



Harnessing the Transformative Potentials of Industry 4.0: What Role for African Public Administration?

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Beyond an undoubtedly disruptive impact, **Industry 4.0** or the Fourth Industrial Revolution **can**, according to Ndung'u & Signe (2020) also **rebalance value creation in Africa**: it could usher in solutions to challenges like low quality education, climate change, vulnerability and poor service delivery, and groundbreaking technology—such as artificial intelligence (AI) could, alongside with enabling empowerment policies, improve business, health care and livelihoods of all and bring about the inclusivity envisaged by the 2030 SDGs. The authors however cautioned that Africa's **large digital infrastructure and skills gap** mean those who have otherwise been at the forefront of 4IR are left behind. Africa indeed still lags behind both developed and other developing countries in several indicators for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, especially in infrastructure, technology, access, and education.

The transformative potentials of Industry 4.0 in Africa include: encouraging economic growth and structural transformation; fighting poverty and inequality; increasing financial services; reinventing labor, skills and production; modernizing agriculture and agro-industries as well as improving health care and human capital. Yet, Africa cannot wish away the challenges facing the continent. It is seriously



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lagging on the digital front. Even though Hafez Ghanem suggests that with its large number of imaginative and creative youth, Africa should become the start-up continent, these potentials may not be fulfilled unless Africa addresses the sizeable deficits in the digital front.

The above scenario has impact on Public administration in Africa especially as evidenced in the ongoing efforts to employ technology to keep public institutions working in the face of the challenges of COVID-19. Providing answers to the following questions become pertinent:

- **How can African governments and Public Administration overcome the challenges of infrastructure, technology, access and education?**
- **How can Public Administration in Africa take advantage of the transformative potentials of the 4IR in the tasks of fighting poverty and inequality; increasing financial services; reinventing labor, skills and production; modernizing agriculture and agro-industries and improving health care and human capital?**

Authors are invited to send in abstracts addressing how the sizeable digital and technological deficits can be overcome and secondly how African governments and Public Administration can take advantage of the transformative potentials of Industry 4.0.



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