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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IMPACT IN SHAPING ECONOMIC POLICIES AND MOBILISING RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. Developing economies, which were the most ambitious in the 21st century, have struggled to mobilise enough financial resources, leading to modest progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This study examines the role of strategic communication in shaping economic policies and mobilising resources for development in emerging economies, with a focus on South Africa, Brazil, and Indonesia. The research adopts a qualitative approach, using case studies to explore how governments in these countries utilise strategic communication to influence public opinion, inspire investor confidence, and promote sustainable economic growth. The findings indicate that effective strategic communication in developing nations can significantly enhance public support for economic reforms and policies, improve transparency, and foster stakeholder engagement. The application of framing theory and stakeholder theory provides valuable insights into how governments can craft messages that resonate with both domestic and international audiences, thus promoting economic resilience. Key factors such as risk communication, stakeholder involvement, and transparency are identified as crucial to the success of economic policies. This study highlights that strategic communication goes beyond mere information dissemination; it involves aligning policies with the values and priorities of key stakeholders. Additionally, the integration of digital platforms is emphasised as an essential tool for broadening outreach and countering misinformation. While the study offers valuable recommendations for policymakers, such as enhancing framing strategies and leveraging digital communication, it also acknowledges several limitations, including its geographical focus and reliance on secondary data. The research concludes by suggesting future research avenues, including comparative studies across different regions and longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of strategic communication on economic development.

Keywords: strategic communication, development, resource mobilisation, economic policies, impact, emerging economies.

JEL Classification: A12

Introduction

Globally, governments are recognising the importance of strategic communication in enhancing public sector performance and ensuring effective service delivery to the public (Weseka *et al.*, 2025). Achieving sustainable growth and development in developing countries depends on the effective creation and application of economic policies. However, for these policies to succeed, they must be supported by effective communication strategies that engage stakeholders, align national interests, and build confidence both domestically and internationally. The creation of an effective communication plan is an intricate, multi-dimensional process that ensures the achievement of public policy goals by using all available communication resources and organising the communication space (Bragina *et al.*, 2020). As a result, strategic communication is vital for influencing economic policies, managing public opinion, and mobilising resources for development. Clear, open, and focused communication is essential for achieving policy objectives and attracting investment as emerging economies navigate the complexities of the global economic landscape. Cooperation and

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involvement of stakeholders are critical in policy implementation, as stakeholders help ensure that policies are useful, inclusive, and enduring (Kumar and Vinati, 2024). Bragina *et al.* (2020) argue that the mechanism for crafting and implementing state socio-economic policies, which ensures effective strategic planning at any level of government, should incorporate effective tools for strategic communication or, more specifically, form an effective communication strategy.

The role of strategic communication in any economy is dependent on its influence and the effective coordination both within and beyond an economy to achieve strategic goals (Ngwenya *et al.*, 2022). Strategic communication enables governments to clarify their vision, link economic objectives with national interests, and structure policies in ways that resonate with key stakeholders, such as the public, businesses, investors, and development partners. By effectively managing how policies are perceived, governments can reduce uncertainties, manage risks, and enhance investor confidence, which are crucial for attracting both foreign and domestic investment. The ability to communicate policy decisions effectively can also mobilise support from donor agencies, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations that provide the financial and technical assistance needed for development. Strategic consensus plays a key role in policy implementation, resource mobilisation, and the development of organisational strategy and performance (Jabarzadah *et al.*, 2019; Lim and Chuah, 2022). According to Sherman and Trithart (2021), communication failures can lead to significant operational and programme-related risks and consequences. Effective strategic communication systems have the potential to shape economic policies and mobilise resources for development (Chepkosgei *et al.*, 2020). Sosiawan *et al.* (2024) suggest that strategic communication is a combination of efforts to understand the cultural influences on all aspects of communication. The authors further argue that communication can involve conveying concepts, processes, or data that fulfil the long-term strategic goals of an economy, facilitating future planning. Strategic communication also determines the nature of relationships and cooperation with crucial stakeholders, such as donors, the private sector, and the international community, who are vital for the successful implementation of a country's policy and resource mobilisation strategy (Guuru and Adede, 2022).

Developing economies, which were the most ambitious in the 21st century, have struggled to mobilise enough financial resources, leading to modest progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Signe, 2015). Several scholars have explored the role of strategic communication in organisational performance (Chepkosgei *et al.*, 2020; Guuru and Adede, 2022; Ngwenya *et al.*, 2022; Wekesa *et al.*, 2025). A gap still exists in research regarding the role of strategic communication in shaping economic policies and mobilising resources for development. Therefore, this study aims to explore how strategic communication influences economic policy and gathers resources for growth in developing economies. The study examines how communication impacts economic policy development and supports successful resource mobilisation, drawing on case studies and relevant literature. It emphasises the importance of open, honest, and culturally aware communication in creating an environment that encourages investment and sustainable growth. Ultimately, the study argues that successful strategic communication is a critical factor in achieving long-term development outcomes and the success of economic policies, in addition to serving as a tool for informing stakeholders.

Literature Review

Rwegasira (n.d.) argues that the creation of an appropriate policy framework for effective resource mobilisation in developing economies must begin with an assessment of the role that the financial sector plays in the economy and the challenges it faces in mobilising necessary resources for investment. The international economy operates under conflicting rules, and global companies face novel strategic challenges, where winning or losing a competitive advantage depends on economic policies, efficacy, and innovation (Andrade and Goncalo, 2021). In Indonesia, communication has become a vital tool for monetary policy over the last two decades, whereas secrecy was once central to central banks' monetary policy actions. Today, transparency and clarity are highly valued, particularly in developed financial markets (Ahokpossi *et al.*, 2020). In Southern Africa, the resource mobilisation strategy ensures that there is a clear, systematic, predictable, and well-coordinated approach to soliciting, acquiring, and utilising resources from International Cooperating Partners. It also aims to expand the resource base to ensure sustainable resources for the implementation of regional programmes supporting regional integration (SADC, 2012). Afonso *et al.* (2016) note that in Brazil, there is a growing consensus that new institutional arrangements are necessary. There is a pressing need to address these issues even before reviewing individual policies. The authors argue that this relates to the fragile coordination of macroeconomic policies, with no organised framework to enhance interaction among various economic authorities. Strategic communication is an essential aspect of the economy, without which it cannot function (Wekesa *et al.*, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

Democratic accountability relies on the ability of citizens to assess the performance of governance and reward or punish the responsible politicians at the ballot box. Theoretically, this feedback loop is normatively appealing because it incentivises politicians to respond to the performance of their constituents (Benedictis-Kessner, 2020). Strategic communication involves the development, implementation, and updating of systems of standards that govern the interaction between authorities and their target audiences (Bragina *et al.*, 2020). This study draws on two key communication theories – Framing Theory and Stakeholder Theory – to understand how strategic communication shapes economic policy and mobilises resources for development.

Framing Theory:

Emerging nations, such as Brazil, Indonesia, and South Africa, with growing innovation capacities, should strive to balance technology integration, human capital development, and policy implementation (Andrade and Goncalo, 2021). Framing theory, initially proposed by Erving Goffman in 1974 and later expanded by Robert Entman in 1993, suggests that the way information is presented can significantly influence audiences' interpretations. In the context of strategic communication, "framing" refers to the manner in which governments communicate economic policies to the public, investors, and other stakeholders. The presentation of these policies can shape public perception, stimulate discussion, and generate support or opposition. Guran and Ozarslan (2022) argue that frames possess the power to influence which aspects of an issue are highlighted and which are excluded. Andrade *et al.* (2021) note that due to Brazil's economic and social challenges, efforts are underway to enhance infrastructure, access to information and communication technologies, and regulatory frameworks, alongside the promotion of strategic communication adoption.

According to Guran *et al.* (2022), symbolic interactionist sociologist Erving Goffman structured the concept of framing within a constructionist framework, defining frames as interpretive schemas that help individuals locate, perceive, identify, and label events and situations in their social world. In strategic communication, framing serves as a tool to assist stakeholders in understanding the potential risks or benefits of a policy by emphasising certain aspects while downplaying others. For example, presenting an economic policy as a "path to stability" or an "opportunity for growth" can help align the expectations of investors and the general public with the government's objectives. In emerging countries, where economic programmes often face scepticism or resistance due to political or historical factors, framing becomes a crucial instrument for governments to garner support. Entman (1993) asserts that framing encompasses both the message's content and its construction to influence the attitudes and behaviours of the audience. When done effectively, a strategic communication campaign can shape perceptions of why, how, and what a nation is doing. It seeks to promote a coherent and appealing narrative that resonates with target audiences, fosters dialogue, and influences behaviour to achieve the desired outcome (Sherman and Trithart, 2021).

National-level communication is the process by which stakeholders share information relevant to the national strategy, activities, and processes (Wekesa *et al.*, 2025). The ability to frame policies favourably is especially important in developing economies, where governments often face trust deficits. By presenting policies as vital to economic empowerment, shared prosperity, or national identity, governments can foster a sense of purpose and commitment to development goals. The strength of strategic communication lies in its emphasis on strategy rather than specific tactics, viewing communication as a holistic process within the economy (Ngwenya *et al.*, 2022).

Stakeholder Theory:

Stakeholder theory is an increasingly influential approach in the literature on strategic management, business ethics, economics, and corporate social responsibility (Valentinov and Roth, 2023). Effective strategic communication involves identifying diverse stakeholders and tailoring messages to meet their specific interests and expectations. Stakeholder theory, originally conceptualised by R. Edward Freeman and others, focuses on recognising and engaging with individuals or groups concerned with the operations and performance of an organisation (Wekesa *et al.*, 2025; Mahajan *et al.*, 2023). In the context of government communication, stakeholders include citizens, businesses, investors, international organisations, and civil society groups, each with their own priorities and concerns.

Freeman and Menghwar (n.d.) explain that much of the original work on stakeholder theory aimed to understand business strategy. The authors identified two definitions: 1) the "narrow" definition, which refers to stakeholders or groups upon whom a nation depends for survival, and 2) the "wide" definition, which includes stakeholders who can impact or be impacted by a nation's objectives. In the context of strategic communication, involving citizens, national leaders, and government departments helps in building the nation's credibility and the legitimacy of its policies, which is critical for their successful implementation (Wekesa *et al.*, 2025). By addressing stakeholder concerns, governments can form partnerships and mobilise resources from a broad spectrum of actors. Freeman (1984) argues that an organisation's success is determined by how well it manages its relationships with stakeholders. When governments adopt a stakeholder approach to communication, they involve diverse groups in the decision-making process and ensure that their policies reflect a balance of interests. For instance, global investors may prioritise policies that ensure political stability, regulatory transparency, and investment protection, while local businesses may favour policies that promote entrepreneurship and local economic growth. This requires governments to ensure that their communication strategies are inclusive and responsive to the needs of various stakeholders, thereby creating a cooperative environment conducive to economic development.

Leading proponents of stakeholder theory view an economy as a set of value-creating relationships between groups with a legitimate interest in the activities and outcomes of the nation, and upon whom the nation depends to achieve its objectives (Valentinov and Roth, 2023; Phillips *et al.*, 2019). Ngwenya *et al.* (2022) suggest that strategic communication involves information provision, persuasion, dialogue, and relational communication aimed at achieving a nation's mission.

The integration of Framing Theory and Stakeholder Theory offers a comprehensive understanding of how strategic communication can influence economic policy and mobilise resources for development. Together, these theories highlight the critical role of communication in shaping public perceptions and fostering the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders to achieve sustainable development goals. Stakeholder theory underscores the importance of engaging key actors in the policy development process to align policies with diverse interests and secure the necessary resources for successful implementation. Meanwhile, framing theory focuses on the strategic presentation of policies to influence public opinion and garner support. By merging these theoretical perspectives, this research provides insights into how communication strategies can promote economic growth in developing economies. Benedictis-Kessner (2020) points out that strategic communication enables national leaders to present information about their own performance, emphasising positive outcomes and enhancing public support.

Methodology

To explore the role of strategic communication in shaping economic policies and mobilising resources for development, this study employs a qualitative research methodology, focusing on the analysis of policy documents, case studies, and existing literature. This interpretive approach is deemed suitable as it aligns with the theoretical framework and is more appropriate than a quantitative approach for addressing the research objectives. A qualitative approach is particularly effective when examining phenomena that are not well understood or are complex in nature (Barness *et al.*, 2022). The study utilises a range of secondary data sources, including scholarly publications, official reports, and policy analyses from several developing countries, such as Brazil, Indonesia, and South Africa. A comparative case study methodology is employed to investigate how these nations have leveraged strategic communication to achieve economic policy objectives and attract foreign investment. By drawing lessons from successful cases, the study aims to identify common patterns and strategies that have contributed to effective resource mobilisation and positive development outcomes. A key focus is placed on synthesising vital communication tactics, stakeholder engagement processes, and the formulation of economic policies within these contexts.

Findings and Discussion

The examination of case studies from Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia reveals several critical issues regarding the role of strategic communication in shaping economic policies and mobilising resources for development. The findings underscore the importance of framing, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and the use of digital platforms in fostering economic resilience and attracting investment. Ineffective communication strategies often lead to the failure to effectively apply the mechanisms for crafting and implementing state socio-economic policies (Bragina *et al.*, 2020). The data highlights the following themes:

Framing Economic Policies for Greater Legitimacy and Support

In developing economies, where uncertainty often clouds economic development, the legitimacy of policies within the policy process can be unclear. These nations frequently experience multiple ambiguous and multifaceted forms of democratic input (Olausson, 2020). One of the key conclusions of the study is the importance of framing in the effectiveness of economic programmes. Public and investor support is typically higher for governments that can clearly articulate their economic policies in a manner that resonates with the country's values and identity. For example, Brazil's economic policies were framed around "inclusive growth," aligning economic changes with broader national goals of social cohesion and development. Institutional reforms in Brazil were generally implemented in response to a series of internal and external crises (Afonso *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, the South African government positioned its post-apartheid economic plans as a means of fostering social justice and reducing inequality. By framing policies as part of a collective national goal, these governments successfully garnered legitimacy and support, which is consistent with Framing Theory (Entman, 1993). This theory suggests that how information is presented influences how it is perceived.

In Indonesia, the central bank has effectively communicated its policy objectives, rationale, and macroeconomic forecasts, helping to maintain legitimacy and confidence in the country's economic direction (Ahokpossi *et al.*, 2020). In emerging economies, where economic changes may face resistance due to political history or economic instability, policy framing becomes particularly critical. Governments can overcome these obstacles by framing their policies as opportunities for expansion, stability, and shared prosperity, which fosters domestic and international support. Framing policies as essential to national identity and future progress helps shift the focus from short-term challenges to long-term benefits, further building legitimacy (Africa Development Bank, 2023). Furthermore, Wekesa et al. (2025) emphasise that communication with stakeholders through platforms like policy consultations enhances the legal authority of government actions, ensuring that citizens' needs are considered.

Stakeholder Engagement as a Key Driver of Policy Success

Another crucial finding is the significance of stakeholder engagement in the communication process. According to Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), the success of economic policies depends on understanding and addressing the concerns of diverse groups, including citizens, businesses, investors, and international organisations. In Indonesia, the government employed a consultative approach to involve various stakeholders in policy formulation. This approach ensured that local businesses, foreign investors, and civil society groups had a voice in the process, which facilitated smoother policy implementation and attracted investment (Ahokpossi *et al.*, 2020). Stakeholder engagement enhances communication and strengthens relationships, which helps resolve ethical dilemmas faced by leaders (Xengwana *et al.*, 2023).

The South African National Treasury has highlighted that public entities perform better when robust systems and policies are in place and performance is monitored. This indicates that stakeholder engagement in strategic management is crucial for improving public service delivery (Twum-Darko *et al.*, 2023). The research suggests that governments in developing economies should adapt their communication strategies to accommodate the diverse interests of stakeholder groups. For instance, foreign investors tend to prioritise political stability and regulatory transparency, while local businesses may be more concerned with policies that foster entrepreneurship and local economic growth. By addressing the needs of different stakeholders and involving them in policy formulation, governments can forge partnerships and raise funds for development. Effective stakeholder engagement supports sustainable development, improving economic performance in developing economies (Xengwana *et al.*, 2023).

Transparency and Accountability in Communication

The study also revealed that transparency significantly influences the effectiveness of strategic communication. Governments that are open about the risks, trade-offs, and challenges associated with economic policies are better able to gain the trust of investors and the public. For example, the South African government acknowledged the risks of temporary unemployment during structural adjustments but framed these challenges within the larger context of long-term stability and growth. This transparency helped manage public expectations and promoted a sense of accountability. Ferreira and Rossouw (2016) argue that sound macroeconomic policies must be implemented to foster economic growth and support redistribution in developing economies.

Similarly, transparency in government communication fosters trust and helps manage stakeholder concerns. When governments are candid about the potential risks of economic policies and outline strategies to mitigate them, they create an environment of trust and credibility. This is crucial for encouraging investment, as investors are more likely to commit resources when they believe the government is being honest. Ahokpossi *et al.* (2020) argue that in Indonesia, transparency in central bank communication enhances policy credibility and allows markets to respond more smoothly to policy changes.

Digital Platforms for Broadening Reach and Engagement

The use of digital platforms for expanding the reach of strategic communication emerged as a key trend. Governments in Brazil and Indonesia, for instance, have leveraged digital media, including social media and online platforms, to disseminate policy information to a wider audience. These platforms facilitate real-time interaction, enabling governments to address questions or concerns directly. In Brazil, the government used digital tools to inform the public about the status of economic reforms and to encourage dialogue about the benefits and challenges of these changes. Digital platforms also enable governments to combat misinformation and provide the public with accurate, timely information.

The rise of digital communication is particularly significant in developing economies, where traditional media may be restricted or controlled. Digital platforms offer a more transparent, inclusive, and cost-effective way to engage with stakeholders. As internet access increases and smartphone ownership rises in developing countries, governments must adopt innovative communication strategies to engage meaningfully with their citizens and stakeholders (Africa Development Bank, 2023). This digital transformation supports the goals of Framing Theory by enabling governments to frame their policies in real time and reach broader audiences, fostering increased public participation in the governance process.

Risk Communication and Managing Uncertainty

The research also emphasised the importance of clear risk communication in managing economic policy uncertainty. Emerging economies often face market volatility, political unpredictability, and external economic shocks, which can undermine investment and public support for reforms. Governments that acknowledge these risks and communicate clear strategies for managing them are better able to maintain investor confidence and public backing. For example, Brazil's government introduced fiscal reforms and initiatives to strengthen financial institutions, which helped mitigate perceived risks related to economic volatility and encouraged both domestic and foreign investment.

Effective risk communication is crucial for managing public expectations and ensuring continued support for economic policies. Framing Theory is relevant here, as it suggests that governments can reduce fears and maintain long-term support by framing risks as short-term and manageable. By communicating the long-term benefits of economic reforms, governments can reassure the public and attract the necessary backing for implementation (Sherman and Trithart, 2021).

Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in Shaping Economic Image

Public diplomacy, which involves the use of soft power, emerged as another vital theme. Governments in developing countries are increasingly using communication to project a positive image of their economies and attract foreign investment. By demonstrating political stability, economic potential, and a commitment to sustainable development, governments can strengthen their international standing. For instance, Brazil has used public diplomacy to showcase its advancements in green energy and sustainable development, attracting interest from foreign investors and environmental organisations.

Public diplomacy enables governments to frame economic policies not only in terms of their domestic benefits but also in relation to global issues such as social inequality, climate change, and regional security. By engaging in global discourse and positioning themselves as responsible members of the international community, developing countries can increase their access to international resources and investment, thereby enhancing their soft power (Snow, 2022).

Conclusion

In emerging economies, strategic communication plays a crucial role in influencing economic policies and mobilising resources for development. This study explored the effect of strategic communication in shaping economic policies and raising funds for development in South Africa, Brazil, and Indonesia using qualitative methods and case studies. The findings suggest that governments in developing countries can enhance public support, inspire investor confidence, and promote sustainable economic growth by effectively crafting policies, engaging stakeholders, maintaining transparency, and leveraging digital platforms. The application of Framing Theory and Stakeholder Theory has provided a valuable framework for understanding the relationship between strategic communication and economic resilience, offering policymakers actionable insights.

The research highlights that effective economic communication goes beyond merely sharing information; it involves presenting policies in ways that align with the values and priorities of both domestic and international audiences. Stakeholder engagement, risk communication, and transparency are essential factors in the success of these policies. As global economic dynamics continue to evolve, the integration of strategic communication into the policymaking process will remain critical to ensuring the success of development projects in emerging economies. By focusing on these communication strategies, governments can create an environment conducive to sustained growth, economic stability, and adaptability to global challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for governments and policymakers in developing economies looking to use strategic communication to influence economic policies and raise funds for development:

1. Enhance Framing Strategies: Governments should focus on presenting reforms as opportunities for inclusive growth and national advancement. By aligning economic policies with national values and objectives, governments can enhance the legitimacy of their policies and garner wider public support.

2. Engage Stakeholders Effectively: Governments should prioritise thorough stakeholder engagement, ensuring that key groups – such as local businesses, civil society organisations, and foreign investors – are actively involved in the policymaking and communication processes. Tailoring communication strategies to address the concerns of various stakeholder groups will help resolve conflicts and build partnerships that support development.

3. Ensure Transparency and Accountability: To effectively manage public expectations and address concerns, governments must adopt transparent communication practices. Being open about the risks, challenges, and trade-offs associated with economic reforms will help build trust and foster accountability, ultimately boosting investor and public confidence.

4. Leverage Digital Platforms: Governments should optimise the use of digital communication platforms to engage with a wider audience, combat misinformation, and facilitate real-time interaction. These platforms offer a powerful tool for governments to involve citizens directly in policymaking and provide updates on policy progress. For example, the Bank of Indonesia has successfully used platforms like YouTube to broadcast monetary policy announcements to a broader audience (Ahokpossi *et al.*, 2020).

5. Develop Risk Communication Strategies: Governments in developing economies should prioritise clear and consistent risk communication. By addressing potential risks and outlining strategies to manage them, governments can preserve investor confidence and maintain public support for reforms.

6. Strengthen International Partnerships: To attract foreign investment and aid, governments should communicate their development plans clearly and effectively to international partners, donors, and investors. Strong communication with these groups is essential for mobilising the resources needed to drive economic development.

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights, it has several limitations:

1. Geographical Focus: This research only examined case studies from three countries – Indonesia, South Africa, and Brazil. The findings may not be fully applicable to other regions, particularly those with different political, social, and economic contexts.

2. Lack of Primary Data: The study relied on secondary data sources such as reports, policy documents, and existing research. Although these sources offered valuable insights, they may not have captured a full range of perspectives or reflected recent changes in the political landscape.

3. Focus on Public Policy Communication: The study focused specifically on how communication influences public policy and attracts investment. Other forms of communication that might affect economic development, such as grassroots movements or private sector-to-private sector communication, were not addressed.

4. Time Constraints: The temporal scope of the study may limit its ability to document the long-term effects of strategic communication on economic growth. A longitudinal study would provide more comprehensive insights into how communication strategies impact economic outcomes over time.

Future Research

Future research in this area could explore several additional dimensions:

1. Comparative Studies Across Different Regions: Comparative studies across different continents and political systems could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how communication strategies vary in diverse contexts. This would enrich the global perspective on strategic communication in economic development.

2. Longitudinal Studies: Long-term research could assess the sustained effects of strategic communication on economic resilience and growth. Such studies would help researchers evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies over time and their contribution to continuous investment and public support.

3. Quantitative Analysis of Communication Impact: Future research could employ quantitative methods, such as surveys or economic modelling, to measure the direct impact of strategic communication efforts on economic indicators like foreign direct investment (FDI), GDP growth, or poverty reduction.

4. Public Diplomacy and Soft Power: Further studies on the role of public diplomacy and soft power in shaping the economic image of developing nations could offer insights into how these countries use communication to enhance their global standing, attract foreign investment, and participate in global development initiatives. Exploring the intersection of communication, international relations, and economic policy will help shed light on the broader geopolitical implications of strategic communication in economic development.

Statements and Declarations

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