empowerment. The policy focuses on aligning vocational training with labor market demands, promoting entrepreneurship, and integrating practical skills into the curriculum. This approach not only addresses immediate skill gaps but also fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment among graduates, contributing to their self-esteem and societal recognition (Musobo & Gaga, 2012). The TVET policy has significantly increased enrollment in vocational programs and improved employment outcomes for graduates (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019).

In Nigeria, the YouWiN! (Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria) program, initiated in 2011, offers a unique approach to economic empowerment and job creation. This entrepreneurship development program provides training, mentoring, and funding to young entrepreneurs, fostering innovation and self-reliance. YouWiN! not only addresses unemployment but also promotes a culture of entrepreneurship and self-esteem among Nigerian youth (Akpan & Edet, 2012). The program has successfully created thousands of jobs and contributed to economic growth, demonstrating the effectiveness of policies that address both skill development and job creation (McKenzie, 2017).

Kenya's Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), established in 2006, exemplifies an innovative approach to youth empowerment by blending financial support with skill development. The YEDF provides low-interest loans and entrepreneurship training to young people, promoting self-employment and job creation. This approach addresses both financial and skill barriers to youth entrepreneurship, contributing to increased self-esteem and economic participation among Kenyan youth (Sikenyi, 2017). The YEDF has shown promising results in fostering youth-led enterprises and reducing youth unemployment (Okirigiti & Rafeq, 2015). Building on this foundation, Kenya has implemented several complementary initiatives to address youth unemployment and promote economic empowerment. The Kazi Mtaani program, launched in 2020, provides short-term employment opportunities for urban youth in public works projects, addressing immediate income needs while developing practical skills. The Ajira Digital Program, initiated in 2016, equips youth with digital skills and connects them to online work opportunities, tapping into the growing gig economy. The National Youth Service (NYS) offers vocational training and character development programs, preparing youth for both formal employment and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP), supported by the World Bank, provides comprehensive support including skills training, job placement services, and funding for youth-led businesses. These diverse initiatives collectively demonstrate Kenya's multifaceted approach to youth employment, addressing various aspects of Maslow's esteem needs by providing opportunities for skill development, economic participation, and personal growth (Hope, 2012; Kaane, 2014). Together, these programs have contributed to a more holistic strategy for youth empowerment and job creation in Kenya, showcasing the country's commitment to addressing the complex challenges of youth unemployment through innovative policy approaches.

#### **4.5 Cultural and Self-Actualization Policies**

Applying Maslow's Theory to African Public Policy Sectors in the realm of Cultural and Self-Actualization Policies reveals how nations are addressing higher-level needs by preserving cultural heritage and fostering innovation and creativity. These policies align with Maslow's concepts of esteem and self-actualization, demonstrating a holistic approach to societal development. In Ethiopia, the Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCCH) has implemented policies to preserve and promote the country's rich cultural legacy. The ARCCCH's efforts in conserving historical sites like Lalibela and managing museums not only protect Ethiopia's heritage but also foster national pride and cultural identity (Ndoro, 2018). Simultaneously, Ethiopia's Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, launched in 2012, aims to build a technology-capable workforce, encouraging creativity and innovation in various sectors (Molla & Cuthbert, 2018).

South Africa's National Heritage Resources Act of 1999 exemplifies a comprehensive approach to cultural preservation. This legislation provides for the protection of a wide range of heritage resources, from archaeological sites to living heritage practices (Abungu & Ndoro, 2022). Complementing this, the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), established in 2008, supports innovative research and development projects, bridging the gap between research and commercialization (Walwyn & Cloete, 2016). In Kenya, the National Museums and Heritage Act of 2006 has strengthened the legal framework for protecting and promoting cultural heritage. This act has facilitated the preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural assets, contributing to national identity and tourism (Abungu, 2005). Additionally, Kenya's Vision 2030 includes a strong focus on science, technology, and innovation, with initiatives like the Kenya National Innovation Agency promoting creative problem-solving and entrepreneurship (Ndemo & Weiss, 2017). Besides, Senegal's cultural policy, as exemplified by the Grand Théâtre National and the Museum of Black Civilizations, demonstrates a commitment to celebrating and preserving African cultural heritage on a grand scale (De Jong & Foucher, 2010). In parallel, Senegal's Digital Technology Park project aims to create an innovation ecosystem,

fostering tech startups and digital creativity (Gabas, 2005). These case studies illustrate how African nations are applying Maslow's framework to address higher-level needs through policies that both preserve cultural heritage and stimulate innovation, thereby contributing to societal self-actualization and progress.

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## 5. Case Studies

### 5.1 Rwanda: Post-Genocide Policy Alignment with Maslow's Theory

The 1994 Rwandan genocide devastated the nation, leaving a profound impact on its social, economic, and political fabric. In the aftermath, Rwanda faced the monumental task of rebuilding and healing. The country's post-genocide policies and initiatives demonstrate a remarkable alignment with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, addressing issues from basic physiological needs to self-actualization. This approach has guided Rwanda's journey from a war-torn nation to a country striving for sustainable development and social cohesion.

At the most basic level, Rwanda's immediate post-genocide policies focused intensively on addressing physiological needs, aligning with Maslow's foundational tier of human requirements. The government prioritized food security, shelter, and basic healthcare for survivors and returning refugees through a multi-faceted approach. The Emergency Repatriation and Reintegration Program, launched in 1994, aimed to provide essential services and resources to those displaced by the genocide (Newbury, 2005). This was complemented by the Food Aid and Food Security Program, which distributed emergency food supplies and agricultural inputs to vulnerable households (Kayibanda, 1999). The National Habitat Policy, implemented in 1996, focused on providing emergency shelter and initiating housing reconstruction efforts (Ministry of Infrastructure, 2004). In the health sector, the Expanded Program on Immunization was revitalized to address urgent public health needs, particularly for children and women (Binagwaho et al., 2014). Additionally, the government, in partnership with international organizations, established numerous feeding centers and mobile clinics to reach remote areas (Prunier, 1997). The Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy was also introduced to tackle the high child mortality rates (WHO, 2000). These coordinated efforts ensured that the population's most fundamental requirements for survival were met, creating a foundation for further recovery and development in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Moving up Maslow's hierarchy, Rwanda's policies then targeted safety and security needs through a comprehensive approach encompassing judicial, police, and community-based initiatives. The establishment of the Gacaca courts in 2001 represented an innovative approach to post-genocide justice and reconciliation. These community-based courts aimed to expedite the trial of genocide suspects while promoting healing and unity. The Gacaca system addressed both immediate safety concerns and long-term societal cohesion by involving local communities in the justice process (Clark, 2010). Complementing this, Rwanda undertook significant judiciary reforms. The adoption of the Organic Law N° 07/2004 established the organization, functioning, and jurisdiction of courts, introducing a more streamlined and accessible justice system (Rugege, 2006). This reform included the creation of specialized chambers for serious crimes and the integration of international legal norms into domestic law, enhancing the overall capacity and credibility of the judicial system (Longman, 2017). Additionally, the reform of the Rwandan National Police, initiated in 2000, focused on community policing and human rights protection, further enhancing the sense of security among citizens (Baker, 2007). The establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights in 1999 and the Office of the Ombudsman in 2003 provided additional mechanisms for protecting citizens' rights and addressing grievances, contributing to a more comprehensive safety and security framework (Chakravarty, 2016). These multifaceted reforms collectively strengthened Rwanda's institutional capacity to ensure safety and justice, addressing the second level of Maslow's hierarchy and laying a foundation for societal stability and individual security.

Addressing the need for belongingness and love, Rwanda implemented a comprehensive set of policies to foster social cohesion, national unity, and inclusivity, aligning with Maslow's third level of needs. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, established in 1999, spearheaded efforts to rebuild social ties and promote a shared national identity through programs like Ingando (solidarity camps) and Itorero (civic education) (Purdeková, 2011). The National Policy on Unity and Reconciliation (2007) and the Ndi Umunyarwanda (I am Rwandan) initiative (2013) further emphasized inclusive governance and a unified national identity (NURC, 2007; Paradis, 2020; Kagure, 2013). Rwanda also implemented disability inclusion policies, such as the Law N°01/2007 on Protection of Disabled Persons, and established the National Council for People with Disabilities in 2011 (Thomas, 2005; Rubagiza et al., 2016). Language policies recognizing Kinyarwanda, English, and French as official languages promoted linguistic inclusivity (Samuelson & Freedman, 2010). Affirmative action policies for women and youth in political representation, and programs like Girinka, which provides cows to poor families, further enhanced social inclusion and solidarity (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017). These initiatives collectively aimed to create a sense of belonging for all Rwandans, regardless of their

ethnic background, disability status, gender, or socioeconomic condition, addressing the complex dimensions of belongingness in a post-genocide society.

Rwanda's policies addressing esteem needs have evolved significantly, building upon the foundation laid by Vision 2020 and the Rwanda Innovation Fund. Recent initiatives demonstrate a comprehensive approach to promoting individual and collective self-esteem through economic empowerment, education, and innovation. The National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) 2017-2024 reinforces the focus on economic development and human capital (Republic of Rwanda, 2017), while the Made in Rwanda Policy fosters national pride in local production (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2017). In education, the Competence Based Curriculum enhances students' self-efficacy through critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Rwanda Education Board, 2015), complemented by expanded Workforce Development Authority programs for vocational training and entrepreneurship (WDA, 2019). The Kora Wigire initiative supports young entrepreneurs (Ministry of Youth, 2018), and the National Digital Talent Policy aims to develop a digitally literate population (Ministry of ICT and Innovation, 2016). These policies collectively address esteem needs by promoting economic self-reliance, educational advancement, and innovation, aligning with Maslow's hierarchy and paving the way for self-actualization. National pride, and economic opportunities, Rwanda continues to strengthen its citizens' sense of esteem and capability, moving further up Maslow's hierarchy towards self-actualization.

In the cultural sphere, initiatives like the Kwita Izina ceremony, which celebrates the naming of newborn mountain gorillas, combine conservation efforts with cultural traditions, promoting both environmental stewardship and cultural pride (Maekawa et al., 2013). Besides, Rwanda's gender equality policies also reflect an aspiration towards self-actualization. The country has made significant strides in promoting women's participation in politics and the economy. Rwanda consistently ranks among the top countries globally for women's representation in parliament, with policies actively encouraging women's leadership and economic empowerment (Burnet, 2008). These initiatives not only address gender-based inequalities but also contribute to the fuller realization of human potential, a key aspect of self-actualization in Maslow's theory.

This analysis shows Rwanda's post-genocide policy framework demonstrates a comprehensive approach that aligns closely with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. From addressing basic physiological needs in the immediate aftermath of the genocide to fostering innovation and self-actualization in recent years, Rwanda's policies reflect a nuanced understanding of human needs and societal development. The country's journey from emergency response to long-term development strategies showcases a deliberate progression through Maslow's hierarchy. Initiatives targeting food security, safety, social cohesion, esteem, and self-actualization have collectively contributed to Rwanda's remarkable transformation. While challenges persist, this alignment with Maslow's theory has significantly aided Rwanda's efforts in rebuilding and transforming its society. This approach, encompassing economic, social, and cultural dimensions, has not only addressed immediate post-conflict needs but also laid the groundwork for sustainable development and social harmony. Rwanda's experience offers valuable insights into post-conflict reconstruction and the application of psychological theories to national development strategies, potentially serving as a model for other nations facing similar challenges.

## **5.2 South Africa: Addressing Apartheid Legacies through Need-Based Policies**

South Africa's post-apartheid era has been characterized by concerted efforts to address the deep-seated inequalities and socio-economic disparities inherited from the apartheid regime. These efforts have been guided by a need-based approach that aligns closely with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, aiming to address fundamental human requirements while progressively moving towards higher-order needs for societal transformation.

At the most basic level, the government has focused on addressing physiological needs through programs like the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Launched in 1994, the NSNP aims to enhance learning capacity and improve access to education by providing nutritious meals to learners from poor communities. This program has significantly reduced hunger and malnutrition among school-going children, contributing to improved educational outcomes and overall well-being (Rendall-Mkosi et al., 2013).

Addressing safety needs, the post-apartheid government has implemented various initiatives to reform the criminal justice system and improve public safety. The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) of 1996 marked a shift towards a more holistic approach to crime prevention, emphasizing community involvement and social crime prevention alongside traditional law enforcement methods. While challenges persist, this approach has contributed to a gradual reduction in crime rates and improved public perceptions of safety (Rauch, 2005).

In terms of belonging needs, South Africa's policy of national reconciliation, epitomized by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), sought to heal the divisions of the past and foster a sense of national unity. The TRC provided a platform for victims and perpetrators of apartheid-era human rights violations to share their experiences, promoting healing and reconciliation. Despite criticisms, the TRC has been credited with contributing to South Africa's relatively peaceful transition to democracy and fostering a sense of shared national identity (Gibson, 2006).

Addressing esteem needs, the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy, later evolved into Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE), aims to redress economic inequalities by promoting the participation of previously disadvantaged groups in the economy. This policy has facilitated increased black ownership and management in businesses, although its implementation has faced challenges and criticisms regarding its effectiveness in broadly addressing economic inequality (Ponte et al., 2007).

In the realm of self-actualization needs, South Africa has made significant strides in expanding access to higher education. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), established in 1999, provides financial assistance to academically qualified but financially needy students. This has substantially increased access to higher education for previously disadvantaged groups, although challenges remain in terms of throughput rates and graduate employment (De Villiers et al., 2013).

While these policies have made significant contributions to addressing apartheid legacies, challenges persist. Income inequality remains high, unemployment continues to be a major issue, and social cohesion remains fragile. However, South Africa's need-based approach to policy-making demonstrates a commitment to addressing historical injustices and promoting inclusive development. The ongoing refinement and implementation of these policies reflect an evolving understanding of the complex interplay between different levels of needs in the South African context, and the necessity for a holistic approach to societal transformation (Seekings, 2014).

### **5.3 Kenya: Balancing Economic Growth with Basic Needs Fulfillment**

Kenya, as a developing nation in East Africa, has been grappling with the challenge of balancing economic growth with the fulfillment of basic needs for its population. This balancing act reflects a nuanced application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in public policy, as the country strives to address fundamental human requirements while simultaneously pursuing economic development.

At the most basic level, Kenya has implemented policies to address physiological needs, particularly in the areas of food security and access to clean water. The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, launched in 2011, aims to ensure adequate, safe, and nutritious food for all Kenyans. This policy has led to initiatives such as subsidized fertilizer programs and irrigation projects to boost agricultural productivity (Alila & Atieno, 2006). The government has expanded these efforts through programs like the National Accelerated Agricultural Inputs Access Program (NAAIAP), which provides subsidized seeds and fertilizers to smallholder farmers, and the Galana-Kulalu Food Security Project, a large-scale irrigation initiative aimed at increasing food production (Sheahan et al., 2013). Additionally, the Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme-Climate Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Window (KCEP-CRAL) supports smallholder farmers in adopting climate-smart agriculture practices. In the water sector, the Water Act of 2016 has sought to improve access to clean water, particularly in rural areas, complemented by initiatives like the Water Sector Trust Fund, which finances water and sanitation projects in underserved communities. However, despite these efforts, challenges in implementation persist, particularly in reaching the most marginalized populations and ensuring sustainable management of water resources (Mogaka et al., 2006).

Addressing safety needs, Kenya has undertaken significant reforms in its security sector. The National Police Service Act of 2011 aimed to professionalize the police force and improve public safety. While challenges remain, these reforms have contributed to improved community policing and a gradual enhancement of public safety perceptions (Ruteere & Pommerolle, 2003). Furthermore, the government's efforts to combat terrorism, particularly in the wake of high-profile attacks, have been a key focus in addressing safety concerns. The establishment of the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) in 2004 has enhanced coordination in counter-terrorism efforts (Mogire & Agade, 2011). The government has also implemented the Nyumba Kumi Initiative, a community policing strategy that organizes households into clusters to enhance neighborhood security (Kioko, 2017). Additionally, the National Security Council, established under the 2010 Constitution, has improved coordination among security agencies. The government has also invested in modernizing security infrastructure, including the National Surveillance, Communication and Control System launched in 2015 to enhance urban security through CCTV cameras and integrated communication networks (Mutahi & Ruteere, 2019). Moreover, reforms in the judicial sector, such as the Judiciary Transformation Framework

2012-2016, have aimed to improve access to justice and strengthen the rule of law, contributing to overall safety and security (Akech, 2011).

In terms of belonging needs, Kenya's devolution process, enshrined in the 2010 Constitution, has been a significant step towards promoting inclusivity and addressing regional disparities. By devolving power and resources to 47 counties, this policy aims to enhance local participation in governance and foster a sense of belonging among diverse communities (Cheeseman et al., 2016). Concrete examples of how devolution has enhanced a sense of belonging include the establishment of County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), which allow local communities to participate in setting development priorities (Kobia & Bagaka, 2014). The creation of Ward Development Funds has brought decision-making on local projects closer to the people, increasing their sense of ownership and involvement (Kilonzo et al., 2020). Devolution has also led to the recognition and promotion of local languages in county assemblies, enhancing cultural representation and inclusion (Mbithi et al., 2019). The establishment of county public service boards has increased local employment opportunities, fostering a sense of local empowerment (Tsofa et al., 2017). Additionally, the equalization fund, designed to bring services in marginalized areas to the level generally enjoyed by the rest of the nation, has helped address historical inequalities (Commission on Revenue Allocation, 2018). While implementation challenges exist, these initiatives have collectively contributed to improving service delivery, enhancing local political participation, and fostering a stronger sense of belonging among Kenya's diverse communities.

Addressing esteem needs, Kenya has implemented various policies to promote education and skills development. The Free Primary Education policy, introduced in 2003, and the subsequent expansion of free secondary education have significantly increased school enrollment rates (Bold et al., 2015). The government has further enhanced educational access through the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) bursaries, which provide financial support to needy students (Kimenyi, 2005). Recognizing the importance of vocational skills, Kenya has revitalized its Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector through the TVET Act of 2013, establishing the TVET Authority to regulate and coordinate training (Muthomi & Oketch, 2014). This focus on TVET aims to address skills gaps and enhance employability. In higher education, the government introduced a new university funding model in 2017, transitioning from the Joint Admissions Board to the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS), which allocates government sponsorship, based on both merit and equity considerations (Oanda & Jowi, 2012). Additionally, initiatives like the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and the Uwezo Fund aim to promote youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, addressing both esteem and economic needs (Sikenyi, 2017). Collectively, these policies and initiatives demonstrate Kenya's comprehensive approach to education and skills development, aiming to boost self-esteem and economic opportunities across various educational levels and sectors.

In pursuit of economic growth, Kenya has implemented Vision 2030, a long-term development blueprint aimed at transforming the country into a middle-income economy. This strategy focuses on key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services, with an emphasis on infrastructure development and technological innovation (Government of Kenya, 2007). Building on this foundation, Kenya has launched several complementary initiatives. The Big Four Agenda, introduced in 2017, concentrates on four pillars: manufacturing, affordable housing, universal healthcare, and food security (Otuki, 2018). The Kenya Industrial Transformation Programme (KITP) aims to accelerate industrial growth, focusing on agro-processing, textiles, leather, and other key sectors (Ministry of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives, 2015). The Digital Economy Blueprint, launched in 2019, seeks to position Kenya as a global leader in the digital economy (Ministry of ICT, 2019). Additionally, the government has established Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to attract foreign investment and boost exports (Farole & Akinci, 2011). The National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) 2019-2024 aims to transform agriculture into a modern, commercially oriented sector (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation, 2019). While progress has been made in infrastructure development, particularly through projects like the Standard Gauge Railway and expansion of geothermal power, challenges such as corruption, external economic shocks, and implementation gaps have hampered the full realization of these ambitious economic goals.

Kenya's approach to balancing economic growth with basic needs fulfillment demonstrates a complex interplay between different levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The country has implemented a wide range of policies and initiatives addressing physiological needs (food security and water access), safety needs (security sector reforms), belonging needs (devolution), esteem needs (education and skills development), and economic growth (Vision 2030 and related programs). These efforts reflect a holistic approach to development, recognizing the interdependence of basic human needs and economic progress. However, significant challenges persist, including income inequality, poverty, inadequate social protection in the informal sector, and strains on urban infrastructure due to rapid urbanization. The informal sector, while providing livelihoods for many, often lacks adequate social protection (Kimenyi et al., 2015). Moreover, rapid urbanization has strained urban infrastructure and services, creating new challenges in meeting basic needs in urban areas. Kenya's experience highlights the ongoing struggle faced by developing nations in

reconciling immediate basic needs with long-term economic aspirations. As the country continues to refine its policies and implementation strategies, the focus remains on creating a more inclusive and sustainable development model that addresses both the fundamental requirements of its citizens and the imperative of economic growth.

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## 6. Conclusion

This study has examined the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to various public policy sectors across African nations, focusing on case studies from Rwanda, South Africa, and Kenya. The analysis reveals that these countries have, to varying degrees, aligned their policies with the different levels of Maslow's hierarchy, from addressing basic physiological needs to fostering self-actualization and societal progress.

Rwanda's post-genocide policy framework demonstrates a comprehensive approach that closely aligns with Maslow's theory. The country's journey from emergency response to long-term development strategies showcases a deliberate progression through the hierarchy of needs. Initiatives targeting food security, safety, social cohesion, esteem, and self-actualization have collectively contributed to Rwanda's remarkable transformation, although challenges persist.

South Africa's post-apartheid policies reflect a need-based approach aimed at addressing the deep-seated inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime. Programs such as the National School Nutrition Programme, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment demonstrate efforts to address needs across Maslow's hierarchy. However, the country continues to grapple with high income inequality, unemployment, and fragile social cohesion.

Kenya's experience highlights the ongoing struggle faced by developing nations in balancing immediate basic needs with long-term economic aspirations. The country has implemented a wide range of policies addressing physiological needs, safety, belonging, esteem, and economic growth. However, significant challenges persist, including poverty, inadequate social protection in the informal sector, and strains on urban infrastructure due to rapid urbanization.

The study underscores the value of applying Maslow's theory to public policy formulation and implementation in African contexts. It demonstrates how this framework can guide policymakers in prioritizing and addressing diverse societal needs while pursuing broader development goals. The experiences of Rwanda, South Africa, and Kenya offer valuable insights into the complexities of post-conflict reconstruction, addressing historical injustices, and balancing economic growth with basic needs fulfillment.

### *Recommendations*

- African governments should adopt a holistic approach to policy formulation that considers all levels of Maslow's hierarchy. This ensures that while pursuing economic growth and higher-order needs, basic physiological and safety needs are not neglected.
- While Maslow's theory provides a useful framework, it should be adapted to specific African contexts, considering local cultural, historical, and socio-economic factors. Policymakers should engage with local communities to understand their unique needs and priorities.
- Governments should develop long-term visions for national development while implementing short-term interventions to address immediate needs. This balanced approach can help maintain social stability while working towards broader development goals.
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place to assess the effectiveness of need-based policies. This will allow for timely adjustments and ensure that policies are achieving their intended outcomes across different levels of needs.
- Promote inclusive governance structures that allow for greater citizen participation in policy formulation and implementation. This can enhance the sense of belonging and address esteem needs while improving policy effectiveness.
- Ensure that policies addressing lower-level needs are designed with sustainability in mind. This includes environmental sustainability as well as the long-term viability of social programs.
- Prioritize investments in education, skills development, and healthcare to address higher-level needs while simultaneously building the capacity for economic growth and societal progress.
- Encourage regional cooperation and knowledge sharing among African nations on successful need-based policy interventions. This can lead to more effective strategies and efficient use of resources.
- Develop targeted policies to extend social protection and support to workers in the informal sector, recognizing its significant role in many African economies.

- In light of rapid urbanization, prioritize urban planning that ensures access to basic needs such as housing, water, and sanitation for growing urban populations.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

All authors have no conflict of interest.

The author of this study declare that he have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. The review was conducted independently and objectively, without any external influence that might bias the results or conclusions.

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### *Data collection*

All data collected and analyzed for this study was done so in accordance with ethical guidelines.

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