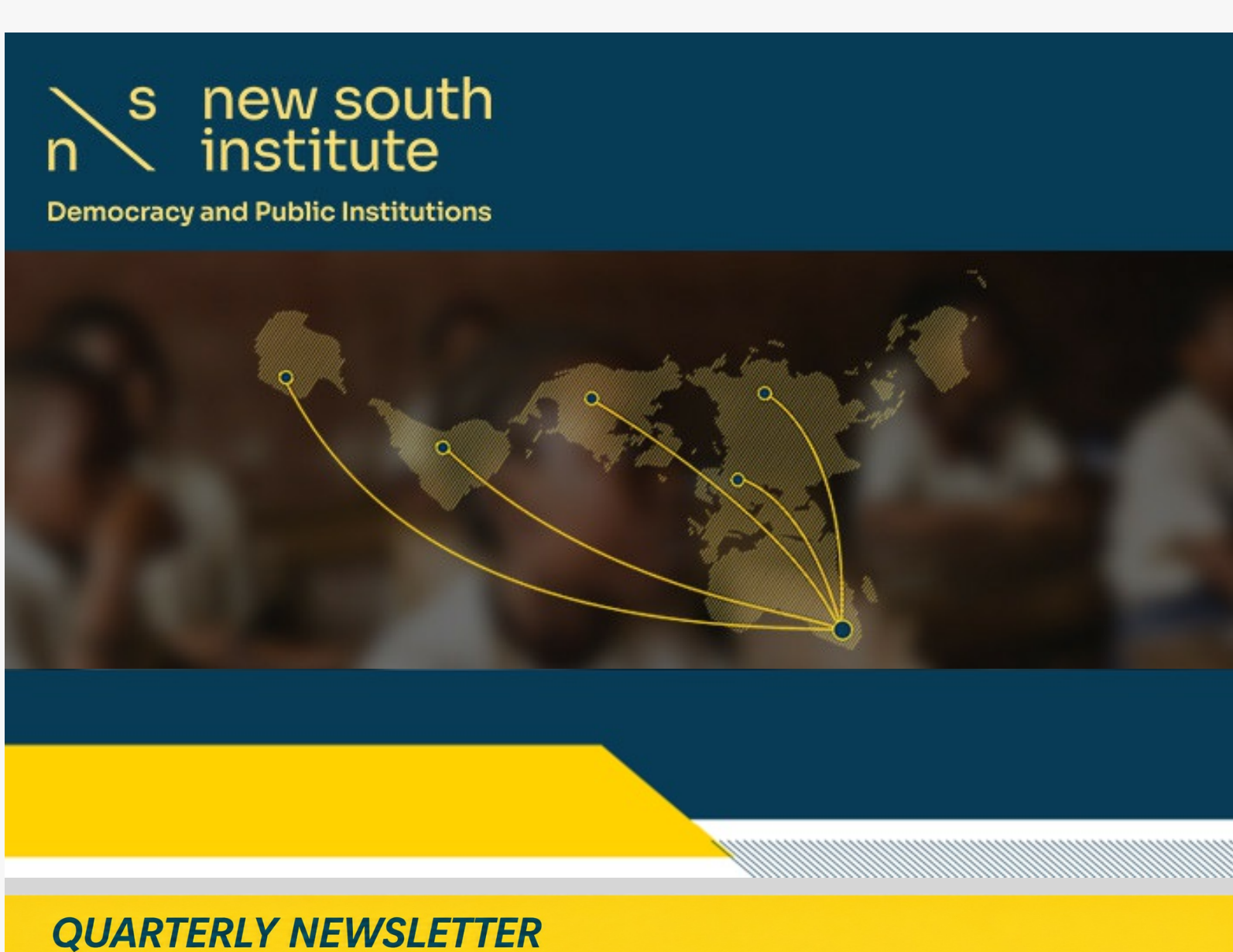




QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2026



Statecraft 2026: An International Congress on Democracy and Public Institutions

Hosted by the New South Institute (NSI), Statecraft 2026 brought together policymakers, senior public officials, researchers and institutional leaders from South Africa and around the world to discuss what strengthens public institutions and how to reform them.

The two-day Congress, held from 22 - 23 September at GIBS in Johannesburg, focused on the appointment of senior public officials, the distinction between political and administrative authority, the importance of professional independence for a functional public service, governance of state-owned enterprises, municipal management, and the need for public consultation and participation.

The Congress took place at an important point in South Africa's reform process. With the enactment of the Public Service Amendment Act 9 of 2025, attention is increasingly shifting from why reform is necessary to how it can be implemented and sustained. International experience provided a useful comparative perspective on the institutional choices South Africa now faces.

Further resources from Statecraft 2026 will be published in the coming weeks, highlighting key discussions, ideas and comparative perspectives from the Congress.

New Research: Retiring the 1994 Generation - The Senior Management Service

NSI published the third report in its "Government in Numbers" series, "Retiring the 1994 Generation: The Senior Management Service", by Ivor Chipkin, with support from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. Drawing on PERSAL (the government's HR information management system) data from 2009 to 2024, the report highlights the leadership and succession challenges facing the public service, as the generation that built South Africa's post-apartheid administration approaches retirement.

The data point to a significant succession challenge: between 73 and 80 percent of senior managers across the national public service, health and education are aged 50 or older. The report calls for deliberate succession planning, stronger career pathways and investment in developing the next generation of public-sector leaders. The report was launched at a **virtual event** bringing together Ivor Chipkin, Yoliswa Makhosi and Associate Professor Vinodhan Naidoo to discuss its findings and the implications for the public service.

[Read the report here...](#)



The Third Transition: Taking the Conversation Across the Country

South Africa's Third Transition remained a focus of NSI's public engagements this quarter. At the University of the Western Cape, Ivor Chipkin delivered a public lecture in partnership with the School of Government on the implications of the Public Service Amendment Act, with Dr Mshukazi Makiva responding on what the reforms mean for the education of future public administrators.

At UCT's Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, Ivor joined Professor Vinodhan Naidoo for a discussion on the Third Transition and its implications for government capability.

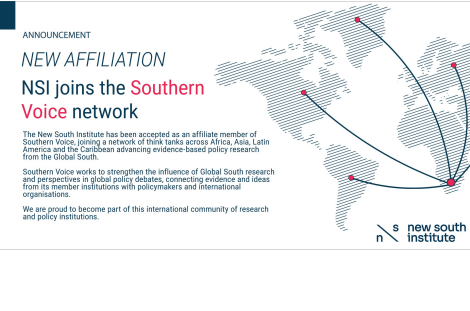
[Read more...](#)

The Crisis of Johannesburg: An Agenda for Institutional Reform

The New South Institute published "The Crisis of Johannesburg: An Agenda for Institutional Reform", written by Ivor Chipkin and commissioned by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) as part of its "Johannesburg Matters" series.

The report looks beyond failing infrastructure and declining services to the institutional and systemic weaknesses underpinning the city's crisis, which include instability in senior management, the loss of skills and institutional memory, and fragmented accountability.

[Download the NSI report...](#)



NSI joins two international networks advancing institutional reform and global cooperation

The NSI has joined two international networks, expanding opportunities to contribute its research to global discussions on governance, institutional reform and international cooperation.

As an affiliate member of Southern Voice, a network of think tanks from across the Global South, NSI will participate in research exchanges, coverings and policy discussions aimed at strengthening the role of Southern perspectives in global debates.

NSI has also joined the Article 109 Coalition, an international network of more than 100 members and partners across 32 countries advocating for a review of the United Nations Charter and the institutions that underpin international cooperation.

Both memberships create opportunities for NSI to collaborate with international peers, contribute African perspectives to global policy discussions and advance its research on strengthening institutions.

Women's leadership and public administration

NSI researcher Yoliswa Makhosi participated in the Women's Voices seminar organised by the University of Pretoria's School of Public Management and Administration, joining scholars and practitioners for a discussion on women's leadership in public administration. Drawing on NSI's research, she spoke about building a capable, professional and accountable public service, and the role of evidence-based policy in strengthening governance.



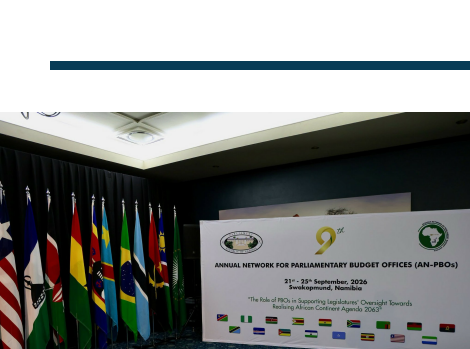
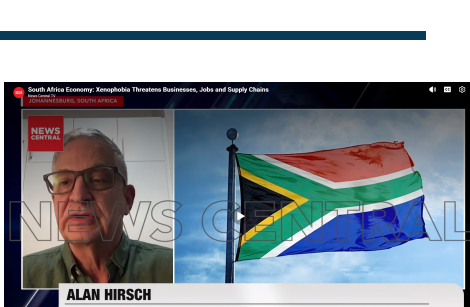
Youth participation and digital citizenship

NSI's Communication Officer, Delani Majola, chaired a round-table discussion, **From Online Activism to Active Citizenship: Combating Misinformation and Digital Manipulation**, hosted by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). The session brought together academics and community organisers from across the province to discuss youth participation in governance and the changing digital information environment.

His presentation focused on democratic participation in the digital age, including how misinformation can shape public opinion and elections, the importance of fact-checking and responsible information-sharing, and how young people can translate online activism into meaningful civic participation.

Migration Governance Reform in Africa

Migration remained prominent in South Africa's public debate this quarter. On **News Central TV, Radio 702 and CapeTalk**, Alan Hirsch, Head of NSI's Migration Governance Reform in Africa programme, contributed to discussions on undocumented migration, border management, economic development, and the limits of enforcement-only approaches.



Beyond Borders: The Economics of Migration in Southern Africa

Alan also addressed the 9th Annual Conference of the African Network of Parliamentary Budget Offices in Namibia, where **his presentation focused** on the fiscal dimensions of migration, including public expenditure, taxation, labour migration, skills partnerships, and remittances. He emphasised the importance of stronger governance, modernised migration arrangements, and regional cooperation.

South-South Dialogues: Global South Perspectives on a Changing World Order

NSI's South-South Dialogues programme continued to connect South Africa's institutional questions with wider debates about global order. In the latest "Missing Voices" conversation, Jelena Vidojević spoke with Paul Stubbs about the Non-Aligned Movement and the continuing relevance of principled non-alignment.



The interview was also republished by **Brave New Europe**.

[Read the full interview here...](#)



Global South perspectives at international conferences

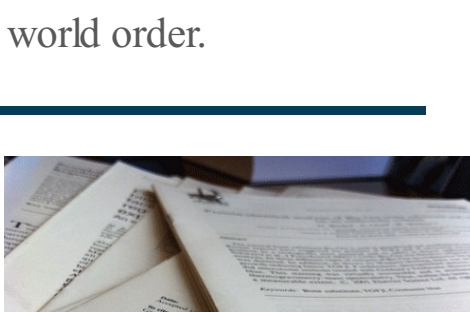
NSI researchers contributed to international debates on global transformations and the changing world order at two academic conferences this quarter.

In Basel, the African Perspectives on Global Transformations conference focused on Africa's place in a rapidly changing world, with discussions spanning past, present and future global transformations from a range of African perspectives. The conference was jointly convened by the Swiss Society for African Studies and the Association for African Studies in Germany, and hosted by the ZASB Research Network Africa at the University of Basel. Miloš Hrnjazić presented a paper co-authored with Jelena Vidojević on Africa's place in Russian and Chinese visions of a multipolar world order.

At the European International Studies Association's Pan-European Conference on International Relations, in Lisbon, **Miloš** presented research on South Africa's case against Israel before the International Court of Justice, linking the case to South Africa's foreign-policy identity, its positioning within the Global South, and wider debates about international law and a changing world order.

NSI Joins Ecologies in Place Workshop

NSI's Histories of Government programme participated in Ecologies in Place, a collaborative workshop convened by Stellenbosch University and the University of Cambridge. Andries du Toit presented research on informal urban settlements on land administered by traditional authorities, and what their locally developed forms of governance can tell us about urban planning, service delivery, and government capability.



[Read the working paper here...](#)



We're on Substack: Introducing Histories of Government

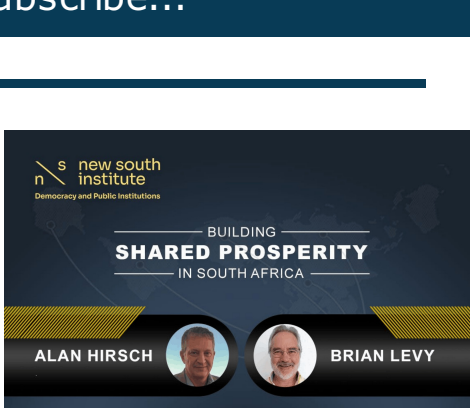
This quarter saw the launch of "Histories of Government", a new Substack from the New South Institute and the University of the Western Cape's School of Government. Led by Andries du Toit and Jelena Vidojević, the publication creates a space for research and debate about statecraft and democratic government from the perspectives of post-colonial and post-socialist societies.

The inaugural post, "The View from Elsewhere", asks what these perspectives can contribute to contemporary debates about democracy and its institutions, and a changing global order. It introduces the idea of the "New South", connecting experiences across post-colonial and post-socialist societies and treating them as sources of knowledge and political imagination in their own right.

[Read and subscribe...](#)

Building Shared Prosperity in South Africa: A new five-part series

The New South Institute has launched Building Shared Prosperity in South Africa, a five-part blog series authored by Alan Hirsch and Brian Levy.



Against the backdrop of persistent unemployment, poverty and weak economic growth, the series considers what it would take to get the economy growing again, where new jobs might come from and which policy reforms could help raise incomes and support more inclusive growth.

The series invites readers to engage with these questions and contribute to a wider conversation about South Africa's economic future.

[Follow the series...](#)

E-mail: info@nsi.org.za

Tel: +27 10 157 2037

Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), 26

Melville Road, Illovo, Johannesburg 2196, South

Africa

