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Editorial

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Guest Editor

We present in this issue of Loyola Journal of Social Sciences a collection of articles covering a wide range of viewpoints on good governance for service delivery in a decentralised system with global imperatives. As countries have democratised, the call for accountability and transparency in the public sector has increased the demand by citizens for greater public value. The recent global credit crunch has placed immense strain on the use of public resources with the resultant need for cost-cutting and more prudent management of public resources. This reality should be viewed against the backdrop of an increasingly uneasy citizenry. A citizenry that is mindful of its rights to public services and one which does not seem to shy away from public protests and riots to make its voice heard.

The changes should also be viewed against the backdrop of the establishment, by many countries, of a range of policy processes that lend themselves to public involvement and public participation in governance processes - including decentralisation and community based planning. This milieu of governance processes necessitates a shift from the traditional public administration characterised by continuity, hierarchy and impartiality to a public administration that is more prudent in its use of resources, managerial in approach but people-centred in its values. The clear changing relationships between the state and society require, among other activities, the enhancement of public management, public governance and public value. Corollary to this is the need to redesign planning, monitoring and evaluation activities to meet new governance processes while seeking for strategies and solutions to the creation of a knowledge economy.

In keeping with this view, South Africa launched its National Development Plan on 15th August, 2012. This plan, put together through a consultative process by the National Planning Commission (NPC),aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The NPC is confident that "...South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive

economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society" (National Planning Commission:2011;1). The slogan of the National Development Plan "Our Future – Make it Work"suggests an implicit commitment to transform South Africa's institutions and service delivery processes, aligning them with the vision for efficient and effective performance. Indeed one of the strategies suggested in the National Development Plan is that society be mobilised to support the plan through conducting research on critical issues affecting long-term development; advising government and social partners on implementing the plan and working with relevant state agencies to report on the progress of the Plan's objectives.

Responding to these strategies inevitably draws on the efficient functioning of the public sector and on the principles of good governance, responsiveness and accountability. For South Africa, the shift is not an easy one. Decades of colonialism followed by years of apartheid and separate development present a scenario of a public service battling to balance the needs of its diverse citizenry. On one hand, the public service system needs to maintain global standards of an investor friendly and technologically advanced system. On the other hand the public service system still has to deal with fundamentals of delivering such rudimentary services of water and sanitation to a citizenry that had hitherto been excluded from such services. Thus South Africa is faced with critical questions relating to public service delivery processes amongst which are the following;

- What governance processes nurture the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes?
- How can public accountability be upheld and what kind of strategic communication processes work best?
- How can political and community oversight be drawn upon to ensure stringent use of resources while delivering the right services to all the citizens in an investor friendly environment?
- How can public servants be held accountable with respect to the management and monitoring of their performance?
- What complexities of global public governance might positively (or negatively) impact the provision of public services to local communities?

In this issue of the Loyola Journal of Social Sciences, empirical and conceptual papers help to explore these and related questions. The contributions in this issue shed light on contemporary public

administration, management and governance in South Africa specifically and in developmental states in general. While the focus is on South Africa, most papers are of a comparative nature and draw on lessons from international best practice in public governance.

Dassah provides a literature analysis of public sector reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa and specifically comments on the three waves of public sector reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa lamenting that these reforms have not yielded positive outcomes. This, he argues, is because the reforms have in the main been donor driven and have been implemented in a milieu characterised by constrained resources with resultant reliance on the private sector to perform public responsibilities. For this reason, it is necessary to give recognition to, and nurture, public service talent and commitment among existing employees by paying attention to critical resources needed and providing appropriate incentives rather than diminish the role of the state by introducing private sector ideals into the public sector. Dassah maintains however, that good governance remains the most critical aspect of public sector reform.

Madue explores the extent to which oversight by the polity is exercised over the executive with specific regard to local government in South Africa. He observes that the fact that local political representatives are elected at community level means that greater accountability can be demanded by the very communities who elect them. While numerous oversight structures exist, Madue focuses on the critical role that Municipal Public Accounts Committees and Audit Committees can and should play in promoting good governance, transparency and accountability for the use of municipal resources adding that the capacity of these structures in rural areas is worrisome in relation to their urban counterparts.

Basheka and Mubangizi take the discussion on oversight a step further and focus on citizen-driven approaches to fighting corruption in public procurement – a process that is very vulnerable to corruption. Focusing on Uganda and using empirical evidence, they point out factors that drive successful citizen-driven approaches to fighting corruption. Drawing on the principal-agency theory, Basheka and Mubangizi observe that, in a democracy, the voting citizenry is sovereign, and are the bona fide principals, with public administrators and managers being agents in the principle-agency dichotomy. It is thus up to the citizens to hold the public administrators accountable in all public administration processes – including public procurement. They suggest practices that can be said to facilitate effective citizen engagement in the budgetary and

expenditure processes in a decentralised system and thus ensure accountability and transparency.

On the issue of transparency and accountability, Subban and Singh suggest that the adoption of an efficient and effective communication model is essential for enhanced service delivery and contribution to good governance. They further propose that incorporation of e-governance into the government communication cache would promote maximum publicity in service delivery and, more importantly, promote reciprocal feedback that would inform future government service delivery processes. Using a provincial department as a case in point, Singh and Subban explore the significance of an effective strategic communication system for upholding accountability as a mechanism of advancing good governance. They conclude that South Africa is faced with the challenge of creating and adopting sound policy and effective communication strategies that translateinto strategic and operational processes while ensuring that the public have faith in the manner in which public institutions are performing with regard to service delivery.

Effective institutional performance is one of the indicators of good governance. In the South African public service, employee performance management is largely based on the Employee Performance Management and Development System (EPMDS). Existing anecdotal evidence raises questions about the system's usefulness. Drawing on empirical data, Duma and Mubangizi evaluate the effectiveness of the EPMDS in the Department of Sports and Recreation in KwaZulu-Natal – one of nine provinces of South Africa. The findings of the study indicate that Department of Sports and Recreation, like other Departments in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government, is implementing the policy of EPMDS. Employees have a reasonable understanding of the need for such a system, and the benefits that can be derived by the Department if the system was to be implemented properly. Tellingly, employees' dissatisfaction with the system concerned its implementation, not its conceptualisation.

To remain relevant to its citizenry, local government should ideally focus on local issues without losing sight of global ones. To this effect, Ruffin considers the metropolitan local government of eThekwini (situated in KwaZulu-Natal – one of South Africa's nine provinces) as an emerging actor in global affairs. Based upon interviews with relevant personnel across the three spheres of government, Ruffin's article contends that metropolitan municipalities could be de-centralised places of coordination and

collaboration for international relations. As such, municipalities can be seen as local development states where public values, and not just factual judgements, figure into good governance decision-making. In this regard, the article shows ways in which the eThekwini metropolitan municipality is emerging as an actor in global affairs and the spinoffs for good governance in the municipality. While such interrelations are useful, countries can only maintain their theoretical identity as knowledge economies within the broader context of globalisation (Stapleton, 2002:213).

In the context of building a knowledge economy Wanjiru., Penceliah and Dassah explore the role of public administration processes and policies as tools for ensuring the realisation of South Africa's sustainable development objectives in the context of the National System of Innovation. The National System of Innovation is concerned with knowledge flows and its smooth operation depends on the fluidity of knowledge flows among NSI actors such as enterprises, universities and research institutions. This article asserts that developing an acceptable level of understanding of the role of research in South Africa is essential to developing better socio-economic and innovation policies.

Taken as a whole these papers raise important and pertinent issues which, it is hoped, will add value to the contemporary discourse in public administration, management and governance in South Africa and beyond.

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Managing the Public Sector in Sub-Saharan Africa: Balance Sheet of Three Decades of Reforms

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Abstract: Public Administration has undergone several paradigm shifts in seeking to establish itself as an autonomous field of study. A defining moment in the recent history of public administration practice is the influence that the New Public Management (NPM) has exerted in transforming public sector management in sub-Saharan Africa. NPM reflects structural, managerial and organisational changes that took place in Western countries in the 1970s. These changes meant that private sector ideals were introduced into the public sector thus moving public administration towards public management and pushing the state towards managerialism and a market-based public service management culture.Since the 1980s, sub-Saharan Africa has undergone three waves of public-sector reforms: structural reform (1980s and early 1990s), capacity-building (mid-1990s and 2000), and current service improvement (late 1990s and beyond). Using secondary sources and in-depth analyses of relevant literature, the influence of NPM in triggering the waves of reforms which swept across sub-Saharan Africa, dislodging the traditional Weberian approach to public administration, are discussed. More importantly, there is a focus on outcomes of these reforms. Analysis of public-sector reform literature indicates outcomes have not been positive. Valuable lessons some African countries could learn in order to lay a good foundation for substantially improving success of current and future public sector management reforms, are presented.

Keywords: New Public Management, paradigms, public administration, public-sector reforms, structural adjustment programmes, sub-Saharan Africa.

Introduction

In establishing an identity for itself as an autonomous academic discipline or field, Public Administration has undergone a number of 'metamorphoses' or paradigm shifts. Henry (1975; 1990), sketched the development of Public Administration as follows:

- Politics/administration dichotomy;
- Principles of Public Administration;
- Public Administration as political science;
- Public Administration as administrative science (or management); and
- Public Administration as public administration.

The field is thought to be in its sixth and current paradigm shift: Public Administration as networked governance. While this article does not focus on paradigms of Public Administration per se, it clarifies the meaning of 'paradigm'. Two definitions are noteworthy. Citing Kuhn (1970), Royal (2000:n.p.) defines 'paradigm' as "…the total pattern of perceiving, conceptualizing, acting, validating and valuing associated with a particular image of reality that prevails in a science or branch of science". According to Göktürk (n.d.:6, citing Ritzer, 1975), a paradigm is: … a fundamental image of the subject matter within a science. It serves to define what should be studied, what questions should be asked, and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answers obtained. The paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science and serves to differentiate one scientific community (or sub-community) from another. It subsumes, defines and interrelates the exemplars, theories, and methods and tools that exist within it.

Paradigms of Public Administration have defining moments when they exert some notable influence on the discipline. This article focuses on the defining moment of Public Administration as administrative management, when New Public Management (NPM) overwhelmingly influenced public sector reforms, which swept across sub-Saharan Africa – dislodging the Weberian approach to public sector management in the process. Since the beginning of the new millennium, public sector reforms have tended to draw on the governance perspective, focusing on poverty reduction strategies, and being influenced by the networked governance paradigm.

Administrative and management reforms of government in sub Saharan Africa – more commonly called public sector (management) reforms – have been a phenomenon since the 1980s, and are influenced largely by NPM. Mhone (2003:11) notes that:

historically discourses about modes of governance and public administration in colonial and post-colonial regimes have been dominated by Weber Ian (sic) approaches emphasizing procedural and instrumental approaches of institutional, organizational and functioning of public administration apparatuses … Following the ascendancy of structural and adjustment and stabilization programmes in Africa beginning in the 1980s, New Public Management approaches superseded and subsumed Weberian approaches by focusing on the instrumental functions of the public sector and how this can be made more efficient and more effective.

The Weberian approach – according to Mhone (2003:11) – gave way to NPM in the 1980s. Ascendancy of NPM ideas over the Weberian approach to the public sector led to a changed role (more of service provision, less of production) and function (efficiency, effectiveness, honesty, responsiveness, robustness and manageability) of the public sector (Jooste, 2008:1). At the time of independence of many states, the public sector in sub-Saharan Africa held great promise for them, and was seen as the platform for growth and socio-economic development. However, external events in the 1970s and 1980s led to the introduction of radical structural reforms that sought to transform the manner in which the public sector operates.

This article reviews the outcomes of three waves of predominantly NPM-inspired reforms. These are: structural reform, capacity building, and service delivery improvement aimed at transforming public sector management in sub-Saharan Africa. Section 1 provides the background, while Section 2 briefly discusses the rationale for and drivers of reforms. NPM, which has exerted great influence on reforms, is discussed in the first part of Section 3, and new institutional economics – a major theory underpinning reforms – is discussed in the second part. The three waves of reform are given prominence in Section 4. Section 5 focuses on the outcomes of the reforms in four key areas, while Section 6 gives some insights into why the reform outcomes turned out to be predominantly negative. Section 7 concludes by presenting lessons/measures that sub-Saharan African states could learn/take.

Background

Sub-Saharan Africa has been, and remains, a testing ground for social and economic reforms (Edigheji, 2008:4). The subregion has been involved in public sector management reform initiatives since the 1980s. With Ghana's attainment of independence in March 1957, followed by that of other countries in the early and late 1960s, prospects of strong central governments using the public sector as a fulcrum for socio-economic development generated optimism. Local private enterprise was still undeveloped, and state capitalism, which became the dominant development strategy, saw governments "capturing the commanding heights of the economy" (Ayee, 2005:35) through nationalisation and creation of state-owned enterprises.

Administrative states emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, equipped with bureaucratic trappings to facilitate societal transformation. African governments became highly centralised and bureaucratised, and employed patronage to control the inherited civil services, which consequently became ineffective. By the 1980s, a number of factors had redefined the state/public sector, including: proliferation of one-party systems, public sector ineffectiveness, economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s and valuable lessons that had emerged from success of market-led economies (Ayee, 2005:1). The ineffectiveness of public officials, and corruption, also contributed to a need to redefine the role of the state.

The public sector has a significant role to play in socio-economic development in developing countries, and initial optimism about its potential in sub-Saharan Africa was not unfounded. The World Bank (2008:xiii) states that: "the public sector is the largest spender and employer in virtually every developing country, and it sets the policy environment for the rest of the economy … the quality of the public sector accountability, effectiveness, and efficiency in service delivery, transparency, and so forth – is thought by many to contribute to development". To perform this developmental role, it is essential that the public sector exhibit efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, accountability and productivity. Since the 1980s, the public sector in many sub-Saharan African countries has undergone three major waves of reform initiatives in pursuit of these qualities.

Rationale for and Drivers of Public Sector Reforms

To understand the rationale for public sector reforms, it is important to note that the public sector is the platform for governments globally

to make an impact in the lives of citizens. Generally, public sector reforms aim to renew and professionalise the sector in order to facilitate sustainable socio-economic, political and technological development (Omoyefa, 2008:18). More specifically, however, three objectives emerge from the literature, namely: (1) "to achieve better delivery of public services affecting living standards" (World Bank, 2000:6); (2) "to create a climate conducive to private sector development" (World Bank, 1997:103) and (3) "to make the state or government institutional apparatus market-friendly, lean, managerial, decentralized and 'customer' friendly, in the hope that it would better meet its societal objectives of good governance" (Mhone, 2003:10).

To achieve these objectives the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) relied on stabilisation and Stuctural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which were based on two strategies. The first was procedural rationality, which involved introducing private sector principles to internal workings of the public sector to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The second involved instrumental rationality, or allowing market forces, rather than state intervention, to determine efficient allocation of resources (Omoyefa, 2008:20).

Larbi (2003:n.p.) cites a combination of factors that have influenced NPM-type reforms in developed countries, some of which have also been instrumental in NPM reforms in developing countries. They include:

- economic and fiscal pressures on governments;

- external trade imbalances and indebtedness;

- public attitudes toward and criticism of Weberian public administration;

- pro-market and pro-private sector advocacy, and denigration of the welfare state;

- donor advocacy and lending conditions of international financial institutions in SAPs;

- competition generated by globalisation; and

- emergence of new information technology.

Peterson (2011:7) states that public sector reforms are driven by four sets of factors, and that reforms succeed when they are aligned with the four drivers of public sector reform, that is context, ownership, purpose and strategy (COPS):

- context: encompasses political, economic and social dimensions at the macro-level; administrative structure,

bureaucratic culture and legal procedures at the meso-level (or mid-level), and four necessary conditions (trust, need, help and urgency) at the micro-level;

- ownership: involves an array of shareholders and agents of reform consisting of "saints" (supporters of reform), "demons" (opponents of reform) and "wizards" (designers and co-implementers of reform with "saints");

- purpose: policy-driven (domestic versus foreign) or technique-driven (which may either aim at consolidating a firm financial plateau or attempt to reach the summit of international best practice); and

- strategy: involves four tasks in the reform process: recognising meaning; understanding and respecting what already exists; improving on what already exists; judicious and justified change; and sustainability, or attending to the operating and maintenance arm of reform.

New Public Management and New Institutional Economics

Public sector reforms have been influenced by NPM and informed mainly by the new economic theory of the state, also called neo-institutional economics (NIE) theoretical framework. This section briefly outlines key aspects of NPM and two theories under the NIE framework.

New Public Management

According to Ayee (2005:12), NPM reflects structural, managerial and organisational changes that took place in Western countries in the 1970s, based on the import of private sector ideas into the public sector, thereby moving public administration towards public management, and pushing the state towards managerialism, with a market-based public service management or enterprise culture. NPM components fall into two interrelated strands: first, a managerial and organisational improvement aspect focusing on decentralisation and, secondly, a markets- and competition-oriented component. Although institutional and capacity constraints of NPM limited its application to the African public sector, it influenced four areas of public sector reform: decentralised management; disaggregation and downsizing of public services; performance management, contracting out public services to give effect to markets and the private sector; and introduction of user fees (Ayee, 2005:12). Key doctrines of NPM are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Doctrinal Components of New Public Management

No	Doctrine	Meaning	Typical justification
1	'Hands-on professio nal management' in the public sector	Active, visible. dis cretionary control of organisations from named persons at the top, 'free to manage'	Accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility for action not diffusion of power
2	Explicit standards and measures of performance	Definition of goals. targets, indicators of success, preferably expressed in quanti tative terms, especi ally for professional services	Accountability requires clear statement of goals efficiency requires 'hard look' at objectives
3	Greater emphasis on output controls	Resource allocation and rewards linked to measured perfor mance; breakup of centralised bureau cracy-wide personnel management	Need to stress results rather than procedures
4	Shift to disaggre gation of units in the public sector	Break up of formerly 'monolithic' units; un bundling of U-form management systems into corporatised units around products, ope rating on decentralised 'one-line' budgets and dealing with one another on an 'arms-length' basis	Need to create 'manageable' units, separate provision and production interests, gain efficiency advan tages of use of contract or franchise arrange ments inside as well as outside the public sector
5	Shift to greater competition in public sector	Move to term contracts and public tendering procedures	Rivalry as the key to lower costs and better standards
6	Stress on private-sector styles of management practice	Move away from military-style 'public service ethic', greater flexibility in hiring and rewards; greater use of public relations techniques	Need to use 'proven' private sector manage ment tools in the public sector
7	Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use	Cutting direct costs, raising labour disci pline, resisting union demands, limiting 'compliance costs' to business	Need to check resource demands of public sector and 'do more with less'

Source: Hood (1991)

New Institutional Economics

NIE theory emphasises the superiority of the free market, and competition, in distributing goods and services efficiently and increasing efficiency of service delivery (Jooste, 2008:5). NIE reforms are based on contestability, user choice, transparency and incentives. NIE deems sweeping state regulation unnecessary except in specific situations of market failure. Deregulation or liberalisation, and a decreasing role of the state are hallmarks of NIE, which comprises several aspects that have collectively influenced public sector reform, including: neo-liberalism, public choice theory, principal-agent theory, transaction cost economics and property rights theory. Agency and public choice theories are highlighted below.

Agency Theory

Agency theory deals with long-term implicit and explicit contracts between principals (the public) and agents (government). The principal-agent theory acknowledges the difficulty the public has in holding government to account. This difficulty arises from lack of information, inability to monitor agents' behaviour and incompleteness of the employment contract (Larbi, 2003:n.p.). The theory postulates that pursuit of self-interests, rather than public interest, on the part of public officials, has led to opportunistic behaviour in public administration and poor public sector performance.

Public Choice Theory

The Weberian bureaucratic model, which is based on the principles of bureaucratic hierarchy, planning, centralisation, direct control and self-sufficiency, has come under attack by public choice theorists for focusing solely on delivery and neglecting costs-outputs relationships (Larbi, 2003:n.p.). Underlying public choice theory is the belief that unrewarded efficiency in the public sector means that politicians and bureaucrats lack incentives to control costs, leading to waste and overspending. Public choice theorists also charge public bureaucracies with slow responses to both environmental changes and users' needs. In spite of some limitations, public choice theory is important because it provides plausible explanations for why governments make decisions that seem to be irrational. The theory casts light on why public interest is not served, why vested interests and lobbyists acquire influence, and why harmful policies are implemented (Ayee, 2005:6).

Waves of Reforms

Fatile and Adejuwon (2010:147) note that while public sector reforms are global, that their most significant impact has been felt

in Africa. Citing Kiggundu (1998), the authors state that in the ten-year period between 1987 and 1996, 64% of all public sector reform operations were conducted in African countries. Three waves or phases are discernible in the history of public sector reforms in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to Olowu (n.d.:10), African countries have undergone four rounds of reforms in three waves since the 1970s. The earliest administrative reforms in Africa occurred in the 1970s, about a decade after most countries achieved independence. These early reforms sought to transform colonial bureaucratic systems, designed to keep law and order, into administrative units facilitating development. These initiatives were compromised by the debt-ridden recessionary economies of the 1970s, and by dysfunctional economic, and political developments.

First Wave: *Structural Adjustment Reform Programmes*

The dynamics of state modernisation of the state in Africa started in the 1980s with moves to improve state capacity to perform effectively and efficiently; progressively redirect public expenditure from consumption to investment; infuse macro-economic stability and maintain law and order; and liberalise, deregulate and provide essential social services (Ayee, 2005:19).

The first wave of reforms was the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s, known as structural reforms. In terms of motivation, according to Mhone (2003), the World Bank's 1981 *Accelerated Development in sub-Saharan Africa* (Berg Report) called for comprehensive public sector reforms after identifying four areas of concern hampering economic growth, namely: (1) poor macroeconomic management, epitomised by persistent fiscal deficits, negative interest rates, price inflation and poor exchange rate controls; (2) an over-extended state, with inefficient and wasteful parastatals; (3) protectionism and over-valued local currencies; (4) overspending by welfare-oriented governments on the public service to guarantee jobs, coupled with unsustainable spending on social services.

Generally called the Structural Reform Wave, first-wave reforms occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s, narrowly focusing on effectiveness and efficiency to foster economic growth. SAPs had an economic rationale and a quantitative bias: downsizing bloated civil service bureaucracy and diminishing state dominance in economic affairs through cost recovery, privatisation, retrenchment, recruitment moratoriums and salary reductions. Diminishing of the state's role in the economy is referred to as "rolling back the state" or "withdrawal of the state" (Ayee, 2008:18).

SAPs were occasioned by the global economic recession of the 1970s and 1980s, which led to the roll back of the state from its role in socio-economic development. Dzimbiri (2008:45) asserts that SAPs had three components: (1) an economic aspect of reforms focused on the need to liberalise economies through reduced controls, denationalisation, privatisation, private sector orientation and reliance on markets; (2) Democratisation and decentralisation, increased participation of citizens and public accountability; (3) de-bureaucratisation, public service downsizing, strong anti-corruption measures and improved productivity. Citing Sharma (2006), Dzimbiri (2008:45) states that SAPs led to reduced state involvement in the economy, a growing private sector and stronger public-private partnerships.

Problems associated with the African public service before SAPs included: "excessive expansion in the number of low-level and poorly-qualified employees, particularly in unproductive state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and 'parastatal' agencies; erosion of real wage levels caused by inflation and the effects of import controls, and compression of wage differentials" (Crook, 2010:481). In Ghana, for instance, according to Nunberg (1994: 146), "a top Permanent Secretary earned only 2.5 times the salary of a basic clerk …" The public service was characterised by "problems of moonlighting and absenteeism, low morale, corruption and politicisation of recruitment" (Crook, 2010:481). To overcome these difficulties, downsizing (which involved retrenchments, mergers, moratoriums on recruitment, eliminating ghost workers) and reducing wage scales, in order to save and pay higher salaries to senior managers with scarce skills, were undertaken. The World Bank gave SAP loans to African countries to deal not only with civil service reform, but also with "stabilising macro-economic crises of balance of payments and fiscal deficits, runaway inflation and currency overvaluations" (Crook, 2010:481). In short, the first wave of reforms focused on structural reform by nurturing private sector development, decentralisation, privatisation, commercialisation or liquidation of non-functioning state enterprises (Mutahaba & Kiragu, 2002).

According to DeLancey (2001) and Gordon (2001), structural adjustment policy reforms were based on two key assumptions. The first was that, with low labour costs, African countries would have a comparative advantage in exporting primary (unprocessed raw agricultural and mineral) products to industrialised countries. Secondly, it was assumed that the removal of protective tariffs,

low labour costs and cheap raw materials would attract foreign investment. Further, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund believed that modernisation of African economies and development of private enterprise and civic groups would prevent emergence of autocratic regimes.

It is paradoxical that initial moves to transform public sector management in sub-Saharan Africa were made by the World Bank and IMF. In this sense, it is uncontroversial to say, at least, that the first wave of public sector reform initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa was imposed by the West and has been the focus of much criticism. Objectives, assumptions, features/strategies, achievements and challenges of the three subsequent waves of reform are presented in Table 2 and discussed thereafter.

Table 2: Phases of Public Sector Reform in Africa

Indicators	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Period	1980s to early 1990s	Mid-1990s to 2000	2000 to date
Objectives	Achievement of macro-economic stability	Performance and civil service management	Effective and efficient service delivery
Assumptions	Problems of service provision were the result of price distortion; distortion emanating from wide spread government subsidies	Shifted emphasis from the quantity of employees to their quality to make public sector employment more attractive and decrease the size of the government	(i) Improve service delivery to citizens, making it more responsive and effective (ii) Effective, responsive and legitimate state is crucial for sustaining market economy
Features	Reducing size of state, cost-cutting, retrenchment, cost-recovery, privatization	Features of NPM: remuneration and promotion policies to reward performance; incentives, skills, motivation, contracting out, public-private partnerships, establishing corporate public service providers based on performance contracts such as the executive authority model	Provision of basic services through processes driving pluralisation, decentralisation and participation; beneficiary surveys, self-appraisal exercises, performance improvement plans by public servants; customer-friendliness and responsiveness; poverty reductions strategy plans

Achievements	Marginal reduction insize of public sector,even though it isdebatable; cut back on equipment, services and development expenditure	Marginal improve mentin conditions of service	Improved participation of civil society and other stakeholders in the formulation of some public policies such as poverty reductionstrategy plans; improved consultativeprocess; marginal improvement in quality of service
Challenges	(i) Ignored the historical evidence about the origin of the public sector problem in Africa. Low productivity and inefficiency originated from economic crisis of the 1970s (ii) Reforms ignored a basic fact about people and organisations: people make organisations work, therefore, motivated workers are a *sine qua non* for organisational efficiency. It, therefore, failed to address liveli hood concerns of public sector employees (iii) Lack of ownership of reform (iv) Real downsizing not achieved	(i) One-size-fits-all approach that ignores country-specific organisational aspects of public organisa tions (ii) Created a quagmire for emplo yees, for instance, reduction in govern ment requires that salaries and no-wage benefits remain low; due to hiring freezes, the under paid and poorly motivated workers were being admonished to assu me additional respons ibility and to lead efforts at improving efficiency (iii) Issue of relativity not addressed (iv) Brain drain continued (v) Lack of ownership	Performance improve ment plans and bene ficiary surveys have not been properly orga nised; provision of services for the poor un satisfactory; in spite of participation, poverty reduction strategy plans have not achieved their object ives; quality of service not improved

Source: Ayee (2008:63)

Table 3 shows a timeline political economy orientation of African states, indicating prevailing administrative reforms from the 1960s to date.

Table 3: African Political Economy and Administrative Reforms

	1960-1980	1980s	1990s	2000-2005	Post-2005
Political Economy Orientation	African Socialism/ State Capitalism, Comma nding Heights	Structural adjustment, Economic liberalism	Governance improve ment	Poverty education and rebuilding country systems for millennium development goals/ Paris Declaration	Poverty reduction and rebuilding country systems for millennium development goals/ Paris Declaration
Prevailing Administrative Reforms	Develop ment Administra tion and indigenisa tion	Cutback management: cost and size reduction of public service; privatisa tion and commerciali sation	New Public Manage ment, Capacity building, Market re forms, Perform ance manage ment, mainly for Human resources	Service delivery, Budget reforms, MTEF, budget support and donor harmonisation	Strategic Performance Management

Source: Olowu (n.d.:12)

Second Wave: *Capacity Building*

According to Fatile and Adejuwon (2010:150), the second wave of reforms (mid 1990s to 2000) focused on capacity building. They reflected a realisation that downsizing and pay restructuring had not yielded much in expected savings. McCourt (1998) and Dia (1996) note that retrenchments and salary decompressions failed to create the savings needed to boost skilled workers' salaries. In some cases, overall expenditure on salaries rose. In Ghana, "a wage hike in 1992 cancelled out the previous gains on controlling the wage bill, which, as a percentage of GDP, nearly doubled from 4.5 per cent in 1990 to 8 per cent" (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2010:149).

Batley and Larbi (2004) see reforms of this era as attempts to transfer techniques from developed Western, English-speaking countries to African and other less-developed countries under the auspices of NPM. These techniques, among others, included:

- performance-related pay and managerial autonomy based on 'internal markets';
- emphasis on outputs, rather than 'process';
- use of the private sector to provide services through privatisation, public-private partnerships and contracting out;
- 'agencification' or creating corporate public service providers based on performance contracts; and
- decentralisation to new local government systems.

Consequently, during the second wave, while the need to trim the civil service was still paramount, emphasis shifted to more stringent measures such as restructuring, introducing management systems, performance management, budgeting/financial management and marketisation of service delivery (Crook, 2010:482). Reforms emphasised private sector practices, including decentralisation of public services, downsizing and right-sizing, outsourcing of services (or privatisation), commodification, commercialisation, public-private partnerships, performance-based contracts for senior civil servants (Edigheji, 2008:7) and other aspects. Aid for public sector reforms increased, as did the influence of donors, consultants and expatriate technical assistance personnel. For implementation purposes, consultants and technical assistance personnel were often located in reform offices based in presidents' or prime ministers' offices (Ayee, 2008:20). This arrangement had the effect of sidelining and alienating mainstream ministries.

Third Wave: *Service Delivery Improvement*

A focus on service improvement emerged from the 1997 World Development Report highlighting the need for an "effective, responsive and legitimate state for sustaining an effective market economy" (Crook, 2010:483). It also reflects "the need to demonstrate early results, public demands for transparency and accountability, influence of new public management, the need to support sector wide approaches, and an integrated systems approach" (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2010:151). Emphasis is on service delivery improvements through citizen participation and collaborative implementation. Although still NPM-inspired, reform initiatives from 2000 onwards tend to draw on the governance perspective and focus specifically on poverty reduction strategies, which are mandatory for sub-Saharan African countries seeking loans from donor countries, the World Bank and other international financial institutions. Effectively, this has meant that public servants have had to seek the opinions of service users in formulating service

delivery standards which form part of their performance improvement plans (Crook, 2010:483).

Although the first wave of public sector reforms was imposed on African countries, reform has gained widespread acceptance and importance across various countries (Fatile& Adejuwon, 2010:151). According to Ayee (2008:66), current public sector reforms started in the late 1990s, reflecting the premise that an effective, responsive and legitimate state is essential for a market economy to operate effectively. Central concerns are public sector improvement, responsiveness and effectiveness, links between service delivery and poverty reduction, service standards and the salience of citizens' input in developing improvement plans.

Outcomes of Reforms

This article raises two critical issues; firstly, have the outcomes of more than three decades of public sector reform in sub-Saharan Africa been positive or negative? Secondly, what lessons can be learnt / measures taken to improve current and future reform initiatives?

Literature analyses reveal mixed perspectives on the outcomes of public sector reform. According to Fatile and Adejuwon (2010:149), Stockhlom (2005) provides empirical data on the results of donor-funded attempts to implement NPM-type public sector reforms in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, showing both successes and failures. The authors note that many of the initial gains following reforms have been reversed. In Ghana, for example, increased wages in 1992 "cancelled out the previous gains on controlling the wage bill, which, as a percentage of GDP, nearly doubled from 4.5 percent in 1990 to 8 percent". Mutahaba and Kiragu (2002) indicate that civil service numbers had increased to 330 000 by 1996, an approximately 25% increase on the 1980 figure. Since 1998, according to Mutahaba and Kiragu (2002), the headcount of civil servants had been on the rise and re-introduction of non-salary allowance had reversed gains from earlier efforts to achieve transparent compensation packages. These authors state that "structural reforms … had some limited enclave successes in improving service delivery in a few instances" (Fatile & Adejuwon (2010:150). The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 2003:2) avers that economic programmes such as privatisation of state-owned enterprises produced positive results, which has reduced the African state's role in spheres in which the private sector is a better actor. However, the ECA acknowledges that withdrawal of the state from critical areas such as health, education and housing has been detrimental to many African countries.

For other authors, the verdict is that public sector reforms in sub-Saharan Africa have been unsuccessful. Crook (2010:499) states that:"… the general consensus to be found in both consultants' reports and in the academic literature is that their achievements have been extremely limited, even negative in some instances". Crook (2010:483) further asserts that: "… over 25 years of increasingly lavish, donor-funded public service reforms, efforts have failed to change the situation – if anything, it has got worse".In addition,Jooste (2008:4) states, as an example, that structural adjustments in developing countries had led to increased poverty and eroded public sector capacity. Furthermore, according to Olowu (1999:1), "Since the late 1980s, many African countries have been reforming their civil services (…) Unfortunately, these reforms have not been very successful because of faulty diagnosis and prognosis. They have failed to tackle the major problems confronting African civil services". Finally, citing Olowu (1999:11), Milunovic (2007:3) states that: "… policies from the 1980s aiming at economic stabilization and development of African states such as Ghana have shown little success". This preliminary discussion suggests that more than three decades of public sector reforms have not yielded positive results for Sub-Saharan African countries. In the sub-sections that follow, more focused assessments of the outcomes of specific aspects of public sector reform are provided.

Bureaucratic, Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

There are mixed views on the outcomes of reforms in bureaucracy, civil service and administration. Scholars such as Lienert (1998), Olowu (2003), Therkildsen (2001), Goldsmith (2000) and Schiavo-Campo (1998) suggest civil service numbers were reduced in some selected important countries by about 10%, which resulted in the sub-Saharan Africa having the leanest civil service in the world in the mid-1990s. Specifically, Uganda and Tanzania have been singled out as success stories in this respect. Therkildsen (2000) indicates that between 1986 and 1996, civil service employee numbers in Uganda were reduced from 239,000 to 159,000 and in Tanzania from 335,000 to 270,000 between 1992 and 2000. Olowu (1999:4-5) indicates that Ghana reduced its civil service from 131 089 to 80 000 in 1995.

In Ghana, however, Ayee (2005:21) states that re-hiring and redistribution reversed initial gains. Similarly, Ayee (2005:21) notes that "government expenditure on wages and salaries in Africa increased as a % of total expenditure, while expenditure on goods and services, transfers and capital expenditure went down — even while overseas aid increased from 5% to over 10% of GDP". In

line with these assessments, the 1999 World Bank review pointedly stated that public sector reforms had been "largely ineffective in achieving sustainable results" (Ayee, 2005:18).

Roos (1996) cites empirical evidence to suggest that the NPM-inspired structural adjustment policies of the Bretton Woods institutions (notably the World Bank) compounded the continent's institutional weakness by shrinking the state. Development Plans were terminated, resource allocations for social development were cut, and the already ill-equipped administrative machineries were further stripped of human and material resources, inflicting a lost decade on the continent. The outcome of these reforms was the weakening of states already plagued by administrative incapacity and political legitimacy.

Pay and Reward Systems

The results of pay incentives as drivers of reform are reported to be even worse than those for bureaucratic, civil service and administrative reforms. Crook (2010:484) reports that "only in Botswana … have public sector wages kept pace with inflation – while at the same time, total public sector employees increased fourfold from 24,000 in the late 1970s to 82,000 in the mid-1990s". According to Lienert (1998), apart from Tanzania and Uganda, where real wage increases were realised, in other African countries, real wage levels fell by 2% annually between 1990 and 1996. While some progress was made in decompressing salaries, relative salary levels showed no marked improvements, leading to an exodus of skilled workers. Pay became so uncompetitive for professionals/skilled workers in comparison with local private, non-governmental and donor sectors that between 1986 and 1990 Africa lost 60, 000 middle level personnel to the developed world. Between 1992 and 2003, according to Ayee (2005:22), the health sector in Ghana lost "one third of all trained health workers, and over two thirds of the country's doctors emigrated between 1995 and 2002". According to Ayee (2005), further states that emigration to the United States of Ghanaians with tertiary education and technical skills increased six-fold between 1986 and 1996. Budget constraints also led to employees on lower salaries not being paid for months at a time.

Budget and Financial Management

No success accrued from efforts in this domain. Crook (2010:485) states that "the two key objectives of public service reform – which are to improve management of government budgets and programmes, and to improve the capacity to offer better services

– have not been achieved". Van de Walle (2001) and Killick (2004) used budget tracking to reveal that 51% (education) and 32% (health) of grant monies reached their intended targets in Ghana while only 27% (education) reached its intended recipients in Uganda.

Public Services

Quality of public services, especially education and health, have declined. Crook (2010:485) states that in Tanzania primary school enrolment dropped from 93% in 1980 to 66% in 1996, though the number of teachers increased. In Ghana, an ISSER study (2001) of public sector education "showed that, by the end of primary school (P6) only 4% of pupils could pass basic competence tests in maths, and only 9% in English" (Crook, 2010:486). Crook (2010:486) reports that outsourcing of government contracts and public-private partnerships failed to improve sanitary and waste collection services associated with pit latrines in major West African cities, including Accra, Lagos, Ibadan and Kumasi, as informal settlements proliferate.

Accounting for the Failure of Reform

Based on an analysis of the literature, this section attempts to understand the failure of public sector reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa. That public sector reforms did not yield positive outcomes is indisputable, and a number of explanations have been offered for their failure. Ayee (2005:36) states that SAPs failed to produce positive outcomes because "the reform depended on ready markets for exports and substantial investment from industrial countries, which for the most part never happened." The consequences of SAPs for African countries were economic stagnation and decline in the 1990s and beyond.

Batley and Larbi (2004), according to Jooste (2008:4), provide the following explanation for difficulties experienced with public sector reforms in developing countries:

> Although they never achieved the same level of inclusiveness of benefits, the statist model was more deeply ingrained in their power structures. On it was constructed a deep commitment to the responsibility of the state that carried its own constituency of interests in maintaining interventionism: politicians and bureaucrats with patronage opportunities, professional staff with standards to protect, urban residents enjoying subsidized prices, services and employment, and industrialists and farmers with guaranteed but also

controlled prices. In the poorer countries with weak market systems, power and privilege existed in function of state action, and the relief of poverty depended on access to state redistributed wealth. To challenge the statist model therefore risked challenging the foundations of the state and its legitimacy.

In referring to public sector reforms in the context of developing countries, Polidano (2001:1) states that: "most reforms in government fail. They do not fail because, once implemented, they yield unsatisfactory outcomes. They fail because they never get past the implementation stage at all. They are blocked outright or put into effect only in tokenistic, half-hearted fashion". Implementation is a problem for public sector reforms in developing countries because implementation problems underlie many reform failures. The problem, however, goes beyond implementation. Reform initiatives in developing countries that are implemented fail in terms of outcomes. Crook (2010:486-487) cites explanations for public sector reform failures emanating from official reports and consultants' reports:

- Implementation failure: this is reflected in the World Bank's Public Sector Management Reform Programme for Ghana in 1999, which aimed at comprehensively redefining the roles and functions of the state and its agencies across all sectors. Failure was blamed on lack of capacity, poor quality consultants and agency rivalry (World Bank, 2004);
- Supply-side factors: capacity issues such as underpaid, poor quality staff and information technology-related difficulties;
- Organisational problems: inter-agency resistance, rivalry and conflict arising from reform programmes being located in a dedicated agency, or blurred lines of command;
- Lack of ownership: this often results from lack of commitment to reform/change, and resistance from staff because managers fail to properly explain the reform. It also reflects the failure of donors to encourage local ownership at the outset; and
- Lack of championship for reform is a major factor behind failure as their participation could remove some other obstacles. Agere (2000), and Stevens and Teggeman (2004) suggest that heads of state drive public service reforms, as implementing agencies are often located in their offices.

Academic analysis of the failure of reforms goes beyond attributing it to political elites, and seeks to understand their behaviour. These analyses focus on features of the African state itself. The African

political context is said to be characterised by "patronage-based political systems, and of neo-patrimonial elites living off the economic 'rent' extracted from import/export taxes on minerals and primary commodities"; this suggests that "there is little or no political constituency for reforming the public services to make them more effective and efficient …" (Crook, 2010:488). Chabal and Daloz (1999), Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1999), and Reno (1999, 2002) hold the extreme view that African political elites are caught in a patrimonial web from which there is no escape. For these authors, in Africa, a subversive parallel shadow state based on clientelism, predation and rent-seeking operates symbiotically within the confines of the formal legal-bureaucratic system. In Crook's (2010:488) words: "… while political elites may swear to donors that they want public service reforms in order to get the loans, they do not in practice want a competent law-abiding bureaucracy which could restrain their activities or insist that formal rules be obeyed". However, more moderate patrimonial analysts do not paint a totally bleak picture. For Van de Walle (2001), rent-seeking politicians can, like business people, be interested in having a competent and effective state. Sandbrook (1985) notes that clever and powerful African presidents can play a positive role, while Engelbert (2000) recognises that neo-patrimonial African states differ in effectiveness.

The neo-patrimonial argument is "not a convincing explanation either for a lack of political commitment for public service improvement or for general developmental failure" (Crook, 2010:489). It cannot explain, for example, why 'developmental patrimonialism' succeeded in Cote d'Ivoire under Houphouet-Boigny or why Botswana is a successful state whereas many others are not. Crook (2010) makes three observations: firstly, patronage can be used constructively or destructively; secondly, neo-patrimonialism cannot be used to explain everything wrong in African politics and administration; thirdly, political and social forces, particularly citizen activism and mobilisation, can counter patrimonialism, albeit slowly. A number of lessons can be learnt from sub-Saharan Africa's experience in public sector reform to increase the chances of success of current and future reform initiatives.

Lessons for Sub-Saharan Africa

After decades of implementing public sector reform initiatives, a number of valuable lessons may be learnt by Sub-Saharan African countries:

- the organisational culture within Africa's public services needs to be changed. Findings by Grindle (1997) and Tendler (1997) suggest that commitment to a mission, a feeling of belonging to a team, recognition and reward of good performance, and feeling valued for one's competence and organisational autonomy are associated with success. These factors may be decisive in altering the balance between public servants' organisational commitment and their ulterior motivations. A restoration of the ethos and dignity of public service may further foster a sense that public service work is valued by society;
- African countries themselves must take ownership of reform initiatives. The need for reforms must be felt by countries themselves, and reforms should be driven from within with necessary support, rather than 'dictated' and controlled by external agents;
- while existing best practice guidelines may be of use, the context of implementation is important. Transplanting practices wholesale from developed Western contexts into African environments in a 'one-size fits all' approach is a recipe for failure because developing countries have unique circumstances;
- commitment to and championship of reform efforts by the highest political elites is critical. It is essential for reform initiatives to be locally owned to increase the likelihood of political elites' genuine commitment to seeing reforms succeed. Also, it must be recognised that 'islands of effectiveness', which could serve as models, exist in spite of the general malaise thought to characterise public services in Africa; and
- reform initiatives should be modest, rather than over-ambitious. Small, incremental improvements are more stable and sustainable. Reforms should be piloted in selected ministries/departments in order to improve implementation before rollout. In addition, reform measures should not be unnecessarily top-down. To guarantee buy-in and forestall potential resistance, an inclusive approach is advisable; all staff members need to be well informed about and involved in reform processes.

Finally, although the literature suggests that public services in Africa are bloated, reformers should recognise that understaffing, or lack of essential, skilled and dedicated personnel, rather than overstaffing, is the real problem in Africa's public services. For this reason, it is necessary to give recognition to and nurture public

service talent and commitment among existing employees by paying attention to critical resources needed and providing appropriate incentives.

Recognition of these lessons and realities could assist in renewing the public sector in Sub-Saharan Africa and put it on course to becoming an effective platform for sustained development. The general lesson to be learnt is that for public sector reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa to stand a chance of succeeding, they must be "home-grown; demand-driven; internally consistent and duly coordinated at a national policy level"(Ayee, 2008:155).

Conclusion

Literature on three waves of public sector reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that reforms have not yielded positive outcomes. Crook's (2010:499) words sum up the general verdict: "Yet over 25 years of increasingly lavish, donor-funded public service reforms, efforts have failed to change the situation – if anything, it has got worse. Ayee (2008:155) points out that "past approaches and strategies were dogmatic and technocratic, did not recognise the complexities of unique national circumstances, had a reductionist agenda, adopted a'one-size-fits-all'stance, instead of customising solutions, and were supply-driven. These criticisms are valid and need to be addressed. There is still hope because the seeds of failure often contain the potential recipe for success. The'effective state'(World Development Report, 1997) re-introduces the potentially positive role of the state in development and cautions against diminishing this role, as NPM reforms did (Ayee, 2008:155). Consequently, current strategies seek to match the role of the state with its capacity and resources, while seeking to develop them – by reinvigorating public administration institutions to enable them to perform their enabling, regulating, monitoring and coordinating roles"(Ayee, 2008:155). If lessons outlined in the preceding section are heeded and appropriate measures taken, the African public service can yet become a platform for supporting sustained development.

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The Role of Oversight in Governance

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Abstract: Local government is where service delivery begins. It is about what happens in our homes, in our streets and our communities. If we cannot achieve good governance at this level, we will never be able to claim that South Africa has truly transformed. In line with the principles of good governance, public leaders have a duty to account to those who have put them in such roles. The fact that local political representatives are elected at community level means that greater accountability can be demanded by the very communities who elect them. Good governance calls for the effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and other accountability measures.In the legislative sector (which covers the three spheres of government, that is, national, provincial and local),monitoring and evaluation is exercised by, among others, the oversight committees of parliaments and municipal councils. The purpose of this paper is toexplore the extent to which oversight is exercised over the executive at local government level. All democratic governments have a compendium of laws that stipulate that the executive has to account for how well it has (or has not) delivered on what it has promised, in compliance with the principles of good governance. In 2008, the South African government set a target for all departments and municipalities to achieve a clean audit by 2014. Achieving this target requires a combination of elements, ranging from sound financial management systems, to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, to employing the right people with the right skills, to holding the executive to account. Thus, this paper argues, that the exercise of oversight over the executive is not only a legislative mandate, but an essential element of good governance. The primary question that this paper seeks to address

is: to what extent has oversight over the executive contributed to good governance in South African local government?

Introduction

Public administration is an expression of governmental power that has profound implications for the effectiveness and efficiency of government, as it defines the quality of democracy and shapes the relationship between government and its citizens (Schoeman & Fourie, 2008:802). One of the means of maintaining this relationship is through the oversight role that the legislatures and municipal councils play in holding the executive accountable. John Stuart Mill (see Mill, 1861:104) recognized the normative importance of the practice of oversight by elected bodies (legislatures) with respect to the unelected ones (government departments and entities) when he stated that:

> … the proper role of a representative assembly is to watch and control the government; to throw the light of publicity on its acts; to compel a full exposition and justification of all of the acts which any one considers questionable; to censure them if found condemnable, and, if the men who compose the government abuse their trust … to expel them from office, and either expressly or virtually appoint their successors.

It is in this context that Legislative Sector South Africa (2012:6) elaborates that "… if the legislatures' oversight role is exercised in pursuit of good governance, then the legislatures also bear some responsibility for overall government performance". Oversight of the executive is the most important function of any legislature (Murray & Nijzink, 2002:43). It involves monitoring the activities of the executive to ensure that they are carried out legally, and according to the legislative intent. Legislatures use the committee system as a vehicle for conducting oversight. Legislative committees conduct their oversight role, inter alia, by scrutinizing government departments' annual reports, by conducting focus intervention studies, by paying site visits, and by summoning the executive for briefings and explanations. A true test of democracy is the extent to which legislatures and municipal councils can ensure that the government remains answerable to the people. This is done by maintaining constant oversight of government actions.

Oversight is an important legislative means of ensuring that the laws passed are implemented, the approved budgets are appropriately spent and the executive is held accountable in accordance with democratic principles. In other words, oversight is a broader form of government control. Governments have a number of agencies charged with the responsibility of facilitating that controls not only exist, but are also adhered to. However, the importance of exercising oversight over the executive tends to be overlooked and treated as a mere compliance activity. The legislative sector uses committees as a mechanism for exercising oversight and achieving accountability. Yet, the effectiveness of committees is marred by a number of challenges. For instance, in the South African legislative sector, committees are generally viewed as exercising their oversight role on an ad hoc basis, which hampers effective monitoring of the organs of state. Committees are reactive in their engagement with the executive and government departments. Thus, they often fail to identify problem areas when reviewing departmental budgets, to reconcile departmental expenditure with public policy priorities, and follow up properly on recommendations or questions directed to the executive. This article is theoretical in design and uses the agency theory (the principal-agent problem) to argue that legislatures (principals), particularly at local government level, do not effectively hold the executive and government departments (agents) accountable. Ineffective oversight contributes to poor performance by the organs of state and government departments, and thus negatively affects service delivery to the citizens. The continuing service-delivery-related protests are indicative of the ineffectiveness of current oversight mechanisms.

In 2008, the South African government adopted a turnaround strategy known as "operation clean audit" which set a target for all government departments and municipalities to achieve a clean audit by 2014. Achieving this target requires a combination of elements, ranging from sound financial management systems, to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, to employing the right people with the right skills, to effectively holding the executive to account. In other words, without effective public accountability mechanisms exercising oversight over the executive in particular, the 2014 target of achieving a clean audit will remain ambitious. The World Bank (2009:4) views public accountability as the institutionalized practice of account giving by elected governments, civil servants and public sector institutions to horizontal or higher levels of public servants and public sector institutions. The phenomenon of public

accountability and good governance has been studied mainly from the national government perspective. This article examines the concept and practice of oversight as an essential part of accountability and good governance, with specific reference to local government.

Public accountability is critical in establishing efficiency in local government operations. The foundations of public administration rely on accountability and control. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005:2) explains that the basic idea of control in public administration is to ensure that an organisation is operating within its legal and policy responsibilities and is achieving the objectives set for it. Control is broadly defined as a process of providing reasonable assurance regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of operations, reliability of reporting, and compliance with laws and regulations. In public administration, accountability is used as one of the means of enforcing control. Public accountability mechanisms include, among others, the ombudsman, anti-corruption agencies and legislative monitoring bodies. The focus of this article is on legislative monitoring bodies, that is, the oversight committees of municipalities. The article will therefore provide conceptual definitions of oversight, the committee system and accountability in the local government setting. A review of the Municipal Public Accounts Committees and the Audit Committee will then be given to lay a foundation for discussing the South African government's target of achieving a clean audit in all municipalities by the year 2014.

The premise of this article is that exercising effective oversight over the executive is an essential component of good governance. Thus the primary question that this article seeks to address is: to what extent has exercising oversight over the executive contributed towards good governance in South African local government? The secondary questions are:

- how accountable are locally elected governments?;

- what is the impact of local government oversight committees on the government's target of achieving a clean audit for all government departments and municipalities by 2014 ? and

- what impact will oversight committees have on governance?

The objectives of this investigation were to establish the extent to which the oversight committees of municipalities are exercising oversight over the executive, and to determine the progress registered by municipalities towards the achievement of clean audits

by 2014. The qualitative research method was followed and document analysis was employed for data collection purposes. A comprehensive analysis and interpretation of primary public documents was conducted. The documents analysed are the Municipal Public Accounts Committee's Practical guide for enhancing oversight in the municipality (South Africa, 2012), the Oversight and Accountability Model in Parliament (South Africa, 2009), and the Toolkit for the Audit Committee (KPMG, 2006).

In addressing the research questions, the following hypothesis was developed: while the oversight role of the legislatures is well legislated, its potential is far from being realized. In other words, the oversight committees of municipal councils are not adequately carrying out their oversight mandate, and this results in slow progress towards realising the government's target of achieving a clean audit by 2014. This state of affairs has a negative impact on the citizens' well-being and the vision of a transformed society. The study was therefore greatly influenced by the principal-agent theory. This theory was first formulated in the economics literature in the 1970s, but has since been used by other disciplines like business management, political studies and public administration. The theory stresses the relationship between the municipal oversight committees (principals) and the municipal departments (agents) in the service delivery value chain. The municipaldepartments are accountable to the municipal councils through reporting to the municipal oversight committees.

In exploring the delegation of power and authority in political and government institutions, political scientists and public administration scholars take agency theory "outside of the economic marketplace and the constricting web of assumptions that shroud the economic theory of agency" (Shapiro, 2005:271). Shapiro elaborates that:

> the political system can be understood as a complex network of principal-agent relationships composed of citizens, nation states, elected officials, lawmakers, members of the executive branch, administrative agencies, courts, civil servants, patronage appointees and even those who monitor other agency relationships inside political institutions and in the market. These actors concurrently play principal and agent roles within and across political organizations.

In terms of the principal-agent theory, which is used to evaluate accountability, the principal is an actor who enters into a contractual relationship with another actor, the agent. The agent (the executive)

is entrusted to take actions that lead to outcomes specified by the principal (the legislature). Moe (1984:38) observed that there is no guarantee that the agent will do what is in the interest of the principal.

Literature Review and Conceptual Definitions

The literature review focused on the concepts of oversight, accountability and the committee system of legislative institutions. The article acknowledges the existence of a substantial body of literature on oversight and accountability and uses a few selected sources to contextualize the importance of oversight, accountability and good governance in South African Local Government. The authors whose work is most relevant to this article are Stapenhurst& Pelizzo (2002) and Johnson and Nakamura (1999), who stress that "with the advent of governance frameworks and the influx of decentralized polity, a convergent view among global actors is that strong legislative institutions may contribute to building responsive and accountable institutions of governance." It is in this context that Fashagba (2009:431) writes that "… In South Africa, the legislative process appears more democratic as it is open to the public so that informed contribution will be harvested and, thus, make the executive accountable". Legislatures, therefore, use the committee system to hold the executive accountable. Thus, the concepts that are prominent in this article are committees, oversight, accountability and good governance.

The Committee System

Legislative work takes considerable time and is voluminous in nature. Since legislatures have limited time to effectively deal with legislative and other related matters, their affairs are transacted by what are known as Portfolio or Select Committees. Cummings & Wise (1997:86) point out that Woodrow Wilson referred to committees as little legislatures. There are two kinds of legislative committees in the Westminster parliamentary system, that is, Standing Committees and Ad hoc Committees. Standing Committees are permanent. Examples include the Standing Committees of Education, Health, Social Development, Community Safety, Petitions, and Public Accounts. Ad hoc Committees are established for a specific purpose and duration. They cease to exist when their assigned task has been completed. An example of an Ad hoc Committee might be the Committee on Rail Safety which has sought to determine the safety challenges in the railway system and to recommend possible solutions to the problems encountered. Committees are empowered to "… monitor, investigate, enquire

into, and make recommendations relating to any aspect of the legislative programme, budget, policy formulation, or any other matter falling within the category of affairs consigned to the committee concerned" (Calland, 1999:136). Committees are, in general, proportionally representative of political parties in legislatures, and draw on or co-opt specialists who are not necessarily politicians.

In South Africa, since the advent of democracy in 1994, committees have become microcosms or engine rooms of the legislative sector, entrusted with legislative drafting, assessing executive or departmental reports, and holding the executive and their departmental chiefs responsible to the people's representatives in the legislatures (Calland, 1999). According to Fashagba (2009:435), committees provide a bridge between the government and the people, especially through their investigative role. Heynes (1996:18) views committees as specialist bodies of legislators that play a key role in formulating laws and policies of specific government departments and in overseeing what those departments and other organs of state are doing. With regard to committees in South Africa's local government, Section 33 of the Municipal Structures Act (Act 77 of 1998) provides that the establishment of committees must take into account the extent of the functions and powers of the municipality; the need to delegate powers to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in their performance; and the financial and administrative resources of the municipality available to support the committee.

Contextualizing Oversight

Oversight is the means by which the executive and other persons in government are called to account. In almost every country, governance and oversight functions by legislatures are provided for in the constitution. "The constitution sets the parameters of legitimacy and the checks and balances for the utilization of the national resources to benefit every citizen" (Shija, 2012:6). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (referred to as"the Constitution") states that Parliament (and by implication all the provincial legislatures) has the power to conduct oversight of all organs of state, including those at provincial and local government level. Section 114(2)(b) of the Constitution stipulates that provincial legislatures are to maintain oversight over the provincial executive authority and any provincial organ of state. In other words, the executive authority is constitutionally accountable to the legislature, which means that government departments are obliged to give account of the services that they render to the citizenry. Legislatures

often express their constitutional functions in their mission statements. One such example is a mission statement of the South African Parliament (South Africa, 2009:32), which states that:

> … *as the freely elected representatives of the people of South Africa, our mission is to represent, and act as a voice of the people, in fulfilling our constitutional functions of passing laws and overseeing executive action*.

The Legislative Sector South Africa (2012:4) defines oversight as:

> … *the proactive interaction initiated by a legislature with the executive and administrative organs … that encourages compliance with the constitutional obligation on the executive and administration to ensure delivery on agreed-to objectives for the achievement of governmental priorities.*

In other words, oversight is an important legislative means of ensuring that laws passed are implemented, that approved budgets are spent, and that the executive is held accountable in accordance with democratic principles. Robust monitoring of the executive, that is, oversight by the legislatures, is an indicator of good governance. Besides its law-making function, it is through oversight that the legislature can ensure a balance of power and assert its role as the defender of people's interests. In this context, Hudson and Wren (2007:12) maintain that oversight is about keeping an eye on the activities of the executive, and – on behalf of citizens – holding the executive to account. Fox (2000) believes that oversight is a key feature of executive-legislative relations, in which the executive branch owes to the legislative branch certain obligations and/or information. According to Ogul & Rockman (1990:5), legislative oversight is also viewed as legislative supervision and monitoring of the executive, whether overt or covert.

Scholars (Calland, 1999; Hudson & Wren, 2007; Halchin &Kaiser, 2012; Stapenhurst & Pelizzo, 2002; Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2006) have generally agreed on the fact that effective oversight is good for the proper functioning of a democratic political system. West and Coope (1989) in Pelizzo & Stapenhurst (2006:4) argue that effective oversight is beneficial for a political system for at least two basic reasons: firstly, because the oversight activity can actually contribute to improving the quality of the policies/programmes initiated by the government; and secondly, because as government policies are ratified by the legislative branch, those policies acquire greater legitimacy.

According to Halchin & Kaiser (2012:228), oversight entails the crucial role of legislatures in the reviewing, monitoring and supervision of the actions and activities of the executive organs of government. Oyewo (2007:8) elaborates that:

> *oversight in this instance means the exercise of constitutional powers by the legislature to check or control the exercise of constitutional powers of other arms of government, and more specifically to check or control the exercise of executive powers or to make the executive accountable and responsible to the electorate through their representatives in the legislature, in between elections.*

Oversight can be performed *ex ante* (during the design and implementation of a programme or policy), as well as *ex post* (after its implementation) (Ogul & Rockman, 1990; Stapenhurst & Pelizzo, 2002). Oversight is thus an essential component of good governance and accountability, especially at local government level. Local government is the interface between the state and its citizens – the level where a functional or dysfunctional state is most keenly felt, and where service-delivery backlogs sometimes result in public protests. Examples of service-delivery-related protests directed at local government in South Africa are the January 2013 Zamdela township protests in Sasolburg in the Free State Province, and the February protests inMakwassie township near Wolmaraansstad in the North West Province. While leadership plays a vital role in local government affairs, the leaders themselves have to be held accountable. Democratic governments allow their citizens to directly or indirectly manage their public affairs through elected representatives. The extent to which the executive is being held to account depends on the type of system – presidential or parliamentary – used in a particular country. Szilagyi (2009:309) defines a presidential system as a government "… where an executive branch exists and presides (hence the name) separately from the legislature, to which it is not accountable and which cannot, in normal circumstances, dismiss it", as is the case in the United States of America.South Africa uses the semi-presidential system, which is a hybrid of the presidential and parliamentary systems. In South Africa's case, the president and his or her executive are accountable to the legislature. Therefore, accountability through exercising oversight over the executive is cascaded down to the local government sphere as an important aspect of good governance.

Accountability and Good Governance in Local Government

Accountability is an important yet elusive concept. The meaning and characteristics of accountability will differ depending upon the context in which it is applied (United States General Accounting Office, cited in Behn, 2001:3). In this article, accountability is defined and discussed in the South African local government context. Kearns (1996:7) writes that accountability involves answering to higher authority in the bureaucratic system of oversight. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA, 2012:3) argues that:

> … *since there is no neat distinction between the Executive and Legislative arms of Council as it were, effective and proper oversight of the Executive at local level thus requires members of Council to fully understand the justifications and rationale behind accountable government and the purpose it serves.*

Oversight is often seen as the domain of opposition parties alone, designed to police and expose maladministration and corruption. The Legislative Sector South Africa (2012:6) argues that "… the term 'oversight' in the South African political context, as in many other countries, is customarily perceived as the purview of opposition politicians". Such a view is limited and deficient. Oversight and accountability help to ensure that the executive implements programmes and plans in a way consistent with policy, legislation and the dictates of the Constitution. It is through oversight that legislatures can improve accountability and good governance, not only in the national government but also in local government. According to the principal-agent theory, legislatures (principals) have the right to hold the government (agent) accountable. In essence, the government and the executive have contractual obligations to account to the legislatures. Scholars such as Hudson & Wren (2007), Halchin &Kaiser (2012) and Stapenhurst & Pelizzo (2002) have largely focused on accountability and the exercising of oversight over the executive at the national level. Yet, local government is of equal importance when it comes to remaining accountable for its activities. Moreover, in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996):

> … *the Municipal Council is an exclusive authority for:*
>
> (a) *the passing of laws;*
> (b) *the approval of budgets;*
> (c) *the imposition of rates and taxes, levies and duties; and*
> (d) *the raising of loans.*

The municipal council clearly has an obligation to ensure that laws are passed, revenue and spending measures are fiscally sound, and that resources are effectively and efficiently managed.

An elaboration of the relationship between oversight, accountability and good governance at local government level is at the centre of this discussion. Commenting on improving local council oversight, Yilmaz, Beris and Serrano-Berthet (2008:13) maintain that:

> … *local councils are the core units of representative governments. Functioning local council oversight relies on the assumption that local elected representatives have more incentive to respond to the needs and preferences of local populations and that they are more downwardly accountable than local bureaucrats.*

The lack of proper accountability, or rather effective oversight at local government level, may contribute to the dissatisfaction levels of local populations and result in service-delivery-related protests.

Kearns (1996:9) advances the proposition that:

> …*the term accountability generally refers to a broad spectrum of public expectations dealing with organisational performance, responsiveness, and even morality of government. These expectations often include implicit performance criteria – related to obligations and responsibilities – that are subjectively interpreted.*

For the purposes of this article, accountability is broadly understood to refer to a means of holding accountable those entrusted with the powers of the State.

In his 2011 State of the Nation Address, South Africa's presidentacknowledged the frustrations experienced by communities with poor governance in the local sphere and stated: "We have instituted a turnaround strategy for local government, focusing on, among others, the strengthening of basic administrative systems, financial management and customer care" (Zuma, 2011:14). He further stressed the building of a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government. The president's statement is indicative of current trends in leadership and accountability and indicative of governance challenges in the local sphere of government. The trends are affecting administrative legitimacy and accountability, and local populations often resort to protests when they feel that the government does not deliver on the promised services.

Stivers (1990:247) argued that:

> ... *administrative legitimacy requires active accountability to citizens, from whom the ends of government derive. Accountability, in turn, requires a shared framework for the interpretation of basic values, one that must be developed jointly by bureaucrats and citizens in real-world situations, rather than assumed. The legitimate administrative state, in other words, is one inhabited by active citizens.*

Accountability means being held to account, being scrutinized, and being required to give an account or explanation. It is a concept that has been used by various authors in different ways. In Britain, for example, Staddon (2007:2) wrote that one such approach, adopted by Lord Sharman in his 2001 report reviewing audit and accountability for central government, divides the notion of accountability into the following four aspects:

- giving an explanation – through which the main stakeholders (for example Parliament) are advised about what is happening, perhaps through an annual report outlining performance and activity;

- providing further information – where those accountable may be asked to give further account, perhaps by providing information (e.g. to a select committee) on performance, beyond the accounts already given;

- reviewing and, if necessary, revising – where those accountable respond by examining performance, systems or practices and, if necessary, make changes to meet the expectations of stakeholders; and

- granting redress or imposing sanctions – if a mechanism to impose sanctions exists, stakeholders might enforce their rights on those accountable to effect changes.

Oversight and accountability have traditionally been the primary concern and central focus of public managers and administrators. They focused on short-term financial management and control, in which accountability was defined by accountants, budget analysts, and financial directors. Recently, however, governments have extended their accountability focus to include concern for long-term management issues and public sector performance (Andrews, 2001:10). In the context of South Africa's local government, oversight and accountability are informed by the need for continuous improvement in service delivery, the promotion of accountable and transparent governance arrangements, and the South African government's target for all departments and municipalities to achieve a clean audit by 2014, as set in 2008. Yet, the Auditor General's report for the 2011/12 financial year revealed that only 13 out of the 283 audited municipalities have obtained a clean financial record. This translates to only 5% of municipalities progressing towards the 2014 target. This article argues that with this slow progress in improving financial performance in the municipalities, and given the fact that only 283 (82%) of the 343 municipalities in South Africa submitted their financial reports to the Auditor-General in 2012, the 2014 target will not be achieved. However, progress towards the 2014 target could effectively be monitored through the use of the Municipal Public Accounts and Audit Committees.

Municipal Public Account Committees

In an ideal setting, local councils – as representative bodies for collective decision-making – make policies and laws; they also work with the local government's executive branch to deliberate on policies and their implementation through public financial management and service delivery. Furthermore (Yilmaz*et al.*, 2008:13):

> *They are assumed to represent citizens by giving voice to individual citizens, civil society organizations and business groups, and by representing the needs of local constituents in policy-making. Therefore, public accountability measures that aim to strengthen local council oversight have to ensure that elected local leaders oversee local government operations on behalf of local citizens.*

The roles and responsibilities of council should always be carried out with a clear distinction between oversight and interference in administration, as defined in Sections 52(b) and 103 respectively of the Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003, and the Code of Conduct for Councilors (Schedule 1 of the Municipal Systems Act, Act 32 of 2000). While local governments use both the Ad Hoc and Standing Committees for holding the executive accountable, the most important vehicles for enhancing effective oversight in local government appear to be the Municipal Public Accounts Committees and the Audit Committees.

Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs) are established in terms of Section 79 of the provisions of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, Act 117 of 1998 and the Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003, to exercise oversight

over the executive obligations of Council. The MPACs assist Council in holding the executive and municipal entities to account, and in ensuring the efficient and effective use of municipal resources. As such, MPACs consist of non-executive members. According to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and National Treasury Guideline for Establishment of MPACs (2011:7), any councilor serving as Executive Mayor or Deputy Executive Mayor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, member of the Mayoral Committee, or member of the Executive Committee, is excluded from being a member of the MPACs. MPACs are not meant to duplicate the role of other committees of Council, such as Audit Committee. The MPAC reports directly to Council through the Speaker of the municipality and interfaces with the other committees of Council through the Speaker, where relevant.

The MPACs are meant to manage similar functions and responsibilities for municipalities as those managed by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) in the national and provincial legislatures, except for certain powers regarding the subpoenaing of individuals. In the case of irregular expenditure by municipalities or municipal entities, the MPAC has the right to subpoena the accounting officer of the municipality or the chairperson of the municipal entity's board of directors to provide information or clarity.

MPACs are strictly oversight committees in that they are not responsible for policy formulation or the prioritization of matters, but for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the council's programmes and projects. In other words, MPACs are responsible for *ex post* oversight. The functions of the MPACs are to:

- consider and evaluate the content of the annual report and to make recommendations to Council when adopting an oversight report on the annual report;
- assist with the conclusion of matters that may not have been finalized, such as reviewing information relating to past recommendations made on the annual report; this relates to current in-year reports, including the quarterly, mid-year and annual reports;
- examine the financial statements and audit reports of the municipality and municipal entities and, in doing so, to consider improvements on previous statements and reports andevaluate the extent to which the Audit Committee and the Auditor General's recommendations have been implemented;

- promote good governance, transparency and accountability with regard to the use of municipal resources;
- recommend or undertake any investigation in its area of responsibility, after reviewing any investigation report already undertaken by the municipality or the Audit Committee; and
- perform any other functions assigned to it through a resolution of Council, within its area of responsibility.

The committee with which the MPAC collaborates most closely is the Audit Committee, which will be discussed in the following section.

The Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is an independent advisory body that advises municipal councils, political office-bearers, the accounting officer and management staff of the municipal entity. Its input covers internal control, internal audits, risk management, accounting policies, financial reporting, performance management, and compliance with the Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003 and the Division of Revenue Act. The Community Law Centre (2008:3) confirms that the Audit Committee is another important committee that establishes the financial accountability of the municipal executive to the municipal council. The committee serves as an institution that provides the council with the necessary information to make the executive accountable with regard to matters of financial management.

According to the KPMG (2006:12), the most effective audit committees are not only aware of their responsibilities, but also completely understand and embrace them, and recognise what is necessary to fulfill them effectively. Van der Nest, Thornhill and De Jager (2008:550) add that the Audit Committee's responsibilities typically include assisting municipal management by overseeing all financial reporting to ensure that it provides accurate and useful information to users. Thus the benefits of having an effective Audit Committee are that:

- it improves financial practices and reporting;
- it improves fiscal accountability;
- it influences action against the misappropriation of funds, and fraud; and
- it enhances the internal and external audit functions.

Shulman & Kim (2011) conclude that an Audit Committee established by a governmental unit offers the same strategic benefits

that an audit committee offers to a publically traded company. The Audit Committee should be made up of members who have a level of financial and programmatic knowledge which is sufficient to read and understand audit reports and comprehend the associated risks identified.

Discussion

While the government has introduced a compendium of oversight mechanisms such as the office of the Auditor-General, the Public Protector, legislative Portfolio and Standing Committees, the accountability of the executive remains unachieved. This paper argues that the government's 2008 target of achieving a clean audit in all departments by 2014 is far from being realized. The Auditor-General's 2010/11 report indicates that half of the municipalities in South Africa are far from realizing the 2014 universal clean audit target set by Operation Clean Audit in 2008. The report further indicates that unauthorized, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure has increased from R6 billion in 2009/10 to more than R10 billion in the 2010/11 reporting year. Only 13.5% of municipalities received a clean audit in 2011. In Gauteng, for example, local government's progress towards clean audits had a setback in 2011, with five of the municipal entities that had achieved clean audits regressing to unqualified audit opinions, leaving only two municipal entities with clean audit status in 2011. With regard to addressing internal control discipline, the Auditor-General reported that only 30% of municipalities were making good progress. He remains concerned about 70% of municipalities, where the basics of key controls have not yet been mastered.

The Auditor-General (2011) posits that this slow progress towards clean audits in local government is caused by the following three prominent factors:

- 57% of municipalities have shown a slow response to the Auditor-General's messages and the implementation of key controls;
- poor performance goes undisciplined, and transgressions occur at over 70% of audited municipalities; and
- officials in key positions (especially in the financial discipline) lacked minimum competencies at 72% of audited municipalities.

These factors have contributed to the poor and stagnant audit outcomes for the 2010/11 financial year. The desired progress towards clean audits in all municipal departments by 2014 is at

risk if these root causes are not addressed. Research also suggests that there are significant service delivery backlogs across all the municipalities in the country. These backlogs are an indication of shortcomings in the oversight role of municipalities and, in particular, the principle of good governance. It can be argued that municipalities are not sufficiently responding to the needs of the people. For example, Kolisa (2012) reports that in South Africa approximately 1.8 million (11%) of households in formal and informal settlements still do not have access to sanitation services. Furthermore, during his oversight visit to the Albert Luthuli Local Municipality on 29 January 2013, the Premier of Mpumalanga Province, Mr David Mabuza, found that only 152 (1.5%) of houses, instead of the planned 10 000 houses, had been built in the 2012/13 financial year. This amounts to a backlog of 9 848 houses for the year ending 30 March 2013. Mabuza's oversight visit and its findings illustrate the ineffectiveness of the oversight committees at local government level. If the oversight committees, particularly the Committee on Human Settlement, were carrying out their roles effectively, then the housing backlog would have been reduced during the earlier phases of the financial year. The infectiveness of the oversight of the executive in the municipalities contributes toward the slow pace with which municipalities are moving towards achieving a clean audit by 2014.

One of the crucial functions of the MPACs is to examine the financial statements and audit reports of the municipality and municipal entities, to suggest improvements on previous statements and reports, and to evaluate the implementation of the Audit Committee and the Auditor-General's recommendations. Considering the Auditor-General's 2011 report, it becomes evident that MPACs are not effectively holding the executive to account. It can thus be concluded that oversight of the executive is making an insignificant contribution towards good governance in South African local government.

Effective oversight in the local government sphere is surely an essential component of good governance. Moreover, in terms of the hermeneutics of democratic practice, legislative committees ought to provide the people with a comprehensive and accurate view of how the government, especially local government, is construing and implementing the people's will. However, it is argued that local government oversight committees are not making a meaningful impact in holding the executive accountable, and therefore not contributing towards the achievement of a clean audit in all departments and municipalities by 2014. The continuing

underperformance of municipalities, as discussed above, clearly impacts negatively on the principle of good governance. The oversight role of MPACs and Audit Committees can clearly be used to greater effect in assisting municipalities to comply with government policies.

The MPACs can play a crucial role in promoting successful oversight by following up (*ex post* oversight) on the implementation of local government programmes. While other Portfolio Committees serve specific government departments, MPACs cut across all departments and should focus on monitoring and following up on issues of service delivery in the context of financial accountability and good governance. It should be emphasized that MPACs are not operational in nature, but are meant to assist the council in exercising oversight over the executive and administration. MPACs should know how much the departments are spending on the delivery of services, in order to effectively hold them accountable. If the MPACs do not have this information, municipal officials may take advantage of the situation, and this may have a negative impact on the delivery of services and the quality of services rendered.

The MPAC cannot function optimally on its own. A healthy working relationship between the MPAC, the Audit Committee and other Portfolio Committees is ideal for enhancing oversight as an essential ingredient of good governance. Therefore, MPACs can play an important role of facilitating that public funds are managed in a more rigorous, transparent and accountable fashion. The Audit Committee might without any compromise, promote effective internal processes, while the MPAC promotes stringent monitoring of the spending patterns of departments. Again, in the quest to ensure a clean audit, the mayors and members of the Mayoral Committees wouldideally be encouraged to attend and participate in the MPAC hearings. The MPAC, independently or together with the Audit Committee, may also strengthen its relations with law enforcement agencies in the pursuit to minimize corruption.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Executive scrutiny by oversight committees may help to improve audit results. However, for the government to claim that all municipalities will have clean audits by 2014, while changing nothing on the ground, is counterproductive. Audit Committees should take the lead in helping municipalities to improve their internal controls in the long term, as significant change is unlikely by 2014. The MPAC should monitor council resolutions and the implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations. In line

with the principles of cooperative governance, cooperation between Provincial Public Accounts Committees and the Portfolio Committees is crucial for dealing with challenges at the local government level.

While there are numerous mechanisms for enhancing good governance, this article has focused on oversight of the executive in South African municipalities. The critical role played by Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPACs) and Audit Committees formed the crux of the argument that effective oversight is an ingredient of good governance. The MPAC's function of promoting good governance, transparency and accountability for the use of municipal resources should be taken seriously. This will ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the executive, thus contributing towards the accelerated institutionalizing of good governance. The oversight function of legislative committees should not be seen as an add-on to democratic legitimacy. It should be viewed as an important vehicle for monitoring the executive's implementation of the will of the people. Furthermore, it should be noted that municipalities are differently endowed. As such, municipalities in rural areas may have oversight capabilities which are different from those in urban or metropolitan areas. Local government may, in this regard, look at how well the public participation mandate of municipalities can be leveraged to improve their oversight. In conclusion, a possible area for further research could be the study of the oversight capacities of rural municipalities and the impact thereof on service delivery.

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Evoking Citizens in fighting Public Procurement Corruption in Uganda

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Abstract: The past decade has seen many development partners focusing efforts on a range of institutional, financial, technical and social interventions aimed at bringing about much-needed improvements in public procurement in Africa. However, a corruption-free public procurement system is still far from being attained.Citizen-driven approaches appear to be a possible remedy to a corruption-ridden public procurement system. However, factors that drive successful citizen-driven approaches to fighting corruption are little understood. Drawing on the Principal-Agent Theory, this paper examines the critical success factors for implementing a citizen-based approach to fighting public-procurement corruption in Uganda's local government systems. Opinions from a survey of respondents from Uganda's four regions are considered. The findings identify the critical success factors for mainstream citizen participation in procurement processes and on this basis, suggestions on how these could be operationalised are made.

Key words: Citizen-based approaches, public-procurement corruption, accountability, Uganda.

Introduction

As rising corruption and the world debt crisis place public financial management systems under increased scrutiny, citizens appear to be claiming a more active role in shaping and monitoring the use of

public finances. In this context, the world over, citizens have traditionally been excluded from public-finance decisions, and their input is – at most – only at the evaluation stage when information on the impact of a policy is being sought (May, 1991; Abelson, Forest, Eyles, Smith, Martin and Gauvin., 2003; Burby, 2007). This has often resulted in a box-ticking approach which renders community participation yet another token piece of administration process for public servants to engage with. In developing countries, this approach exacerbates, rather than addresses, the challenges of poverty reduction. Yet public servants in a democracy are by definition servants of the people, and ought to implement policies that put the needs of the citizens first.

In questioning what citizens should do in a world that is increasingly excluding them, Stivers (1990) makes a case for government being brought back to their rightful owners – the citizens. This requires the renewal of public spaces, and the creation of myriad opportunities for people – citizens, officials and administrators – to meet so that each can express his or her own viewpoint on the issues that face them (Stivers, 1990:12). Vigoda (2002:527) also supports greater involvement of citizens in governance processes, noting that the New Public Management model places pressure on state bureaucracies to become more responsive to citizens as 'clients', and argues that citizens are the 'formal' owners of the state. The implication here is that the citizens are simultaneously owners and clients. The reason why public officials are known as 'servants', is because they have to 'serve' the citizens who are the bona fide owners. This fact is seldom understood by the politicians and the officials who have to implement the politicians' policies

In a representative democracy (as opposed to participatory democracy), politicians are elected to represent citizens. Once elected, these politicians need to formulate legislation, pass laws and establish policies which set the framework for the proper functioning of society. However, politicians cannot implement the legislation and policies themselves. They rely on the executive arm of government which in turn delegates these responsibilities to thousands of public servants, who are responsible for the day-to-day delivery of public goods and services at any level - at central, provincial or local government level. In this arrangement, politicians and public servants act respectively as principal and agent, with the former delegating executive and decision-making responsibility to the latter. The practical problems (or moral hazard) that arises from this include the challenge of ensuring that the agent performs its delegated tasks adequately. This is not merely for the sake of

meeting the principal's expectations, but ultimately for the sake of the constituency the principal represents – which, in a broad sense, are the citizens. As Shapiro (2005:271) has observed, "the citizens delegate to the public servants, who are the agents, the authority to carry out their preferences".

In an organisational context, every employee has to account to an employer, and different forms of accountability entail different degrees of accountability relationships. While politicians hold political accountability; administrators hold administrative accountability. Within an organisation, role players are held accountable in various ways – collectively, as subgroups, and individually. Most administrators of autonomous organisations have to account to specialised agencies like an Ombudsman, the Auditor-General or a Public Accounts Committee. There is also legal accountability (via the courts) and professional accountability (via professional associations). In this regard, it is not only public servants who are delegated the authority to carry out public services, but a range of actors and institutions. Modern governments have changed in scale and scope, and have become complex and highly differentiated (Milward & Provan, 2000:360).

Governments contract out numerous services to the private sector. Governments also engage in public-private partnerships to deliver public services; once the primary domain of the public sector. This mode of public-service delivery introduces other role players in the provision of public services, raising the question of how to keep non-state actors accountable. Milward and Provan (2000:360) note that government agencies (departments or ministries in some countries) have chosen to share their authority for collective action in a network of mutual dependence between state and non-state actors. These networks involve private entities often drawn upon to provide services that public servants would not be able to provide effectively or efficiently on their own. When a multiplicity of agencies operate through numerous horizontal and vertical organisational networks – as opposed to the hierarchical structure of the traditional public administration – the lines between private and public are easily blurred. This can lead to the citizens – who are the true beneficiaries of public services – being further and further removed from the processes of public service provision.

On the issue of public participation in public service processes, Fung (2006:66) submits that the multifaceted challenges of contemporary governance demand a complex account of the ways in which those who are subject to laws and policies should participate in making them. Fung furthermore develops a framework

for understanding the range of institutional possibilities for public participation, and concludes that "citizens can be the shock troops of democracy" (Fung, 2006:74). Properly deployed, "citizens' local knowledge, wisdom, commitment, authority, even rectitude can address wicked failures of legitimacy, justice, and effectiveness in representative and bureaucratic institutions" (2006:74).

So far we have argued that citizens ought to take centre stage in government's public-service delivery processes, and that citizens and public servants are locked in a principal-agent relationship that requires accountability as its basic tenet. The centrality of this accountability logic requires more elaboration. Oakerson and Parks (1989:114) remind us that to be accountable is "to have to answer for one's actions or inaction". In general, accountability involves officials being responsible for the consequences of their actions or inaction (Burke, 1986; Cooper, 1998). In the context of this paper, efforts focused on improving accountability in public procurement need to occur on both the supply and demand sides.

Elsewhere, it has been suggested that a significant contribution to formal political accountability and a transparent operating environment, is also made by increasing the role of the media (Stapenhurst, 2000: 2-8), and by utilising e-government for transparent record management (Anderson, 2009:201). Public procurement systems have fundamentally benefited from the scrutiny of the media, through reporting excesses of government departments in tendering processes. Just as elected politicians play a representative advocacy role and also take on the responsibility of being democratically accountable to the electorate for decisions made under their watch, it is expected of the public service that technocrats be accountable to the beneficiaries as well as the principal (Mulgan, 2006; Stoker, 2006; Caldwell, Bakker & Read, 2007). In this regard, the media have continued to put technocrats under close scrutiny with numerous *expose's* of corrupt actions appearing in various parts of the globe. Through such actions, Phillips, Caldwell and Callender (2007:38) insist – citizens can hold both politicians and technocrats accountable for better service delivery.

The paper now turns to a discussion of Principal-Agent Theory, as a framework for revising the role of citizens.It does so with a view to examine the critical success factors for implementing a citizen-based approach to fighting public-procurement corruption in Uganda's local government systems.

Principal-Agent Theory as a Framework for Revising the Role of Citizens

Using Principal-Agent Theory (also known as Agency Theory), the relationship between citizens and public officials can be described as one in which the 'principal' (citizens) engages the 'agent' (public servants), to perform a function which involves delegation of decision-making. However, the agent cannot always be trusted to make decisions that are in the best interest of the principal.As mentioned above, the 'principal' (citizen) does not have the knowledge and understanding to differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' decisions. Invariably, he/she will propagate a route of action that will benefit him or her most. This thinking derives from the theory of Rational Choice, which sees individuals as natural self-maximisers. The agent's actions will accordingly be largely informed by considerations of self-interest and self-preservation – neither of which is likely to align with the preferences of the principal. According to Lane (2007:618), the likely differences between the principal's and agent's preferences requires the principal to provide incentives and to monitor agent behaviour to ensure compliance with the contract. Because the two parties have different interests, the principal has to create an environment in which the agent is either incentivised to align its interests with the principal's, or the principal actively monitors the agent to limit opportunistic behaviour (in this case acts of illegality, maladministration or corruption).

Illegality is often perceived to occur when public officials breach a statute, regulation, court order, the Constitution, or international laws, which ought to have legitimised their actions and decisions. Maladministration, in contrast, includes any improprieties on the part of public officials, including carelessness, lack of cooperation, unfairness, undue delays and procedural irregularities. Further to this, according to Halpern*et al.* (2008:4), the World Bank defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain, as it involves the intentional actions of public officials. They further state that Transparency International defines corruption as the behaviour on the part of officials in the public sector, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves, or those around them, by misuse of public power entrusted in them. When public officials engage in illegal practices, maladministration or corruption, the effects on any state are dire. Firstly, the state incurs political costs in that political institutions are undermined by corruption, and a corrupt government is less able to rely on the cooperation and support of the public (Gould & Amaro-Reyes, 1987). Secondly, as noted by Gould and Amaro-Reyes (1987), corrupt governments incur

economic costs due to the inefficient and wasteful use of resources (which affects the allocation of funds and thus impacts on production and consumption in a society). Thirdly, corruption gives rise to bureaucratic costs related to administrative inefficiency. Nepotism and patronage lead to the ranks of the civil service being filled with inept and incompetent individuals, causing productivity to decrease.The effects of illegality, maladministration and corruption are devastating and far reaching, as they translate into such social ills as ill-stocked medical facilities, undelivered educational material, reduced social services – to mention a few. Corruption will derail not only the development process of many developing countries, but will inhibit the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.According to Agency Theory, non-performance by the agent can be blamed on the principal's failure to provide the right performance incentives and/or sufficient oversight. In this regard, it is suggested that citizens should be at the coalface of monitoring the functioning of public servants. *Public procurement* is one area of the public service delivery process where corruption is rife, and one in which citizens could have a significant impact in ensuring ethical practices. In this regard, Tanzi (2000:445) observes:

> *… between their creation and their final implementation, fiscal decisions (of which public procurement is one) go through many stages at which mistakes, indifference, implicit opposition and various forms of principal-agent problems may distort the final outcome.*

Modern public services are delivered through a multiplicity of agencies operating through horizontal and vertical networks of public and private organisations. Private sector providers are engaged where the public service is: unable to perform a function; to ensure better quality goods and services at a lower overall cost; and to shorten delivery times in order to speed up service completion. Such goods and services are sourced through a public procurement process in which a government entity contracts certain services to the private sector according to agreed terms and frameworks. As Matechak (2002:1) points out:

> *…these objectives cannot generally be met unless contracts are awarded on a truly competitive basis under a system that has clear guidelines incorporating transparency, efficiency, economy, accountability and fairness into the public procurement system as a whole.*

As a key area where the public and private sector interact financially, public procurement is what Matechak (2002:1) calls "a prime

candidate for corrupt activity, cronyism, and favouritism as well as outright bribery". Viewed from this perspective, corruption stems from an asymmetry of information and a divergence of interests between the agent (service providers) and the principal (the citizens on whose behalf tasks are performed).

The extent to which Matechak's assertion applies in the Ugandan context is considered in this paper, and the critical success factors for implementing a citizen-based approach to fighting public procurement corruption in Uganda's local government systems, is examined. First, however, a comparative examination of selected citizen-based approaches to fighting corruption is necessary.

A Comparative Analysis of Citizen-Based Approaches to Fighting Corruption

In fighting corruption, governments rely on legislation and statutory institutions like the Ombudsman or Public Protector, and the Auditor-General. In any country, the success of these institutions depends on the level of political support they enjoy, the prosecuting power they can garner, and the resources available to them (Treisman, 2000). In addition to such institutions, there is also a growing interest amongst the citizenry in how decisions on the allocation and use of public resources are made. Transparency International (TI), for example, is a world body that endeavours to fight corruption in the private sector, the public sector, and in civil society organisations. In publicising itself, TI asserts that it is:

> *…a global civil society organization leading the fight against corruption. It brings people together in a powerful worldwide coalition to end the devastating impact of corruption on men, women and children around the world. TI's mission is to create change towards a world free of corruption"* (see: www.transparency.org*)*

In this regard, TI has been instrumental in ensuring that the fight against corruption remains high on the agenda of such institutions as the World Bank and the United Nations.Lakin (2011) commented on the recently-launched Global Assembly for Budget Transparency, Accountability and Participation – as another landmark in citizens' attempts to lobby for greater accountability and transparency in the use of public resources. Launched in Dar es Salaam in November 2011, the event attracted citizens and civil society groups from 56 countries. Delegates spent two days deliberating on how – through civil society structures at local, national and international level – ordinary citizens could work to promote a set of global values and

principles regarding public expenditure, and also advance processes to improve people's lives across a range of public sectors such as health and education. The launch culminated in the signing of a declaration of principles, which gave voice to the values and objectives of the assembled members. As noted by Lakin (2011):

> …*the declaration demands a number of changes to budget practices around the world. Among these are: greater transparency; more frequent and serious opportunities for citizens to participate in defining budget priorities and monitoring budget implementation; more comprehensive and higher quality budget data at all levels of government; and use of public monies efficiently, effectively and equitably.*

Just like Transparency International, the Global Assembly for Budget Transparency Accountability and Participation represents a realisation by civil society that citizens are the principal beneficiaries of public resources, and that greater oversight is required of them so as to hold public agencies accountable.In many parts of the world, examples of citizen involvement in public finance decisions are not uncommon, as the cases below will show.

Citizen-Based Approaches to Fighting Corruption in India

The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) is a People's Organisation and part of the growing 'non-party' political process in India. This organisation used India's Right to Information Act of 1995, as leverage to draw attention to the pitiful wages of workers of government projects specifically, and generally to expose massive corruption in government.

One of MKSS's successes to date, has been to demand and obtain copies of the financial records of local government institutions. Relying on informal means and sympathetic officials to access such records (there were no formal processes permitting such access), these records are then closely examined by the people of the local government, within public hearings called *Jan Sunwais* (MKSS: www.mkssindia.org).

Ackerman (2004) reports that public hearings were organised by the MKSS and that at such gatherings, residents came together to verify and audit the work of their *Panchayat*(local self-government of village or small town) through individual and collective testimonies. Thus, the demand for transparency, accountability, and redress through social audit (physical audit by the people), began to take shape. The first Public Hearing the MKSS organised in December 1994, established the importance of information for

the people, and exposed the official opposition to disclosure of records (Ackerman, 2004:456) The MKSS has developed a methodology through which it independently investigates government spending practices and then exposes and compares this information to project budgets through public hearings. In this oversight role, obvious discrepancies and missing funds are exposed. Ackerman (2004:459) reports that in many cases, this exposé by the MKSS has led to public officials returning large amounts of public funds.

The MKSS case shows that successful oversight processes need not start with revolutionary or radical governments, but with simple community-level, citizen-based processes. Success can also arise out of the action of independent organisations and community-based social movements that make demands on the state. Such entities lobby their way into co-governance,leading to transparency and accountability in the auditing of government programmes, as has been the case with Transparency International and Global Assembly for Budget Transparency Accountability and Participation,discussed above.

Citizen-Based Approaches to Fighting Corruption Brazil

The case of Porto Alegre City in Brazil is another effective scheme of state-society collaboration promoting accountability in developing countries. Ackerman (2004:451) notes that every year, more than 14,000 of this city's 1.3 million citizens participate in a series of meetings at various levels of the community. At these meetings, two councillors are elected to serve on a citywide Council of Participatory Budgeting – the organ responsible for putting together the final citywide budget plan. During the following year, the regional and thematic assemblies, councillors and neighbourhood groups, evaluate the financial records, engage in negotiation processes of procurement, and monitor the implementation process of the previous year's budget. Such a participatory budgeting process is an excellent example of 'co-governance for accountability' (Ackerman, 2004:452). Ordinary citizens are involved directly in the planning and supervision of public spending activities. Not only does this limit the possibilities for corrupt behaviour on the part of bureaucrats, but citizens feel that they have a stake in ensuring compliance by the government.

Citizen-Based Approaches to Fighting Corruption South Africa

In South Africa, while policy and legislation create an environment that encourages citizen participation in all matters of local government, this doesn't appear to have been realised in practice.

There are, however, a few successful cases worth highlighting. In a study on participatory budgeting in the eThekwini Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, Smith (2004:34) concluded that:

> …*eThekwini Municipality is one of the few municipalities in the country that has demonstrated any kind of serious commitment to opening up its budget formulation process to citizen participation. [Yet] the participatory process in eThekwini has been an uneven and mostly superficial one, and clearly there remain elements within the municipality's administrative and political structures that are not yet comfortable with the notion of citizens exercising more control over how resources are allocated.*

A separate study conducted by Leduka (2009), established that citizens and civil society organisations had not been encouraged or mobilised to partake in the budget process of local government. Instead, Leduka concluded, political and administrative elites were largely still holding onto power that should be in the hands of citizens. The case of South Africa challenges us to look beyond the 'well behaved' citizen participation in local government activities, as prescribed by policy and legislation. For, despite supportive policies and a legislative environment that permits citizen participation in all aspects of local government (including budgeting, procurement and outsourcing), South Africa has witnessed numerous violent protests, often directed at local government officials and councillors (Mubangizi, 2009, 2010). According to Valley (2009:11), reasons given for the protests included wage increases, dissatisfaction with the high crime rate, resistance to government policy, mobilising the masses in sympathy with the oppressed and high service charges.

Such social unrest not only indicates dissatisfaction amongst the citizenry, but also implies that the citizens will not fold arms and allow government officials to do as they please. The case of South Africa suggests that if space is not created for citizen involvement there is a likelihood of social upheaval. It is thus important to explore what critical factors are most likely to facilitate citizen engagement in a non-violent and responsible manner.

Given the successes and failures of the aforementioned examples, what processes can be said to facilitate effective citizen engagement in the budgetary and expenditure processes of local government? This question is examined through the lens of a case study on citizen-based processes of fighting corruption in Uganda.

Methodology

Studying the critical success factors for adopting a citizen-based approach to fighting corruption in a government function like public

procurement requires views from different stakeholders. This is because many stakeholders play a critical role in local governments, due to the multiple accountabilities that typically characterise local-government systems. Local governments have both horizontal and vertical accountability relationships. Vertically, they are accountable to the citizens, but also to the central government. Horizontally, officials in a particular local government account amongst themselves through the functions performed, but also account to their fellow local governments within similar geographical jurisdictions. In this study, a cross-sectional survey of 11 local governments in Uganda was conducted. The first 10 local governments were selected on the basis of the 2006 Global Integrity Report for Uganda (Biryetega, 2006), in which it was observed that the higher the budget, the more likely the occurrence of procurement corruption.

To select the sample for this study, an assessment of Central Government Transfer of funds to local governments for the 2010/11 financial year was done, to determine which local governments had received the biggest budget allocations. In this regard, the study examined development grants and allocations from the Ugandan Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) to each of the local governments for the 2012/11 financial year. On the basis of the amount of funding received, 11 districts were identified as being best placed to provide the information required for this study. This was not only because they received more funding from central government, but also that they had more development grants from MoFPD, a variety of both administrative and political officials, an active and varied civic society, and hosted a number of pre-qualified firms in the district with capacity to provide goods, services and works to the local governments for a given time in the financial year. On the basis of these characteristics, various categories of respondents responded from the 11 districts (see Table 1).

Table 1: Categories and Number of Respondents

Category	Sample size	Sampling technique
Politicians	118	convenience sampling
Administrator*s*	233	convenience sampling
Opinion leaders	118	purposive sampling
Ordinary citizens	414	random sampling
Civil society	99	purposive sampling
TOTAL	982	

Data for the study were collected using a self administered questionnaire which consisted of various sections. Specifically, the survey instrument had a section focusing on the critical success factors for a citizen-based approach in the fight against public-procurement corruption. These questions were indirectly formulated to elicit ideas on why anti-corruption strategies tended to fail – with the responses likely to give the critical success factors which needed to be addressed. Respondents' opinions were also sought on the effective means which were needed to implement citizen-based approaches. We used a four-point Likert scale, where 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. Before administering the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out to ensure that the questions asked were not only clearly understandable, but also valid and reliable in terms of their wording, structure and sequence. The coefficient for the overall survey instrument was 0.905, suggesting acceptable reliability (according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a coefficient of 0.70 or more implies a high degree of data reliability). Upon confirmation of the reliability and the normality of the data, the actual analysis of data was done using a combination of descriptive and factor analysis. The descriptive results included frequency distributions, as well as the mean scores as presented in the next section.

Findings and Discussion

Before the multivariate analyses, an exploration of the sample characteristics of study respondents is appropriate. A total of 982 returned the survey instrument. However, during analysis of the data, questionnaires which had missing information on certain items were removed from further analysis. Our analysis confirms that the respondents included 118 (12%) politicians, 233 (23.6%) administrators, 118 (12.0%) opinion leaders in the local governments, 414 (41.9%) ordinary citizens, and 99 (10.0%) representatives from civil-society organisations. The remaining 0.5% was non-responses cases that could not be used in the computation of the descriptive statistics. While Uganda is a representative democracy where the administrators, politicians and those in civil society organisations would be presumed to 'work for' the citizens according to the principal-agent theorisation, the biggest number of respondents being citizens offers credibility to the findings as their views are entertained as opposed to that of their representatives. A cross-tabulated analysis of citizens' responses (as compared to other categories) on whether there is support from all stakeholders in the fight against procurement corruption in

Uganda, reveals varied responses. Overall the various categories of respondents strongly agreed that fighting procurement corruption required a well-defined support from all stakeholders.

The respondents were further disaggregated by gender, where it was found that 578 (58.6%) of the study respondents were male, compared to 403 (40.3%) who were female. By disaggregating the data in this way, it was found that the districts whose top political leadership were female had relatively less procurement corruption cases than those whose leadership was predominantly male. Cross tabulation of results by gender confirms that females and males have divergent opinions on how to adopt a citizen-driven approach in the fight against procurement corruption. For example, more males in the male cohort (56.9%) than females in the female cohort (55%), strongly agreed that citizen-driven approaches can greatly enhance accountability by administrative officials in local governments. They were unanimous in confirming that a citizen-driven approach was one of the major strategies neededin terms of increasing transparency and accountability in procurement processes.

Respondents had different religious affiliations. In his study of the social determinants of public procurement corruption, Basheka (2012) reported that there was a higher likelihood of corruption amongst Protestants as compared to Catholics. This considered, items on religious affiliations were includedin the background characteristics of respondents. To get deeper meaning out of such items, a cross-tabulation with substantive items was done and an analysis of their relationships leads to such conclusions. Researchers can tell how respondents of a particular age group, gender or religious affiliation, respond on a particular item. Corruption is a subject that has significant implications from the cultural dimensions, and understanding of the background category of respondents is critical to developing deeper insights and drawing conclusions about social problems like corruption. In this study, 43% of the total respondents were Protestants, 30.2% were Catholics, 16.2% were Muslims, 6.8% were seventh day Adventists, and 2.2% had other religious affiliations. In terms of educational attainment, 26.1% of the study respondents had high-school level, 53.6% had a bachelor's degree, 6.0% had a master's degree, and the remaining 12.8% had other qualifications including professional qualifications, ordinary diplomas, and PhD qualifications. Respondents hence had varying social, cultural and religious backgrounds, and this, we believe, increases the validity and reliability of the research.

Table 2: Measures and Rankings on the Critical Success Factors for Addressing Procurement Corruption

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean score
1. Extensive citizen awareness	56.1	33.8	4.7	1.5	3.50
2. Effective monitoring systems	57.3	31.3	4.9	2.1	3.50
3. Well-defined support from all stakeholders	56.1	34.4	3.0	2.3	3.49
4. Adequate power to anti corruption agencies	44.2	37.5	5.5	2.5	3.46
5. Accountability by administrative officials	53.7	34.7	4.6	2.6	3.44
6. Accountability by political leaders	53.1	33.0	5.9	4.0	3.40
7. Involvement of anti-corruption civil-society organisations	49.1	38.2	6.1	3.0	3.38
8. Sufficient resources for anti-corruption	44.2	38.7	8.5	4.1	3.28
9. Complementary but highly-coordinated institutions	42.2	43.1	7.6	3.1	3.28
10. Involvement of political parties	35.9	39.2	12.5	8.1	3.06

The mean scores for each of the items above showed that respondents agreed overwhelmingly that creating a successful anti-corruption strategy requires, inter alia: (1) extensive citizen awareness; (2) effective monitoring systems; (3) well-defined support from all stakeholders; and (4) adequate power to anti-corruption agencies. It's clear from Table 2 that all these items had a mean score above 3, indicating that respondents saw each of the success factors listed as critical for addressing public-procurement corruption. Our findings are comparable with those found in other related studies. Approaches to addressing corruption often take at least two forms: (1) approaches aimed at restraining

unethical or corrupt behaviour through legal and regulatory sanctions, codes of conduct, independent watchdogs in the public or private sector, and the practice of whistle blowing (the formal approach); and (2) approaches that stress the role of civic education with the aim of increasing public awareness. The literature suggests that in most countries there is no single approach that has been effective in addressing the problem of corruption. We thus acknowledge that our findings confirm the need for such a variety of approaches.

To support appropriate conclusions and policy recommendations regarding a citizen-based approach, it is necessary to consider the exact areas where such citizens can be involved in the public procurement process. Citizens, according to this research, specificallysuggested that they could be involved in the following aspects of procurement:

- Procurement policy development;
- Public-procurement spending decisions;
- Monitoring of public-sector performance;
- Demanding accountability for public resources used;
- Demanding better public-service outcomes;
- The process of procurement planning;
- The process of bids' evaluation;
- Awarding of contracts; and
- Monitoring of contract performance.

Previous findings in Uganda's context indicated that most citizens do not participate in public-procurement processes (Basheka & Bisangabasajja, 2010). Our analysis relating to which stages in the procurement process citizens should be involved in, found that most respondents believed citizens should be involved in public procurement at the performance-monitoring stage, which constitutes the contract-management phase of the public-procurement process. IN addition to this, it was also establish that most respondents supported citizens' involvement during the "accountability for public resource use" stage when the public servants give an account of how funds were utilised in relation to the outputs. Since public procurement is an important function of public financial management, with wider implications for improvements in service delivery, the performance of a public-procurement system can credibly be measured by assessing the quality of public services being offered by local governments. While most respondents agreed to citizens' participation in the evaluation

of bids, this particular variable also attracted a sizeable number of respondents who objected to this requirement, possibly because of the technical nature of bid evaluation. The public procurement laws of Uganda entrust evaluation to a technical committee (evaluation committee) whose composition ought to reflect various specialisations. For example, the bid evaluation exercise for a complex construction project will not benefit from citizen involvement, because they lack the required skills. The award process is critical to a well-functioning public-procurement process. Owing to the political manoeuvres that most local government award decisions go through, citizen involvement is crucial at this level. While the citizens may not be involved in making the decisions, anti-corruption advocates would wish to see those involved in awarding contracts being monitored, in order to check their excesses.

When asked to score the activities they deemed effective in promoting citizen-driven approaches, participants responded as in Table 3, below:

Table 3: Effective Means of Promoting Citizen-Driven Approaches

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean score
1. Encourage awareness building	61.8	31.9	4.7	1.6	3.55
2. Capacity-building initiatives	47.4	42.8	7.8	2.1	3.36
3. Citizen feedback mechanisms	46.7	43.1	7.2	3.0	3.34
4. Public hearings	46.0	39.3	9.6	5.0	3.27
5. Promoting linkages with churches and NGOs	45.3	38.4	12.0	4.3	3.26
6. Participatory budgeting	44.9	41.7	9.3	4.1	3.27
7. Participatory boards at local government	42.6	40.8	12.1	4.3	3.23
8. Establishing independent monitoring groups	41.7	43.6	10.9	3.8	3.25
9. Establish complaints' mechanisms	39.2	45.1	11.9	3.8	3.30
10. Encourage organised protests	36.7	31.9	21.2	10.2	2.94
11. Encourage lobbying activities	34.8	44.7	13.1	7.4	3.08

The most popular method of promoting citizen-driven approaches was to "encourage awareness building". Of the total respondents, 61.8% strongly agreed, while 31.9% agreed that this was necessary. The second most significant approach for respondents was "capacity building initiatives", with 47.4% strongly agreeing and 42.8% agreeing. The third opinion was argued to be "establishing citizen feedback mechanisms", with 46.7% strongly agreeing and 43.1% agreeing, and which was closely followed by "participatory budgeting" with 44.9% strongly agreeing and 41.7 agreeing. Combining the scores for "agreed" and "strongly agreed", all scores were above 80%. This implies that respondents were of the view that each of the listed approaches is important, albeit to varying degrees. An analysis of the mean scores suggests that respondents highly rated each of the means for promoting citizen-based approaches. However, encouraging awareness building had the highest mean score (3.55), and encouraging organised protests had the least mean score (2.94). Dialogue as opposed to confrontational approaches appears to be an important factor in the adoption of citizen-driven approaches.

Discussion

Citizen-driven approaches are one of the methods currently favoured for addressing public-procurement corruption. Our findings indicate that respondents value the involvement of citizens in effective monitoring systems, coupled with a multiplicity of stakeholders, in order to combat procurement corruption. Extensive citizen awareness, effective monitoring systems, and well-defined support from stakeholders, were ranked as the most important success factors for involving citizens (see Table 1). This is confirmed by the fact that respondents most valued citizen-awareness building processes, capacity-building initiatives and citizen-feedback mechanisms (see Table 2). That citizen awareness was highly rated by the respondents suggests that people realise the role of citizens

in the fight against corruption. They also realise that citizens in general cannot participate in anti-corruption processes, unless there is a basic awareness of the important aspects of such processes. The findings suggest that, in Uganda, there is a growing awareness of citizens' role in anti-corruption strategies over the traditional measures of fighting corruption (through appropriate institutions and other such incentives). Extending this view, it would appear that citizens see themselves as agents in the principal-agent dichotomy, discussed earlier. As agents, they see the bureaucratic machinery as being there merely to implement policy, while the power to monitor policy implementation lies squarely in the hands of the citizens.

That the respondents ranked "the involvement of political parties" as the least likely to positively impact anti-corruption strategies, shows citizens' lack of trust in politicians. Indeed, in Uganda, corruption has been largely blamed on politicians – either from their direct involvement in corrupt activities, or resulting from their failure to deal decisively with corrupt officials (Flanary & Watt, 1999; Tangri & Mwenda, 2001).

The findings of this study resonate well with the Voices of the Poor survey, in which respondents to a worldwide survey on poverty issues affirmed that, worldwide, the poor continue to make a passionate plea for their greater involvement in matters of governance and decision-making processes – particularly those to do with resource use and allocation (Narayan, Chambers, Shah & Petesch, 2000).

The argument that people need capacity to participate, and that some technical matters should be left to bureaucrats and technocrats, has been advanced (Ludeking & Williams, 1999). However, the Brazilian, Indian and South African case studies cited earlier, have shown that it is possible and indeed beneficial for ordinary people to participate meaningfully in, contribute to, and monitor matters of interest to the citizenry. What then might this mean for public managers, policy makers and society in general? One clear scenario to be avoided is a situation where the views of the citizens in anti-corruption strategies are not taken seriously. This would spell disaster, since the bottled-up anger and resentment of the by the citizens can quickly escalate into massive violence and social unrest, as was witnessed at the dawn of the Arab Spring uprisings, and as occurs regularly in South Africa's so-called 'service delivery protests' (Mubangizi, 2001; Mubangizi & Gray, 2011).

We suggest a multi-pronged approach that places the citizens at the centre of anti-corruption endeavours, coupled with a sound participatory monitoring system within multi-stakeholder processes. In this regard, we suggest the following practical strategies:

- *Realignment of the service culture amongst public servants*. There is a tendency for public officials and politicians to overlook their obligation to the public, in nurturing citizens' involvement in public-policy making processes. A mind-shift is needed in the way the public is viewed by public officials; in other words, the public should be seen by officials as their *raison d'être*, not pawns in a game of self-aggrandisement;
- *Improved transparency* with regard to access to information, including financial reports;
- *Citizen education and capacity building for public participation*. In this regard there should be an acknowledgement that citizen participation goes beyond election day. Citizens can only truly participate in their numbers, if they are empowered in these matters and are clear about the purpose and nature of participation as far as effective delivery of public services is concerned. High levels of citizen education and awareness will motivate involvement in processes that promote transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, in the delivery of public services.
- *Mobilising citizens and aggregating citizen voices* will ensure that individuals in the communities become more interested in issues that relate to planning processes, performance measurement and management of municipalities, the use of resources through efficient budgeting, and the implementation of policies and rendering of acceptable levels of service.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Effective Public Financial Management systems are essential for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public-service delivery, and are critical for any government's poverty-reduction strategy. However, public institutions are notorious for their unresponsiveness and unaccountable practices regarding the poor, and this is especially the case in public procurement. This is of particular concern, because procurement corruption hinders government efforts to satisfy social needs. It does so by diverting resources that would otherwise be best utilised for social welfare services.

Unless this trend is arrested, it will derail not only the development process, but also the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Citizens rarely participate in public-finance policy matters. Where there is participation, it is common for policy designers only to involve citizens at the evaluation stages, where they tend to serve more as sources of information than as active contributors. However, it can be argued that such officers are only 'servants' of the people, within the confines of the principal-agent relationship.

In responding to the agency problem which occurs when the interests of the agency are not 'in sync' with those of the principal, agency theory proposes a potent monitoring system, part of which includes participation of the principal in the agent's activities. This paper has suggested that, in a democracy, the voting citizenry is sovereign, and are the bona fide *principals*, with public administrators and managers being *agents* in the principle-agent dichotomy. It is thus up to the citizens to hold the public administrators accountable in all public administration processes – including public procurement. The findings of this research add to the understanding of factors that make citizen participation in procurement processes possible. And while based in Uganda, the views expressed in the research findings could well be of value to other developing counties who face similar challenges in public procurement processes. They suggest practices that can be said to facilitate effective citizen engagement in the budgetary and expenditure processes of local government.

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Upholding Public Accountability through Strategic Communication in the Public Sector

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Abstract: The need to uphold public accountability in all forms of communication in the public sector cannot be overemphasized. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on increased transparency and accountability in the public sector is dependent largely on the increased sphere of control brought to bear on the state by various stakeholders and beneficiaries. Effective engagement and communication between government and the public would contribute to improved accountability where effective service delivery is seen as a product of both public service provision and public service benefit. Legitimacy and voice; direction; performance and accountability are seen as integral aspects for enhancing strategic communication. It is therefore postulated in this article that the adoption of an efficient and effective communication model is essential for enhanced service delivery and contribution to good governance. It is further proposed that incorporation of e-Governance into the government communication cache would promote maximum publicity in service delivery and, more importantly, promote reciprocal feedback that would inform future government service delivery processes in the New Public Management environment. This, in turn, would contribute towards greater transparency and accountability, and more prudent use and management of public resources. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport and Recreation, which is currently experiencing severe austerity measures, serves as a case in point. Against this background, this article explores the significance of an effective

strategic communication system for upholding accountability as a mechanism of advancing good governance.

Introduction

The nature and degree of service delivery by the government-of-the-day is a key determinant of both the duration and the legacy of that government. The current democratic government in South Africa has resulted from the replacement of the system of apartheid that had been based on a divided nation characterized by segregation of service delivery as part of a conscious effort to divide its people. The democratic principles of current governance are based on the concept of a "people's government"; hence, one of the guiding tenets is the involvement of the citizens of the country in the decision-making process. For this to happen effectively, government thinking, intentions and activities must be made known to the participating citizenry. This democracy is based on the principle of "a government for the people, by the people" as a key tenet of participative democracy.

Following on this approach, however, the current system of governance is characterized by minimal interaction with the communities being served. The process of public administration results in limited information flow to beneficiary communities. The challenge, however, is the very limited reciprocal flow in the form of feedback. Public sector accountability lies with the political office bearers and parliament rather than with the public administration arm. This article investigates the impact of improved provision of information to the community as part of strategic communication, and the upholding of public accountability through increased transparency and access to information in the public sector. Some reference will be made to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport & Recreation (DSR) as an example for purposes of discussion and further elucidation.

Strategic Communication and Public Accountability

Within the parameters of government service delivery, communication is intended to inform the services delivered, and to consequently receive feedback from beneficiaries on methods of improvement. Service delivery is viewed as a mechanism to activate

the communication strategy (Pretorius & Schurink 2007:26). The communication process thus has to be active in order to be effective.

Integral to the art of good governance is the use of communication as a strategic tool to achieve the goals and aims of departments, and to deliver on the political agenda of government. It is a common misunderstanding that communication is simply an information dissemination process. However, Barrett (2002:2) defines meaningful communication as that which accomplishes two primary objectives: (1) it informs and educates employees at all levels in the company's strategy, and (2) motivates and positions employees to support the strategy and associated performance goals. Such performance is identifiable in the nature and quality of service delivery. These postulations support the claim that strategic communication management, when identified and adopted as a management tool, has a direct bearing on the performance management of an organization. This, in turn, has a direct bearing on the value-for-money approach as well. It also incorporates the spheres of strategic management of both internal and external communications as key factors to monitoring and evaluation, and risk management, thus promoting and ultimately upholding public accountability.

Within the context of the discussion above, it is notable that communication is a strategic tool used to achieve a particular outcome. As such, the communication policy would embody the *modus operandi* directed towards achieving the needs of the organization. This policy would thus harness all the objectives of the organization with a view to contributing to its achievement as part of the organizational strategy.

It is implied that, for communication to be considered strategic, it reflects a planned process, and in this context, communication policy is a product of the public policy formulation process. In this regard, Hanekom (1987:8) defines public policy as a deliberate process serving as a guideline for the usage of allocated government resources to achieve societal goals, with the resultant guideline made known publicly through legislation. It follows then that the communication policy would form part of administrative policy as it pertains to operational matters in the main.

To contextualise, Brathwaite (2003:1) defines strategic communication as being "people centred", and as a process of providing information with the aim of achieving a shared meaning based on organizational values and principles. The fundamental purpose of strategic communication in an organisation is to enable and energise employees to carry out its strategic intent, and to rapidly identify, send, receive and understand strategic information that is credible, sensible, and relevant. Communication is a function, not a branch. It is conceded that it should operate as a unified cross-organisational management function, not as a monolithic unit.

Towards Good Governance in Communication

The revised system and structure of government in South Africa is intended to improve service delivery. According to Matlosa (2005:5), governance pertains to the manner in which national affairs are run by those institutions and public officers who are duly mandated to do so. Okot-Uma (2003:1) regards good governance as a feature of a New Paradigm in Public Administration that emphasizes the role of public managers in providing high quality services, advocates increasing managerial autonomy and recognizesthe importance of the human and technological resources that managers require to meet their performance targets. In this context, the authors concede that the need for timely communication would contribute to good governance.

Saxena (2005:2) identifies the 1997 United Nations Development Programme's enunciation on the following set of principles that define good governance:

- legitimacy and voice, with a focus on participation and consensus orientation;
- direction, with emphasis on strategic vision;
- performance management relating to responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness;
- accountability in relation to the public and contributing to transparency; and
- fairness with a focus on equity and the Rule of Law.

Emanating from the above discussion and key to the success of public service delivery is the adoption; adherence to and implementation of policies at point-of-delivery, i.e. at the Department

of Sports and Recreation (DSR) level in this context. It is conceded that policy formulation and implementation contribute to good governance in a public sector context. Cloete and Auriacombe (2007:193) is similarly of the view that the "current dominant governance paradigm" leans strongly towards government activities being accessible and transparent so as to be indicative of "evidence-based" policy assessment.

Rosenbloom (1998:4-5) defines public administration as the action part of government, the means by which the purposes and goals of government are realized. This implies that public administration has a direct impact on both the level of services delivered, as well as the reciprocal impression left on the constituency of the level of service delivery by the current government. Hannekom (1987:6) expands this definition by claiming that public officials are the intermediaries between political office-bearers and society. Adopted policies direct the agreed process of operations to ensure that the public officials conduct business in a manner that is aligned with the thinking of the political principal. Therefore, imbibing the spirit of corporate governance, as espoused in the King III Report is inclusive of processes and systems to which institutions adhere, are managed and thus held to account. Bridgman (2007:14) on the other hand, views good governance as the qualitative state of excellence in decision-making and conformance, and that performance and governance can only be achieved when all institutional roles are operating collectively. In relation to DSR, policy implementation by the Communication Services Component (CSC) would incorporate the use of strategic communication as a prerequisite for good governance, thus upholding the principles of access and transparency, as well as the resultant principle of accountability which is deemed an important principle of public administration in practice.

Additionally, extracted from the 2009-2012 Medium term Strategic Framework that form the foundation for The Presidency strategy, is the *Strategic Priority* focusing on *building a developmental state including improvement of public services and strengthening democratic institutions* Reference is made to the challenges of transformation in the system of governance in this regard. This prioritization process emphasizes the intent of government to improve the nature and quality of its governance.

Van Kersbergen & Van Waarden (2004:145) postulate that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) supports good governance by associating best practices in key areas such as public management, business-government relations and social policy. Good governance has therefore emerged as a global trend, and strategic communication that integrates the service provider and beneficiaries is a major contributor, as it incorporates participative management and service provision. It can therefore be said that good governance is achieved when communication is managed as a strategic resource.

Legislative Framework Governing Communication

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa introduced the concept of democracy and joint decision-making. Of significance is Chapter 10 of the Constitution that deals with Public Administration, with the fundamental Values and Principles of Section 195 incorporating the following important principles:

- a high level of professional ethics;
- efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
- people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making;
- public administration must be accountable; and
- transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.

The stipulation of the principle of transparency in the dealings of provincial government pertains to both political and administrative transparency for purposes of accountability. This underscores Section 32 (1) of the Constitution which stipulates the right of Access to Information in which everyone has the right of access to information held by the state. Such accountability is possible only through a communication policy that talks to the needs of the province.

The Citizen's Charter

Another relevant aspect is the Citizen's Charter.The White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery (1997:11) requires that government commits to a citizen-centred approach to service delivery. The Citizen's Charter has been developed from the Bill of Rights provided for in Chapter 2, Sections 7 to 39 of the Constitution of South Africa. In the Foreword to the Charter (1-2), Premier Mkhize categorically explained that "the government therefore, by way of this document, makes a commitment that it will uphold your rights as a citizen". The Charter therefore "lifts the veil"from the face of

government, in order to enable each and every citizen to get a clear picture of one's rights and privileges, while at the same time ensuring that civil servants act with diligence which is free of corruption and malpractice at all times, for the good of all levels of society." It is against this backdrop that the strategic use of communication services will facilitate good governance through accountability and transparency, both internally and externally.

In keeping with the Principles of Batho Pele, a Sotho phrase meaning"People First"is a process intended to get public servants to be service-orientated and accountable for the level of service they deliver. The KZN Citizen's Charter, by committing every government official in KZN to the adoption of Batho Pele, is thus an enabler, as it gives effect to strategic communication. Within the communication perspective, despite the Ombudsman in KZN being operational and accessible through the Presidential hotline, much more needs to be done to combat fraud and corruption within government. In the State of the Nation Address (SONA) on 9 February 2012, President Zuma emphasized that the government has prioritized "the fight against corruption" and that it was working closely with provincial government departments to "improve governance, systems and administration." This concern with corruption was reiterated in the 2012 State of the Province Address (SOPA) by KZN Premier Mkhize, who stated that the KZN government was also considering additional mechanisms to fight fraud and corruption, and that the Citizen's Charter, Batho Pele and other relevant documents would empower the citizens to evaluate the performance of the public service.

Batho Pele and the Citizen's Charter are important policy documents paving the way forward for strategic communication and good governance. Visser and Twinomurinzini (2003:4) believe that the use of e-Government as a service delivery enabler would support government's service improvement philosophy of Batho Pele, thus "putting people first". ICT can put people first, but only if its use is supported by the necessary underlying business processes. The success of both ICT inclusion and e-Governance is heavily dependent on the communication policy. It is therefore beneficial for government entities to embrace and incorporate ICT to enhance government communication, thus promoting greater transparency and upholding accountability.

Promotion of Access to Information Act

The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) instructs the right of citizens to access information held by the

state. This Act supports the Citizen's Charter and serves as an enabling framework to guide the strategic intent of the department on strategic communication. The Act makes it possible for any member of the public, or any other entity, to access any information pertaining to government service provision, precluding only information that could be a threat to national security. This changed perspective allows for information provision to the public on the basis of public interest, and is again a contribution to good governance and public accountability.

Government Communication Information System (GCIS)

The key mandate of the National Government Communication and Information System Department (GCIS), presented as part of the Strategic Plan for the Medium-Term Period: 2012-2017, and as presented by the GCIS executive on 09 March 2012 is to:

- provide tactical leadership in government communication; and
- co-ordinate a government communication system that makes sure that the public is familiar with government's policies, plans and programmes.

Government's mandate requires that its communication be expanded to enhance access to information that enables the public to participate in the country's transformation and in improving the lives of communities. The GCIS is challenged in its attempts to synchronise government communication holistically. There is a direct correlation between the degree of importance attributed to the communication component and the service delivery levels of the entity. As government departments tend to function in silos, the lack of shared information contradicts the principles of Batho Pele, and the legal prescripts of PAIA and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) 3 of 2000. The intention of these acts is to encourage public servants to be service-orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement. It is a simple, transparent mechanism which allows citizens to hold public servants accountable for the type of services they deliver. The inability of the GCIS to institute a consistent government communication policy is the result of an uncooperative bureaucratic system. This challenge can be clearly ascertained from the following discussion on government communication.

Operationalising Communication in the Public Sector

The performance of government is judged by the impression citizens have of its record of delivery. Provincial government departments, as branches of national government, function as the operational limbs involved in the service delivery process, and are accountable at two levels, *viz* to provincial parliament as part of administrative governance, and to the citizens of the service area who elect provincial parliamentarians. A discrepancy often exists between the reports presented to parliament and the services actually provided to the community. The intention is that strategic communication inherent in the communication policy would ensure that what is reported to parliament is a true reflection of that which is realistically occurring on the ground. A natural consequence of this approach will thus be improved service delivery as a clear indicator of good governance.

The CSC of a public entity is directly responsible for the marketing of that entity. Usage of the services of this component to improve service delivery by publicizing the activities of the entity internally and externally would ensure that the organization functions as an efficient team, delivering together on one mandate. Cognizance must be taken of the fact that communication as a concept and activity is not restricted to this component only, but rather that, by its very nature, it permeates all other aspects of administration and is impacted on heavily by the human factor. Communication must thus sit at a strategic level.

The status of government communication, as depicted in the Communications 2000Final Report (2000:7), is not encouraging. The report indicates an overall lack of central co-ordination, and that "communication has a low priority as reflected in its budgets and the status of communicators." The communication policy should include an assessment of the languages of communication with the citizenry. Ngcobo (2009:5) acknowledges the South African Constitution's stance on equal rights which includes the right to be served in one's own language. The authors believe that information is only meaningful if provided in a language that one can understand, a key tenet that could be made possible through the communication policy.

The embracing of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the practice of e-Governance holds major consequences for government departments if they are not to lag behind in the global

arena of communication management. In this regard, Jain (2004:1) defines e-Government as the use of information and communications technologies to improve the functioning of government. A modernising civil society dictates that government keeps up with the ever-increasing pace set by the South African community, who are now part of the global village and information society. The Internet and social media are fast becoming the new 'encyclopaedia', and government needs to harness this conduit for maximum exposure and engagement. Kumar (2001:2) postulates that institutions can embrace or be crushed by the information revolution. An evaluation of the communication policy would identify areas in this arena that could be redressed. Integral to the art of good governance is the use of communication as a strategic tool to achieve the overall goals and objectives of departments, and in so doing, deliver on the political mandate and agenda of government. To this end, functional communication necessitates a sound exchange between three dominant categories of society: politicians; the public officials who deliver the services and the communities who are the recipients or beneficiaries of public services. There is a need for greater interaction amongst the three categories involved in the governance process. In this article we assess the contribution of the communication services unit to teamwork and transparency within the DSR, and its resultant effect on optimized service delivery.

An area of concern is the absence of the Communication Services Component (CSC) from the decision-making process, i.e. its absence from the strategic level of decision-making at EXCO results in the dissemination of information being delayed, filtered or not received at all. This silo operation of the CSC has a direct impact on the perceived accountability, or lack thereof of officials within the department, as well as to the public in terms of the principles of Batho Pele, which depicts the service standards adopted by government. Senior management is thus denied the opportunity to be conscientised by the CSC on their role in strategic communication as part of the DSR. In support of this assertion, Kaufmann, Kraay, Mastruzzi & Lambsdorff in Pathak & Prasad (2005:67) emphasize the belief that the drivers of corruption are: monopoly of power; indiscretion, and lack of accountability and transparency. The article explores the use of the CSC as a critical tool of redress by the KZNDSR to address the gaps in terms of risk management, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The discussion is thus located within the operational policy framework of government communication, and briefly presents the following key policy models that can be used to inform communication services within the DSR.

Models/Approaches Informing Communication Services Within DSR

Hanekom (1987:32) believes that public interest is a great determinant in policy formulation. This factor is consequently a direct determinant of the communication policy. The following theories that guide policy-making would locate strategic communication with a policy approach.As a government entity operating at point-of-contact level, the DSR has to employ policy approaches that would promote effective communication. In this regard, the following approaches to communication policy formulation should be considered:

Systems Approach to Policy-making

The systems approach clearly depicts the framework describing the relationships between the demands, political system, results/outputs and resultant triggered demands. The impact of environmental influence on policy outputs, or *vice versa*, can be clearly gauged. The uniqueness of this model lies in its cyclic nature, illustrating the evolving nature of policy-making. Cloete, Wissink & de Coning (2006:33) believe this model provides a graphic explanation of the total policy process, unlike the institutional, incremental or social interaction models. Formulation of the DSR communication policy using this model would effectively ensure that feedback from beneficiaries on services rendered would inform the refinement of the policy, as a result of the cyclic nature of this model (Fox, Schwella & Wissink 1991:31).

Governance-Risk-Compliance (G-R-C) Triangulation Approach

The Governance-Risk-Compliance (G-R-C) Triangulation Approach highlights three pillars of good governance. Good governance is reliant on good risk management which ensures compliance and *vice versa.* The Governance-Risk-Compliance (G-R-C) Triangulation Approachhighlights the inter-relatedness of the three pillars for enhanced communication as a preferred approach to upholding accountability.

Within the dimension of strategic communication, NPM represents a "paradigmatic break from the traditional model of public administration" (O'Flynn in Doorgapersad 2011:238). It is a reformed public sector transformation that breaks away from the repressive autocratic and conservative paradigm of public administration that followed top-down hierarchies. In the context of compliance, Denhardt and Denhardt (2007:43) conclude that New Public Management Theory has signalled a radical shift on the

role of public administrators, the nature of the profession and the manner in which tasks are accomplished. The authors further propose a new Service Model with public sector focus in a post-modern era, including the following principles:

- serve citizens, not customers;
- seek the public interest;
- value citizenship over entrepreneurship;
- think strategically, act democratically;
- recognise that accountability isn't simple;
- serve rather than steer; and
- value people, not just productivity.

These principles relate directly to the services rendered by the DSR as a provincial government entity responsible for service delivery, and are integrated with a strategic approach to enhancing communication whilst contributing to accountability. The 5C Protocolenables the location of the discussion on strategic communication within a policy management framework.

5C Protocol Theory

According to Cloete, Wissink and de Coning (2006:182), the five interlinked variables known as the famous 5C Protocol, and their appropriateness to the communication policy, are:

- *content*: Implementation process includes the policy content in terms of what DSR communication goals are, what the policy intends to achieve, as well as methods to be employed to address identified problems, *viz* exactly what and how DSR is going to communicate with its internal and external stakeholders;
- *context*: DSR communication policy needs to follow due process in terms of the processes of consultation with all key stakeholders and decision-makers involved in the communication process, amend it accordingly, and have it ratified and adopted by senior management before it is accepted as policy. It is hoped that a buy-in by all DSR stakeholders would be achieved;
- *commitment:* Various responsibility managers within the DSR entrusted with the action of the adopted policy to ensure that the desired communication objectives are realized;
- *capacity*: DSR responsibility managers need to be knowledgeable administratively to deliver on the identified communication responsibilities, especially since they are

key drivers to the communication and information-dissemination process; and

- *clients and coalitions*: beneficiaries of the communication policy, *viz* internal and external stakeholders to the DSR, need to support and engage positively with the communication policy implementation process and provide feedback to the department.

Such an approach to compiling the communication policy of the DSR would ensure that all facets of the strategic communication process are considered, and included within the communication policy.

Challenges in Communication in the New Democracy

In locating public accountability through strategic communication via policy models, some challenges experienced in DSR regarding communication are identified. They are centered on a discussion of The New Democracy; Communication Services as a Programme in the DSR and the Strategic intent of Communication in the DSR.

Prof Sangweni, ex-Chairperson of the Public Service Commission, stated in the foreword of the August 2007 *Report on the Evaluation of the Batho Pele Principle of Value-for-Money in the Public Service* that, for true transformation to occur, public value can be created only through effective and efûcient resource utilization. The strategic communication inherent in a communication policy would be central to the assessment process, the result of which would determine whether there is such public value and, as such, good governance. Section 195 (1) (b) of the Constitution of South Africa states that Public Administration must be administered by democratic values and principles. The use of public resources must always be efûcient, economic and effective. The White Paper on Transformation of Service Delivery (1997) defines value-for-money as the provision of public services economically and efficiently. A strategically inclined communication policy would ensure accountability and value-for-money. The democratic South African government is 18 years old and many challenges remain in transforming government entities. Some of these challenges include:

- formation of new provincial government departments such as the KZN Department of Sport & Recreation, as well as the restructuring of some other departments;
- appointment of new office bearers in senior positions at both administrative and political levels;
- retention of many of the departmental officials appointed during the previous regime;

- majority of the previously disadvantaged communities not being accustomed to the accountability obligations of the government-of-the-day;
- concept of representative democracy ensures that generally only those critical stakeholders interacting directly with government are kept informed. However, government is obligated to ensure that the entire community is informed directly on service delivery issues; and
- in effective information flow within the department and the broader provincial community.

Communication Services as a Programme in the DSR

All Government departments have a dedicated CSC. There is a great deal of discrepancy in the status of such components, *viz* placement, funding, resourcing, structural level, and access to information, amongst others. Effective communication is the essence of an organization, promoting maximum service delivery with the minimum use of resources. Currently, the CSC within the DSR is not put to maximum use as its placement is still largely undecided. Whilst the CSC accounts to the Office of the Chief Director: Corporate Governance operationally, the financial responsibility for authorization of funds for CSC activities is located with the Office of the Director: Administration. This situation creates great challenges for the implementation of Communication-related programmes as responsibility managers may have conflicting views on CSC activities and operations. The area of concern is the absence of effective two-way communication between the components themselves. Conflict is created because Operations and Financial managers do not always understand each other, or share objectives. The current communication policy within the DSR thus needs to include revision of the placement and authority granted to the CSC. A key section of the MEC's report in the *Annual Performance Plan* for April 2012 to March 2013 (2012:3) states that "the growth of the department through the establishment of district offices poses a challenge for the organization in terms of implementing effective communication and reporting channels, and the organizational structure will need to be reviewed to ensure there is alignment between the structure and what the department plans to deliver." As there are only three officials serving in the CSC, *viz* two deputy managers (one on secondment) and an Administration Officer, most services are restricted to Head Office programmes, resulting in district activities being neglected.

The implication of the operational plan in the preceding discussion is that activities pertaining to External Communication,

*viz*Departmental programmes/projects publicized, and Speeches for the MEC are incorporated into the tasks for *Internal Communication.* Hence the anomaly of the naming of the component, which has direct implications for its duties and allocated budget. Brand exposure at events is also not considered, resulting in these being effected on an *ad-hoc* basis by other components. It is therefore necessary to address the anomalies that currently exist in the DSR, and to streamline a new approach for enhanced communication and service provision, whilst contributing to upholding accountability.

Strategic Intent of Communication in DSR

The use of communication within the organization is varied, incorporating aspects such as strategic communication and operational communication. Holtz (2004:206) states that, communication is not an end; but is a *means* to an end. It is this interpretation that defines communication as a strategic tool to be used gainfully to achieve a particular purpose.

The DSR is a fairly large organization comprised of 183 employees with a head office (at two separate sites) and 11 district offices (at six sites). The channels of communication are thus quite intricate. Zaremba (2004:136) identifies "three basic (communication) network systems that operate within an organization: external and internal; formal and informal; and upward, downward and horizontal." Central to the communication process, is the culture of the organization. Zaremba (2004:167) postulates that the culture of an organization is concerned with the belief and value system of that organization. The implication is that the inherent value system is assimilated by new employees who are socialized at work. The communication policy is a key enabler to announce and promote organizational culture and the desired ethos.

In support of the above assertion, Khandwalla (1977:453) argues that information and action are indissolubly linked in organizations. One gives rise to the other and *vice versa*. There is a misnomer that communication, strategic or otherwise, is restricted to a particular component tasked with that function. This perception is shared by Holtz (2004:66) who holds the view that "most professional communicators enter the business because they are skilled at producing communication tools, such as words, publications, videos or websites. Often, it is this focus that leads to the belief that communication is not strategic, and that it has little to do with the bottom line. This misconception leads to senior management undermining the use of communication as a strategic tool to give effect to their deliberations and decisions.

Holtz (2004:207) also believes that an effective internal communication department is one that helps achieves results. The authors go further to expand on the following question: So where, then, should employee communications report? Ideally, the function should report directly to the CEO, for whom employees are a critical audience. If leaders set a strong agenda for communication by articulating its expectations, the managers of the function to which communication reports will ensure that the department has the resources and backing it needs to meet those goals. This notion is relevant to the DSR because its Communication Services component is not present at senior management meetings.

The assertion above underscores the fact that communication of information needs to be strategically managed for each audience to receive such information in as efficient, effective and acceptable a manner as possible. There is no one-size-fits-all situational expectation. Holtz's (2004:210) statement that the highest ranking internal communicator needs to have a seat at the leadership table where decisions are made gains attention in this regard. The communication of management decisions prior to their enactment indicates that recipient considerations play a role in decisions taken at top management level. A revised communication policy will ensure that communication services will be present to advise senior management on issues of communication consequence.

Dlamini (2011:8) states that as public sector organizations have to deliver their services or products to an enormously diverse population, it is important for them to communicate smarter for less. This assertion brings into question the government regulation on the non-use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook, the cheapest and fastest forms of communication, as well as key conduits to the youth. President Zuma's challenge to all government communicators (2011:11), is that government needs to communicate more consistently and regularly to the media "as the people need to know what services are being delivered, how, where and by whom, and we can inform them through meaningful and regular communication." The current communication policy needs to be revised to include the use of social media.

There is currently little importance attributed to use of ICT within the DSR. The website hosts limited and incomplete information. Many officials refrain from utilizing their emails optimally, opting rather for telephonic communication. Similarly, lack of sharing of information by various committees and sub-committees contributes to the ethos of mistrust prevalent in the organization.

The above situation does not bode well for the accountability of the DSR to the citizens of KZN, and for teamwork. Furthermore, an integral focus of this article drew attention to a public policy approach to examine the current communication process in DSR with emphasis on a strategic perspective. Based on the preceding discussion, the following recommendations are proposed to guide the DSR's communication policy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that the need to uphold public accountability by the public sector is enshrined within South African law and a commitment to good practice. The challenge, however, is to create and adopt sound policy and effective communication in this regard that translates into strategic and operational processes while ensuring that the public have faith in the manner in which services are being administered. Access to public processes and mechanisms of such access are essential in order to engage the electorate positively as critical stakeholders in promoting the concept and principle of access, transparency and accountability.

The authors recommendthat further research be conducted on evaluating the impact of an effective and integrated communication management system within the DSR which should include, *amongst others,* the following areas of enquiry:

- policy and strategy of Communication Services components within provincial government departments;
- budgetary allocations and placement of staff for the Communication Services Component;
- comparison of degree of effectiveness between government departments with varying communication structures and the resultant performances of such departments;
- degree of interaction with critical stakeholders and beneficiaries internally and externally;
- smarter mechanisms of communication such as ICT and social media; and
- designing a communication model that would address the challenges of strategic communication.

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Effectiveness of the Employee Performance Management and Development System

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Abstract: With recent public service delivery protests highlighting critical challenges in the South African public service, the need to boost institutional performance has never been greater. Yet any institutional performance management intervention must begin with the individual employee, to ensure proper alignment between individual actions and strategic departmental goals. In the South African public service, employee performance management is largely based on the Employee Performance Management and Development System (EPMDS). With existing anecdotal evidence raising questions about the system's usefulness, this paper evaluates the effectiveness of the EPMDS in the Department of Sports and Recreation in KwaZulu-Natal – one of nine provinces of South Africa.

Based on a recent research study, the paper examines the role of the EPMDS in improving employee performance, and interrogates the link between employee performance and the achievement of the Department's strategic goals. While employees understand the use of the EPMDS and its potential benefits, the study revealed that the EPMDS is currently ineffective in terms of improving employee performance and contributing to the Department's strategic goals. This may be attributed largely to implementation problems. The paper recommends improved communication around the EPMDS's aims and procedures, a better understanding of day-

to-day activities in the light of departmental goals, and targeted training of line managers - as essential measures to ensure the success of the system.

Key Words: Performance management, performance appraisal, EPMDS, public service, strategic goals

Introduction

After almost eighteen years of democracy in South Africa, ineffective and inadequate service delivery continues to plague the public service, entrenching social inequities rather than alleviating them. According to the *Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa 2010-2030*:

> ...*some of the most intractable and urgent challenges that remain include poverty, income inequality, threats to social cohesion, on-going demographic (race, gender, age, class and geographic) inequities and the impact of globalisation (Republic of South Africa, 2009:6).*

The KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study (KIDS) corroborates this trend, pointing to increasing poverty, inequality and social exclusion in the initial post-apartheid era (May, Agüero, Carter and Timaeus, 2007). In the context of this unacceptably high level of persistent inequality, the post-apartheid state is engaged in various efforts aimed at redressing pervasive imbalances.

The preamble to the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) lists one of its aims as "improving the quality of life of all citizens". In this regard, the manner in which the democratic state is required to conduct its business should be qualitatively different from that pursued during the apartheid era. Part of the challenge is to promote institutions which enable the state to deliver on the Constitution's promise of a democratic and equal society. This mandate, embodied in the public service's *Batho Pele* ("people first") campaign, underpins the government's efforts to create a public service that is responsive to the needs of its citizens.

According to Chapter 10 of the Constitution, the following fundamental democratic values are expected of the public service: (1) a high standard of professional ethics; (2) efficient, economic and effective use of resources; (3) development-orientation; (4) impartial, fair, equitable and unbiased service provision; (5) responsiveness to people's needs, including public participation in policy-making; (6) accountability; (7) transparency; (8) good human-resource management; and (9) broad representation of the South

African people within the parameters of ability, objectivity, fairness and redress.

The 1997 *White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery* (also called the *Batho Pele* White Paper) addresses the government's expectations of public servants in greater detail, and lists the following eight basic principles for transforming service delivery: consultation, service standards, courtesy, access, openness and transparency, dealing with complaints, and giving best value.

Van Dijk (2008:385) notes that the White Paper effectively marks a shift "from personnel administration to human resource management" – in other words, a shift from simple employee *acquisition,* to the effective *utilisation* of employees for achieving the goals and strategies of the public service. Pointing out the clear connection between effective human resource management and effective service delivery, van Dijk explains that:

> ...*the vision of the [White Paper] is that human resource management [in the public service] will result in competent and well-managed employees, capable of, and committed to, delivering high quality services to the people of South Africa … Only when an organisation puts into practice the words describing a competent, professional and committed human resource system, will employees be able to master their own competence while acting as development resources to the benefit of their colleagues (van Dijk, 2008:386).*

To assist in this aim, the Employee Performance Management and Development System (EPMDS) was launched on 1 April 2007. Designed by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the EPMDS was intended as a voluntary model for the performance management of senior public officials in departments and provinces across South Africa. It aims "to optimise every employee's output in terms of quality and quantity, thereby improving the Department's overall performance and service delivery" (DPSA, 2007:10).

This case study of the provincial Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) in KwaZulu-Natal, explores the degree to which the EPMDS contributes to the enhancement of the democratic state's ability to deliver on the promises made in the Constitution. The case study does this by examining the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the EPMDS, and also by assessing the extent to which the system has delivered in the context of its aims and objectives.

Defining Performance Management

Salaman, Storey and Billsberry (2006:318) point out that "managers have always devised ways, formally or otherwise, to set tasks, see that they are carried out well, and make modifications designed to secure further improvements". In his study of academics' perceptions of employee performance management, Pillay (2003:7) observes that "performance management is a business process that links what individuals and teams do on a daily basis with larger goals, values and cultural practices of the organisation and the needs of its customers". The same perspective is articulated by Khoeli (2003:34), who adds that "performance management exists in many forms in most organisations".

A financially-focused approach to performance management mainly investigates how the organisation – whether private or public – is performing financially. It is premised on the idea that if the financial performance of the organisation is sound, this is indicative of the organisation's progress and success. In response, Niven (2006:5) cautions that "undue focus on any particular area of measurement often will lead to poor overall results". He calls for an alternative approach characterised by "a method of balancing the accuracy and integrity of our financial measures with the drivers of future financial performance of the organisation".

Niven's 'balanced scorecard' approach is a more holistic one which considers the performance of the organisation in its entirety. Arguing for balanced criteria in measuring and improving organisational performance, Niven asserts that "measures selected for the scorecard represent a tool for leaders to use in communicating to employees and external stakeholders the outcomes and performance drivers by which the organisation will achieve its mission and strategic objectives" (Niven, 2006:13). He further maintains that balanced scorecards examine and elucidate strategy from different viewpoints, because any effective strategy must describe financial aspirations, markets served, processes to be dealt with, and the personnel who will skilfully guide the company or organisation to success.

In the context of the above claims, it is clear that performance management is a systematic process that seeks to manage the performance of organisations, particularly through actions of employees in such organisations, and from various organisational perspectives. This process looks at the performance of various resources at the disposal of the organisation, and seeks to

understand the extent to which such resources are contributing to the creation of value and attainment of organisational goals. This approach emphasises consideration of not only financial resources, but also all other resources potentially placed to help the organisation achieve its strategic goals – including physical, relational, organisational and human resources (Ross, Pike & Fernström, 2005:72).

Performance Management in the Public Service

The Department of Provincial and Local Government's view of performance management – as cited in Gobardan's (2006:10) study on performance management systems in local government in KwaZulu-Natal, – is as follows:

> [A] strategic approach to management which equips leaders, managers, employees and stakeholders at different levels with a set of tools and techniques to regularly plan, continuously monitor, periodically measure and review performance of the organisation in terms of indicators and targets for efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

In 2007, the DPSA presented the EPMDS in similar terms, as a means of assisting government departments to plan, manage and improve employee performance. For the purposes of the EPDMS, the aim of performance management is "to optimise every employee's output in terms of quality and quantity, thereby improving the [employer's] overall performance and service delivery" (DPSA, 2007:10).

Both conceptually and practically, performance management is generally used to assess the performance of individuals, not groups or whole organisations. Whether the approach stresses mainly financial performance or is a balanced measurement of organisational performance, the emphasis tends to be on how each employee contributes to the attainment of organisational goals. This is because individual performance is more easily measured against performance indicators; because remedial action generally addresses individual shortcomings and gaps; and because it is at the level of the individual drawing the salary, that performance accountability fundamentally lies.

Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk (1998) point out the dual function of performance evaluation – first as a yardstick to gauge performance effectiveness, and second as a means of requiring it – in the following statement:

While performance appraisal systems are often no more than a system of measurement (that is, a specific form together with certain written rules and procedures controlling its use), the concept of performance management signifies an attempt to entrench performance appraisal as a legitimate and integral part of a manager's job of getting subordinates effectively to achieve the results and goals expected of them (Erasmus et al., 1998:405).

Correspondingly, Spangenberg (1994), in Erasmus et al. (1998: 404), describes performance management as "an approach to managing people that entails planning employee performance, facilitating the achievement of work-related goals, and reviewing performance as a way of motivating employees to achieve their full potential in line with the organisation's objectives".

In order for performance management to fulfil the goals of the organisation, it is important to align employee activities with the objectives and goals of the organisation itself. Mukabera (2006) cites Armstrong's (2000) contention that the manager and employees act as 'partners' within a framework that sets out how they can work together to achieve the necessary results. This entails deciding jointly what needs to be done by each employee to meet the organisation's goals (i.e. planning), reviewing progress against stated performance criteria, and forward planning for improvement and career development.

Acknowledging the challenges of time and budget in managing this process, the 2011/2012 Strategic Planning Reviewdocument of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Sport and Recreation (KZN-DSR), concedes that:

The reviewed Strategic Plan (2010-2015) and new Annual Performance Plan (2011-2012) has to be based on the new approved organisational structure as responsibilities may change. However careful consideration must be given to the National Budget Structure and the process needs to be guided by the CFO. It may be more practical for us to develop our Annual Performance Plan in line with the budget structure and then align our implementation in terms of the new approved structure (KZN-DSR, 2010:3).

The above considerations of time, budget and leadership capacity (needed to ensure alignment between individual performance and departmental goals) are just some of the variables that inform the

performance management process in the public service. Another is the way in which employee tasks are aligned to larger organisational goals and values, such as those espoused by the KZN-DSR.

Linking Performance of Organisational Goal Attainment

In its 2011 *Review of the Concept of Performance Management and its Practical Implementation*, the KZN-DSR acknowledges its role "to promote and protect all values upon which the Republic of South Africa is founded" and therefore accepts that "the performance of the department is required to be judged on the basis of the extent to which it contributes to the attainment of these values" (KZN-DSR, 2011:1).

The document rationalises the EPMDS, as a means of fulfilling this aim. It contends that:

the introduction and subsequent implementation of a performance management system in the public service is meant and should therefore be understood within the broader context of a concerted effort by the democratic state, to transform all public servants into becoming agents of the state's transformation agenda. This insight becomes extremely crucial if the department is not to lose sight of the purpose for which most of the public service policies, including those dealing with performance management, are conceptualised (KZN-DSR, 2011:1).

The purpose of public service being to serve the people – to 'put them first' according to the principle of *Batho Pele,* the question is whether or not the EPMDS does indeed assist in this regard.

Performance Management in the Kwazulu-Natal Department of Sport and Recreation

The KZN-DSR was established as a 'stand-alone' Department in 2004. Prior to this, the executive function dealing with sport and recreation in the province was based in the Department of Education and Culture. The Department's existence and functionality is provided for in the 1996 Constitution, where Schedule 5 lists "provincial recreation and amenities" and "provincial sport" as "functional areas of exclusive provincial legislative competence". As the preamble to the Constitution points out, one of its aims is "the improvement of the quality of life of all citizens and the freeing of the potential of each person".

In terms of Section 125(2)(b) of the Constitution, the Premier of the Province "exercises the executive authority, together with other

members of the Executive Council, by implementing all national legislation within the functional areas listed in Schedule 4 or 5 except where the Constitution or an Act of Parliament provides otherwise". In the context of this constitutional provision, the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) responsible for Sport and Recreation implements national legislation, as part of the provincial collective, within the functional areas relating to sport and recreation in the province. Accordingly, and in the spirit of Chapter 3 of the Constitution and the Inter-Governmental Relations Framework Act (Act 13 of 2005), the KZN-DSR plans and delivers its sport and recreation services in line with the National Sport and Recreation Act (Act 110 of 1998). In view of this constitutional and legislative mandate, the KZN-DSR is responsible for:

> *the promotion and development of sport and recreation, co-ordination of relationships between sport federations and other agencies in the province, provision of interventions to correct imbalances in sport and recreation and the promotion of equitable access and proper governance in sport and recreation (KZN-DSR, 2010:11).*

Consistent with the regulations on strategic plans mentioned above, KZN-DSR is required to engage in at least an annual review of its implementation endeavour.This is to determine whether or not its implementation is in line with its set objectives and, where gaps are found, to develop corrective measures to align strategy execution with the strategic plan.

The process of annual review commences with the delivery of the State President's State of the Nation Address at the beginning of each year. This address outlines national issues that are critical for delivery for each annual performance cycle. The KZN Premier's State of the Province Address in turn identifies key delivery issues from the State of the Nation Address, and then gives them provincial content.

After the Premier's Address, the MEC for Sport and Recreation then delivers a budget speech in the provincial legislature, outlining key provincial issues relevant to sport and recreation that require delivery during the annual performance cycle. This speech forms the basis upon which the Department's annual performance plan is developed. This plan is in turn submitted to the provincial legislature and provincial treasury at the beginning of each annual performance cycle. Over and above the development of annual performance plans, the Department is also required to compile operational plans

that are specific to each chief directorate and/or directorate. These are to outline how each directorate will deliver on the performance plan of the Department. Finally, employee annual performance agreements must be concluded between each employee and his/her supervisor, based on the annual operational plan.

Tellingly, evidence from the shop-floor suggests that since the Department's establishment in 2004, these employee performance agreements have been concluded between employee and supervisor on the basis of his/her *job description* – not the operational plan. Instead of factoring in departmental goals, key result areas (KRAs), or key performance areas – as reflected in the job description of each employee – these are transferred to an employee's annual performance agreement. The subsequent work-plan that is developed between each supervisor and employee stipulates the employee's expected deliverables and forms part of the overall documentation of an employee's performance agreement with his/her supervisor. As part of this exercise, employee development gaps must also be jointly identified and, on the basis of this, employee development plans developed and agreed upon.

The Departmental performance framework stipulates that, six months into the annual performance cycle, each supervisor and employee must review the latter's performance over the past six months. Where employee performance is satisfactory, joint attempts should be made to reinforce this; and where performance is unsatisfactory, workable ways should be found to improve the situation. Part of this exercise entails reviewing the extent to which performance failures are a result of learning and development gaps identified during the performance contracting process, and the degree to which agreed-upon employee development plans have effectively been implemented. These bi-annual performance review conversations in the Department are required to constitute a critical element of the final review session between each employee and each supervisor, which is scheduled to take place during April of each year. At this time, the overall annual performance of an employee is assessed and rated on a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents poor, and 5 represents excellent performance.At the level of implementation, the performance of each employee is required to be monitored on an on-going basis to ensure that, where deviations occur, these are detected as close to the point of their occurrence as is practically possible. On this particular issue, the departmental policy on the Employee Performance Management and Development System (EPMDS) states that:

Performance at the individual level must be continuously monitored to enable the identification of performance barriers and changes and to address development and improvement needs as they arise, as well as to determine progress and/or identify obstacles in achieving objectives and targets, enable supervisors and jobholders to deal with performance related problems, identify and provide the support needed, modify objectives and targets and ensure continuous learning and development (KZN-DSR, 2009:15).

The issue of monitoring employee performance on an on-going basis, is clearly a critical element of an effective performance management system. The importance of on-going monitoring derives from its potential to identify problem areas as near to their source as practically possible, in order to implement corrective measures swiftly.

Critical to the implementation of the EPMDS process, is the need to ensure that there is an alignment between what employees are required to produce as their performance outputs, and the outputs which directorates and/or chief directorates are required to deliver.This kind of alignment is necessary to ensure that the performance of individual employees is linked to the overall objectives of the Department. Otherwise, employees may be found to be 'performing well', but such performance might not necessarily be in line with the overall performance objectives of the Department. One of the key principles captured in the departmental EPMDS policy (KZN-DSR, 2009:13), is that "performance management processes shall link to broad and consistent staff development plans and align with the department's strategic goals".

It is against the background of this policy requirement, that this study sought to determine the extent to which the Department effectively manages the performance of individual employees continuously, and further to establish the degree to which such performance management associates with the broader management of KZN-DSR's performance.

Findings and Discussion

The information presented below was sourced from data collected from questionnaires distributed to selected employees of KZN-DSR, and from follow-up interviews with the same participants. Ten respondents were issued with questionnaires and subsequently interviewed. These comprised the KZN-DSR's human resources manager, chosen by virtue of his position in the Department; four

other Departmental officials from various line functions; and five from support function units of the Department. A stratified random sampling technique was employed for the purposes of picking interview candidates, who represent senior, middle managerial and operational levels. This method was used to ensure a fair representation of level, gender, functional unit and length of service in the public service. Each of the sections below addresses a particular issue addressed in the questionnaire and interviews.

Understanding of EPMDS processes in the Department

Respondents showed a reasonably good level of understanding in respect of EPMDS processes. Most respondents (80%) outlined the process as commencing with the planning phase between the supervisor and supervisee, followed by the performance management phase on a day-to-day basis, and ideally culminating in quarterly reviews. Following from this performance management process is the performance evaluation and assessment phase, which happens once every year.

During the planning session, respondents reported that the supervisor is required – jointly with the supervisee – to identify and agree on key areas of delivery during the performance management period under discussion. Eighty per cent of the respondents further indicated that input documents into these performance conversations should include, *inter alia*, the Department's annual performance plan, and the functional operational plan of each area.

Eighty per cent of the respondents, while demonstrating a reasonably good level of understanding of the EPMDS process, nevertheless expressed reservations about the practical adherence to this process. Most of these reservations concerned the lack of time made available for discussions that should take place prior to the conclusion of performance agreements and assessment of performance. One of the issues that emerged quite conspicuously relates to performance reviews which, in terms of the process, should happen quarterly. Most respondents indicated that these reviews were usually very late at best, or did not take place at all. It would seem that employees have some understanding of the EPMDS process and its purpose, but have reservations about adherence to the system.

Understanding the link between the employee performance assessment and the strategic objectives of the Department

This question triggered various responses from the respondents, ranging from "I do not know" to "most of the staff members would

not even know what the strategic objectives of the Department are". Therefore it is unlikely that individual performance and Departmental objectives have ever been aligned in practice. This hypothesis is supported by shop-floor evidence that performance agreements take only job descriptions – not strategic Departmental objectives – into account.

Although 20% of respondents were able to demonstrate that there is some kind of linkage between employee performance assessments and the Department's strategic objectives, they had reservations about such a linkage being achievable in practice. For example, although EPMDS is supposed to motivate the performance of the employee, the system is not seen by employees in this way. Rather, it is seen only as an exercise that is meant to give preferred individuals extra cash during the festive season. Complaints by respondents also suggest that the system used to provide bonuses is also not consistent. It was indicated that only those who have benefited are happy with the system.

Value added by the EPMDS in the general performance of the Department

Responses to this question showed a high level of dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Department implements its own EPMDS policy. Most employees interviewed had the feeling that in the Department, the system appears to be a means of getting extra cash. The other observation was that the implementation of the system is just about compliance and a paper-pushing exercise, and therefore most employees have lost faith in it. One respondent said, "I do not think the EPMDS implementation adds any value as an employee. It is done to meet deadlines. Both managers and employees do not have time to commit themselves to it as it is too time-consuming." According to this respondent, this scenario works directly against the growth and development of employees, and of the Department as well.

Clarity of the EPMDS policy and the extent to which is it linked to the EPMDS national policy framework

A remarkably small percentage (25%) of employees felt that the Departmental policy is clear. This view emerged during follow-up interviews. Even these employees felt that the purpose of the policy was somewhat difficult to understand and interpret. Other employees could not even understand the Departmental policy, and stated that they had never seen or come across the national policy framework – therefore they could not link the two. While some respondents were aware of a link between the national policy framework and the Departmental policy on EPMDS, they were

unable to elaborate on it during follow-up interviews. Hence it can reasonably be inferred that this link is poorly understood, if perceived at all, on the ground. Some respondents admitted that the Human Resources section does embark on road-shows in which employees are workshopped on HR-related policies, including EPMDS. However, they felt that the main challenge will always be that managers do not attend the workshops, which then affects their level of understanding of the policy and its application in practice.

Extent to which the EPMDS acted as a motivating factor in the day-to-day performance of employees' duties

Seventy percent of questionnaire respondents did not find EPMDSto be a motivating factor in the day-to-day performance of their duties. During interviews, it emerged that most respondents felt this way because they perceived EPMDS to lack objectivity in terms of its implementation. Those who did see it as a motivating factor cited the incentive of obtaining a higher salary notch and the possibility of a bonus as reasons for their response. For those who had previously benefited through bonuses or notch increases, this was certainly a motivating influence. Those who felt the system fails to motivate said that, instead of encouraging innovation for the benefit of the Department and the nation, the system is there merely to enforce 'compliance' and to provide financial reward for some.

Relationship between the implementation of EPMDS and skills development in the Department

Astonishingly, 90% of the respondents said there is no relationship between the implementation of EPMDS and skills development in the Department. The only questionnaire respondent who did perceive there to be some kind of relationship between EPMDS implementation and skills development, turned out to be referring to what should be happening instead of what is actually happening. (This emerged during follow-up interviews, when respondents were asked to elaborate in detail on their written responses.) It is overwhelmingly clear that participants have no faith in the ability of EPMDS to contribute to their growth and development. This finding is quite disturbing since one of the central objectives of any performance management system is to identify areas of employee weaknesses in terms of competencies – and then to agree to a plan of action to address these weaknesses.

Motivation to participate in EPMDS

Each employee interviewed indicated that participation in EPMDS in the Department is purely for compliance and financial reward, rather than for purposes of performance improvement. Those who

do participate do so in the hope of receiving a bonus. At times such individuals reach pay-progression level only, as the system is also dependent on the availability of a budget – so the purpose of the system is defeated.

Strengthening implementation of EPMDS

Not surprisingly, all interviewed employees (including line managers) indicated that there is a great need for further training of line managers in EPMDS implementation. One respondent said she found herself becoming "irritable" at submission time, owing to a limited understanding of the point of the EPMDS and to the fact that she seldom received a bonus after going through such a 'cumbersome' exercise.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the study indicate that KZN-DSR, like other Departments in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government, is implementing the policy of EPMDS. Employees have a reasonable understanding of the need for such a system, and the benefits that can be derived by the Department if the system were to be implemented properly. Tellingly, employees' dissatisfaction with the system concerned its *implementation*, not its conceptualisation. Such dissatisfaction emanates from what the study identified as three critical weaknesses:

- the lack of collective and coherent understanding as to the purpose and objectives of the EPMDS;
- the ineffectiveness of the implementation of the system (employer bias, lack of training, inconsistent application, etc.); and
- the lack of an identifiable link between employees' day-to-day performance and the Department's strategic objectives.

It can thus be concluded that the KZN-DSR's EPMDS is not currently effective in improving employee performance within the organisation; nor is it overtly channelling individual performance towards achieving higher-level Departmental goals. Since objections to the system tend to focus on issues of implementation, it is to this question that this paper now turns.

Firstly, the Department needs to engage in a campaign to raise awareness among all employees regarding the need to participate in the performance management system. This campaign should, *inter alia*, deal with the purpose of the EPMDS; the link between individual employee performance and the performance of functional

units where such individuals are employed; the link between each functional unit and the broader strategic objectives of the Department; and the purpose and process of incentivisation.

Along with proper alignment between performance contracts and strategic goals, the national EPMDS policy cites proper training on the system as crucial to its success. According to the policy (DPSA, 2007:8),

> *Managers, supervisors and employees must be trained in the mechanics of the system and areas such as communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution in order to manage the system more effectively. The training of supervisors in particular is of the utmost importance, and this should result in supervisors knowing how to implement the system, ensuring that employees receive adequate training and possess sufficient information to be able to fully participate in the processes. This must be done with the support and co-operation of the HRD unit in the Department.*

As part of their performance contract, Departmental and line managers should be required to be present at workshops and training sessions on EPMDS. This would greatly enhance their ability to align their employees' performance with higher-level Departmental goals, and would correct the impression of EPMDS as 'just another bureaucratic exercise'.

In conjunction with the above, the Department needs to pay particular attention to all phases of the performance management cycle, from planning to management and assessment. It is essential that both managers and employees be capacitated in terms of understanding and executing their roles in all of these phases. For instance, one of the findings indicated that employees thought that there was no link between the implementation of the system and skills development. While this may be a consequence of several factors, one might infer that the Department has failed to ensure that there is systematic identification of competency gaps during performance conversations, and has failed to put plans in place and to follow up on them to ensure that such identified gaps are dealt with effectively.

Finally, the Department should take seriously the issue of linking the implementation of EPMDS with employee growth and skills acquisition and performance incentivisation. In the absence of this

strong link, the findings consistently suggest that the Department will continue to pay out pay progression and bonus incentives, often to undeserving individuals. Individuals who are better performers may become demotivated because of the lack of such a link, and may as a result not be as incentivised as they could and should be.

While the national EPMDS Policy recognises that "[not] all the work done in a department is…captured in a strategic plan, which means that performance agreements for employees whose key responsibility areas and activities are not covered in the strategic or operational plan (are not catered for)" (DPSA, 2007:8), this doesn't absolve employees from the responsibility to participate in the system. Their performance agreements should "reflect their own KRAs and priorities", encouraging them to link their daily work with the larger social purposes of the Department itself.

If a culture is established in which individual daily tasks are consciously aligned with the 'bigger picture' of which the Department is a part, EPMDS will have achieved its goals – both at the level of the Departmental mandate and individual efficiency. Khoeli reminds us that "for organisations, particularly those looking to the future and those concerned with improving business performance by focusing on behavioural aspects of performance, performance management is difficult and costly in terms of time" (Khoeli, 2003:34). She adds that performance management needs to be introduced, assembled or changed gradually, often over many years, with each element requiring regular review, maintenance and improvement. This should certainlybe the case with the KZN-DSR.

Further research is needed on the effectiveness of EPMDS in other government departments, both at provincial and national level. Some of the limited literature available (Oliver, 2008; Jantjies, 2006) refers to structures in the Western Cape provincial government, where comparable – albeit not necessarily identical – difficulties with the staff appraisal system exist. But what seems to be a common theme is the frustration and low morale relating to the existing staff appraisal system and the unequal link between performance and pay. Clearly this needs to be addressed, both in terms of the perspectives of employees and those in management structures. Despite current perceptions of the EPMDS, however, indications from this case study are that an active engagement in the performance review process by employees is likely to yield the benefits initially envisaged.

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Municipal International Relations: The South African Case of Metropolitan eThekwini

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Abstract: This article theoretically lies at the intersection of public governance and international relations. It contributes to literature on the rise of local government as an actor in global affairs, with specific reference to cooperation between cities of the global South. This article first situates the international relations of local government in the context of globalisation and urbanisation, before examining contemporary change in municipal internationalism and the constitutional, legislative and policy framework for municipal international relations in South Africa. Finally, the article considers metropolitan eThekwini as an emerging actor in global affairs based upon interviews of municipal managers, South African Local Government Association managers and administrators of the South African Department of International Relations and Co-operative Governance; the results of these interviews are factored into a review and analysis of documentary evidence. The article contends that cross-border, inter-urban cooperation and learning exchange is the governance focus of some municipalities – not solely inter-urban competition in a global economy as neoliberal discourse would have it. The urban landscape may not be just a geo-political, socio-economic locale for capitalist accumulation. Rather, metropolitan municipalities may be de-centralised places of coordination and collaboration for international relations, accentuating municipalities as local development states where public values, and not just factual judgements, figure into good governance decision-making. Metropolitan eThekwini is a case in point.

Key words: African municipal international relations, global/local governance nexus, municipal internationalism, sister city relations, South-South cooperation

Introduction

Local government is experiencing change the world over in the face of interdependent and interactive geographical scales along with a global trend toward decentralisation and a shift from government to governance. Given processes of globalisation, the nation state is no longer privileged over global, regional, metropolitan and urban geographical scales but is being transformed (Brenner, 2004:30, 54). Globalisation is a contested and even contentious term. Most scholars agree that it is a differentiated and multifaceted process, through which political and economic power is deterritorialised and reterritorialised with complexity (Held *et al.*, 1999:28; Langhorne, 2001:2). The processes of globalisation are not inevitably imposed but subject to human agency (Botlanski and Chiapello, 2005:3-4). The power of national governments is being reconstituted and restructured in response to complex governance processes and the inclusion of a wide range of transnational meta-sector actors in a more interconnected world (Rosenau, 1997; Risse, 2012:429).

Localisation and urbanisation parallel and are yet mutually constitutive with globalisation. Within world affairs there is an interactive nexus of global and local forces shaping governance (Rosenau, 2003:4). Urbanisation is a process that for centuries has been a contested terrain connected with capitalist accumulation and international division of labour to further the capitalist project (Kipfer*et al.*, 2013). For the first time in history the majority of the world's population live in urban areas, and we are experiencing the globalisation of urbanisation, with upwards of 5 billion people living in urban areas by 2030 with a rural population below 3.5 billion (UN, 2004). The fastest growing urban populations are in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where local and metropolitan governance present complex issues and multi-faceted challenges (Martine *et al.*, 2012: 1, 5).

As urbanisation advances, on numerous fronts and across many fields and continents, public, private and public-private sector partnerships and networks generate an interactive and interdependent nexus between global and local actors. Besides finance capital and trade, the global/local nexus pervades technological communication, natural and built environment, health, security, transportation, migration, labour, education, human mobility, culture, politics, public policy, administration and management. Global and regional organisations such as the United Nations and European Union exert local influence, and conversely, urban actors engage with supranational organisations.

The interaction between globalisation and urbanisation has led to a rise in the influence of metropolitan regions. In the year 2000, for example, a post-apartheid South Africa went from 1300 to 283 local authorities, establishing six single-tier metropolitan authorities corresponding approximately to that of the functional economic area (OECD, 2008). An aim of consolidated metropolitan governance in the Republic of South Africa is to create fiscally sustainable and cooperatively governed regions while still generating competitive cities in the global economy (Boraine, 2008). eThekwini is a metropolitan municipality given its high population density, intense movement of people, goods and services; extensive development; multiple business districts and industrial areas; active economic centre and diverse economy; integrated development planning; and strong interdependent social and economic units between constituent units [RSA, 2000: MSA, Ch. 1, Part 1, Sec. 2(a)-(d)]. Central to metropolitan eThekwini's influence on the world stage is the Unit of Municipal International and Governance Relations (MI&GR) on the one hand, and the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) on the other hand. Before exploring metropolitan eThekwini it is worth contextualising the case within the intersection of public governance and international relations theories, contemporary changes in municipal internationalism, and the legal and policy frameworks that give rise to eThekwini's international relations.

The Intersection of Public Governance and International Relations Theory

Shifting predominance of geographical scales has witnessed a move in many countries from government to governance and a trend toward decentralised government. Although Rodriquez-Pose and Gill (2003:333) draw upon examples from countries such as Brazil, China, India, Mexico and the USA, to posit a global trend toward decentralisation, they caution that decentralisation is not homogenous but diverse, depending in part on relations between tiers of government. Concurrent with decentralisation is the move from government to governance. Rather than authoritative, independent rule by governmental entities of public administration processes and procedures, 'governance' changes the meaning of government to refer to new processes whereby ordered rule is no longer undertaken by government alone (Rhodes, 1996:652; Kelly &Dodds, 2012). Rather, there is interdependence between public, private, and not-for-profit entities in providing public goods and services and implementing public policy (Stoker, 1998:18). To construct a theory of governance, Stoker delineates five propositions: (1) institutions and actors are drawn from and beyond

government, (2) there is a blurring of boundaries between sectors tackling socio-economic issues, (3) there is power dependence in collective action, (4) there are self-governing networks of actors, and (5) government uses new tools to steer and guide rather than command and control. This theory of governance transcends governmental spheres and geographical scales.

State-centric theories of international relations such as realism are consistent with public administration approaches grounded in command and control where government power rules. The realist approach to international relations perceives the world as anarchical, and the self-interested Westphalian sovereign state, as the sole actor in global affairs, must – from a Hobbesian standpoint – gain and retain power while maximizing its own security. As Beier (2002:84) points out, this abiding faith in a Hobbesian state of nature, and reliance upon the Westphalian model as the only legitimate expression of political order forecloses the possibility of political community in the absence of state authority. In contrast to realism, post-internationalism theory recognises myriad actors in global affairs, and porous boundaries between the domestic and foreign – converging, interacting, overlapping and at times merging – leading to globalising and localising forces that result in integration and fragmentation (Rosenau, 2003:15, 410-411) or fusion and fission (Ferguson &Mansbach, 2007:532).

The intersection of Stoker's theory of public governance and Rosenau's theory of post-internationalism provide a useful point of departure for exploring the international relations of eThekwini. The intersection of theories helps illuminate good governance beyond the fact/value dichotomy (Hildebrand, 2008) to interurban value-based collaboration (Bao*et al.,* 2012). Prior to discussing eThekwini, this article briefly reviews contemporary changes in municipal internationalism and the legal and policy foundations upon which South African municipal international relations are founded.

Contemporary Changes in Municipal Internationalism

Municipal internationalism is not new. As used here, the term is subsumed in the broader term 'municipal international relations' and embraces town twinning, sister cities and similar formal and informal relationships between cities in different nation-states. Such engagements are also termed para-diplomacy. Over the last 60 years, particularly in view of globalisation, supranational regionalisation, metropolitanisation and urbanisation, the dynamics of municipal internationalism have changed. After World War II the United Nations emerged with the mantra "Never Again" in an effort

to avoid world wars by creating peaceable relations among existing and potentially sovereign nations. Britain's town twinning initiative and the United States' sister city project helped lead the way to international cooperation through transnational municipal relationships during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

By mid-1960 as many African countries were experiencing decolonization, the UN Economic & Social Council adopted Resolution 1028 entitled 'Town Twinning: Means of International Cooperation'. In 1965, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 2058 seeking collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and appropriate non-governmental organisations to identify 'concrete steps' that could be undertaken by the UN and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to achieve town twinning. The UN General Assembly next passed Resolution 2861 in 1971, inviting the Secretary-General to study how the UN could contribute to international cooperation between municipalities and to revitalise methods of co-operation and facilitate participation of local and regional bodies in development. Even then, the nation-state was considered the sole actor in international relations, although these peace-building efforts through para-diplomacy engaged municipal governments. Today, town twinning across Europe boasts more than 30,000 relationships (Ewen&Hebbert, 2007: 330) and Sister Cities International works with local governments and organisations in more than 700 communities throughout the world – working collaboratively with the Africa Global Sister Cities Foundation. Although this type of municipal internationalism spans more than half a century, it was only in September 2011 that the first Global Sister Cities and Twinning Summit convened with Cairo, Egypt as the venue of choice. The international United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) organisation estimates that 70% of cities in the world are involved in various forms of international cooperation (UCLG, 2007: 12).

Only recently have municipal governments, as autonomous actors in international relations, been subjects of empirical studies (Ewen&Hebbert, 2007). To date, these studies have primarily revolved around transnational municipal partnerships or networks of cities in Western Europe and North America – often in terms of North-South relations between the industrialised and developing or transitioning world (Clarke, 2010; Kern &Bulkeley, 2009; Heinelt&Niederhafner, 2005) or former colonisers and colonised. North-South town twinning as a tool of development with perceived mutual benefits for both parties is of recent origin. Bontenbal

(2009:45) points out that paternalism and domination by the party of the North risks undermining the partnership – just as expecting a passive partner of the South endangers the partnership (UNDP, 2000; Jones & Blunt, 1999). Although inventories of North-South municipal internationalism for cooperative development exist there is scant evidence of institutionalised outcomes and sustainable development (Bontenbal, 2009:46).

While there is a dearth of empirical investigation into outcomes of municipal internationalism regarding North-South relations, there appears to be even less academic inquiry into African municipal internationalism as it pertains to the emerging context of South-South cooperation on the journey to development. This is a subject which this research seeks to address through continued continental study. With the rise of urbanism, metropolitanism, regionalism, and globalism, significant responsibilities have been devolved to African local governments. Local government is closest to the people and as such must play a key role in service delivery and socio-economic growth. This article contends that, while this increased decentralisation of responsibilities further burdens local government, local government does not have the benefit of human capital, monetary sustenance and capacity-building strategies to meet ever-expanding challenges. Exploring changing African municipal internationalism will reveal the extent to which local government is using transnational partnerships and networks, interacting with global institutions, and influencing international law to meet local demands.

While many may disagree, this article argues that cross-country interurban cooperation may be the governance focus of some municipalities – not solely interurban competition in a global economy as the neoliberal discourse would have it. The urban landscape may not be just a geo-political, socio-economic locale for capitalist accumulation. Rather, metropolitan municipalities may be de-centralised places of coordination and collaboration for international relations in which municipalities demonstrate public values that direct global cooperation toward local developmental goods and services.

Nijman (2009:15) persuasively argues that there are at least three ways in which urban actors such as local governments are becoming increasingly visible in global governance:
- transnational intercity relations such as 'sister cities' and 'cross-border networks' between municipalities;
- interaction with regional and global organisations and institutions;

- involvement with the construction or implementation of international laws such as environmental governance and human rights.

'Sister city' and 'cross-border networks' are discussed above. The second way refers to relationships between local government and regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Organisation (SADC), African Union, European Union and global organisations like the United Nations spectrum of organisations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund. Involvement with international law may be independent or through affiliation with organisations such as United Cities and Local Government (UCLG). International law governs relationships between nation-states and not unlike the realist approach to international relations, generally views states as monolithic bodies, and does not attach importance to non-state actors like local government and NGOs (Weiss, 1999:98). International laws include bilateral or multilateral treaties like the 1941 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol regarding global environmental governance (Sands, 1999:122). After a brief review of the South African legal and policy framework for municipal international relations this article discusses how intersecting theories of governance and post-internationalism are a point of departure for understanding municipal international relations; and whether metropolitan eThekwini is becoming visible in the spheres of global governance described by Nijman (2009:15) above.

The Constitutional, Legislative and Policy Framework for Municipal International Relations

The South African Constitution mandates three spheres of government: national, provincial and local. The spheres are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated (SA Constitution, Sec 40(1)). Municipalities are endowed by the Constitution with original powers and functions to administer delineated local government matters (SA Constitution, Sec 156(1)(a), Part B of Schedule 4 and Schedule 5). At the same time, national government and provincial governments may regulate the exercise of municipal powers and functions (SA Constitution, Sec 155(7)). National and provincial legislation may also assign additional powers to municipalities (Sec 156(1)(b)) and the National Assembly may assign additional legislative powers to municipalities. Yet municipalities are not obliged to accept delegated powers or functions (Guidelines on Allocation, 2007: Section 33). On the one hand each of the three spheres is autonomous within its geographical and governance

jurisdictions. On the other hand, the three spheres are interdependent and interrelated, and decisions made and action taken at any level must be in cooperation with the other levels.

Statutorily, the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 (RSA, 1998a) sets forth powers and functions as well as types and categories of municipalities. The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act No 15 of 2005 (RSA, 2005) facilitates coordination of policy and legislation across the three spheres of government. On matters affecting local government, the law prescribes consultation by national and provincial government with organised local government through an intergovernmental structure. If there is no duly authorised local government representative in the intergovernmental structure, local government is entitled to participate through a representative with full speaking rights (RSA, 2005: Secs 31(1) and (2)). Before promulgating policy or enacting legislation that affects local government, a province must take into account the interests of local communities, consult local government and consider the impact on the functional, institutional or financial integrity and coherence of local government (RSA, 2005: Secs 36 (1) and (2)).

This constitutional and legislative framework evidences that original powers and functions of South African local government promote decentralisation. Rodriquez-Pose and Gill (2003: 333) found that the global trend toward decentralisation revolved around devolution from national to provincial and state government. Significant is their finding that legitimacy of decentralisation differs depending upon the relationship between tiers of government. This factor about intergovernmental relations is instructive for decentralised powers and functions to local government in the South African context. The autonomy of local government is interwoven with interdependence and interrelatedness with the national and provincial spheres, and supported by national policies that encourage municipal international relations such as the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) of 1998 (RSA, 1998b) and the Municipal International Relations Policy Framework (MIRP) of 1999 (RSA, 1999).

The WPLG furthers inter-municipal cooperation such as learning exchanges, engagement with municipalities in other countries, domestic and international public-private partnerships, and partnerships with community-based and non-governmental organisations (RSA, 1998b: 65-66). The MIRP defines municipal international relations as a link between two or more communities from different nation-states, in which at least one of the key actors

is a municipality (RSA, 1999: 7). The purpose and objectives of the policy include facilitating information and knowledge sharing, building managerial and technical capacity, promoting a region or city as an attractive location for investment and tourism, developing project partnerships for mutual benefit, addressing regional and global challenges of local impact but which need to be tackled on a broad basis, and contributing to global understanding, solidarity and peace. The MIRP identifies four types of municipal international relations, namely: (1) participation in representative associations of municipalities, (2) twinning arrangements, (3) membership of networks, and (4) municipal marketing and global presence (RSA, 1999: 8-9).

National MIRP principles include being developmental and outcome oriented by adding value to municipal programmes, developing stronger relationships with southern hemisphere countries, emphasising links that support an African Renaissance and contributing to an international culture of human rights, global solidarity and understanding (RSA, 1999: 10-11). Among MIRP guidelines are building and expanding a culture of learning, applying strong management and adequate resourcing, and involving non-governmental stakeholders (RSA, 1999: 11-12). MIRP's supportive intergovernmental framework revolves around involvement of national Departments of Constitutional Development, Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry and Environmental Affairs and Tourism (RSA, 1999: 16-17). In effect, while local government has relative autonomy to engage in international relations, it must do so in cooperation with national government bodies such as the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO) where official foreign policy promulgation and implementation are vested. In its policy discussion document on International Relations, the African National Congress (ANC, 2012: 35) called upon DIRCO and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) to draft a para-diplomacy policy framework to ensure better co-ordination of international engagements of provincial and municipal governments. As one DIRCO respondent put it, "municipal politicians and employees must demonstrate what the city gains from international relationships – international travel must not be self-serving or merely to give high profile to politicians."

Against this backdrop of contemporary municipal internationalism, Stoker's theory of governance and Rosenau's post-internationalism are well suited as approaches for exploring the international relations of metropolitan eThekwini.

Metropolitan eThekwini as an Emerging Actor in Global Affairs

The eThekwini metropolitan municipality lies in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), heart of the Zulu Kingdom. It is home to the highest Zulu population in KZN, and the largest urban Indian population outside India. eThekwini's population is made up of African (71%), Indian (19%), White (8%) and Coloured (2%) residents. Individuals within the 15-34 year age group comprise the majority of the population (IDP, 2011/2012).

Metropolitan eThekwini's Municipal International and Governance Relations (MI & GR) unit provides strategic support for development and implementation of international and intergovernmental relations, policies and programmes to maximize service delivery (Unit Business Plan, 2012:1). MI & GR seeks to position the municipality as a strategic global actor through a comprehensive sister city programme, donor relations programme and programmes in conjunction with continental and global organisations such as New Partnerships for African Development (NEPAD) and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (IDP, 2011/2012:163). MI & GR goals and objectives mirror the national Municipal International Relations Policy framework, ensuring *inter alia* that local stakeholders, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, educational and tertiary institutions, and faith based groups are involved in municipal international relations agreements (Unit Business Plan, 2012:2). MI & GR plays a co-ordinating and steering role through its head of department, senior managers for International and Donor Relations, Protocol and Event managers, and Intergovernmental Relations and programmes managers for the African/NEPAD and CIFAL programmes respectively. There is a dedicated project officer for sister city agreements and administrative coordinators. According to interviews and document review, agreements are project-based – not protocol or ceremonially oriented, and must help execute eThekwini's Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

Table 1: Aspects of the eThekwini 2011-2012 IDP Relative to Municipal International Relations Agreements

Cross-cutting implementation of the IDP 8-point plan	Strategic Focus Area	Programme
Develop and sustain spatial natural and built environment	Climate protection planning	Develop and implement a municipal climate-protection programme
Developing a prosperous, diverse economy & employment creation	Provide secondary support to business enterprise	Manage SMME Development
Creating a quality living environment	Address community services' backlog	Integrated human settlement programme
Fostering a socially equitable environment	Promoting health of citizens	Climate change adaptation strategy
Creating a platform for growth empowerment and skills development	Develop the city as a learning city	Develop local government capabilities in countries in Anglophone Africa
Enhancing our cultural diversity, arts and heritagem	Empower and create economic opportunities for arts, culture and heritage	International sports cooperation through sister-city networks
Good governance and responsive local government	Ensure access and promote governance	Promote cooperative international and inter - governmental relations
Financially accountable and sustainable city	Grow and diversify revenue	Seek alternative sources of funding

South African municipalities are legally mandated by the Municipal Systems Act (No.32) of 2000 to prepare and implement a five-year IDP (RSA, 2000). Therein, a municipality must *inter alia* delineate a coherent strategic plan, link and integrate proposals for the municipality's development, realistically align the IDP with resources and capacity, and set key performance indicators (Valeta and Walton 2008: 376). eThekwini's IDP revolves around an 8 point plan in which each point cascades into strategic focus areas followed by corresponding programmes. Corroborating interview data, a review of the 2011-2012 IDP and other documentary evidence, indicate that city-to-city international agreements, learning exchange networks and multi-lateral organisational affiliations are consistent with the IDP. According to municipal respondents, "sister city agreements are project based and designed to benefit citizens and facilitate service delivery." Read together, Table 1 depicts components of the IDP plan, along with the strategic focus and programme categories which are executed by sister city projects that appear in Table 2.

Sister City Relations

Table 2 shows selected sister cities listed in order of commencement dates. Given space constraints, this discussion is confined to Leeds, Bremen, and the shift to South-South cooperation. Reading Tables 1 and 2 together, it appears that eThekwini's relationship with

Leeds helps implement a number of IDP plans and programmes. Specifically, the Commonwealth Good Practice Scheme project funded by the CLGF advances economic development (Plan 2), skills development (Plan 5), good governance (Plan 7) and a financially accountable and sustainable city (Plan 8) by service delivery that prepares SMMEs and public managers to better participate in procurement practices and tendering processes that promote accountability and public service values. This project was extended to include Steve Tswete municipality – again positioning eThekwini as a learning city through its knowledge transfer to Tswete municipality (Plan 5) – which is the type of link encouraged by UNDP (2000). Through its Lion's Den project with Leeds, eThekwini businesses receive competitive start-up grants from UK corporations and equity shares in companies – awarded for best business plans and prospects (eThekwini MI & GR Document, 2012:6-7). The Lion's Den project provides evidence of validity of Stoker's theoretical proposition about power dependence in multi-sector collective action as well as Rosenau's non-state actors in international affairs.

Table 2: Metropolitan eThekwini Internationalism Sister-City Relations

Country	City	Nature of Agreements
Commencement dates: 1997-2000		
The Netherlands	Rotterdam	Environment, safety & security, socio-economic development, tourism, arts & culture
United Kingdom	Leeds	Environment, safety & security, socio-economic development, tourism, arts & culture
Algeria	Oran	Promotion of exchange & development of trade, industrial and technical relations
China	Guangzhou	Economy, trade, science and technology, culture, education, sports, health, personnel, to promote common prosperity and development
Commencement dates: 2001 to 2004		
Egypt	Governorate of Alexandria	Knowledge exchange among and between citizens, educational and cultural cooperation and exchange, business sector cooperation and exchange
Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	Economic development and trade, social upliftment, safety and security, tourism, cultural relations, education, sports, administration and professional links
Germany	Bremen	Promotion of exchange on development projects for safety, economic, social, tourism, environment, arts, culture, inclusion of civil society
France	Province of KwaZulu-Natal & Regional Council of Reunion Island	Culture and language, rural development, management of nature reserves, aquaculture and business linkages
USA	Chicago	Cultural exchange initiatives, tourism, inner-city revitalisation and environmental management best practices, music industry, trade links for SMMEs, human rights
USA	New Orleans	Waterfront and port developments, film and music industries, ICT, cultural exchange, tourism, inner-city revitalisation and environmental management best practices, clothing and textile sector promotion
France	Nantes	Human rights, sustainable development, green areas, healthcare, sports, arts and culture, urban development and security, inclusion of civil society
Commencement dates: 2005 to Present		
France	Le Porte	Knowledge, cultural, educational, social and economic exchanges
Mozambique	Maputo	Planning, mutual-development projects and funding sources, fortify economic relationships through networks and partnerships, further aims and objectives of UCLGA, NEPAD
Brazil	Curitiba	Knowledge exchange and promotion of development interests
South Korea	Daejon	Knowledge exchange and promotion of development interests
Proposed or Emerging Sister-City Relations		
Gabon	Libreville	Waste management, trade & investments, port development, tourism, arts & culture
Ghana	Tema	Trade, investment, port development, SMME fairs and other events
Kenya	Mombasa	Trade & investment, tourism, youth development, capacity-building programmes
Nigeria	Port Harcourt	Skills transfer & training, water & sanitation, environment, urban development
Rwanda	Kigali	Investment &promotions seminar, SMME Fairs, capacity-building programmes

Examples of sister city projects with Bremen revolve around Plan 1 and Plan 6 of the IDP. Concerning the environment, there is an ongoing project with the University of KwaZulu-Natal on treatment of waste water in KwaMashu designed to improve sanitation for Durban's informal settlements at Siyanda and Frasers. A new eThekwini-based NGO was established to deliver basic services in accordance with this project. Bremen donated 4 wind turbines to eThekwini to facilitate renewable energy as part of a sustainable development project funded in part by Deutsche Wind Technik. Toward youth development, 4 youths experienced 6 month Germany-sponsored internships in Bremen working on environmental issues. Regarding IDP Plan 6, there are a number of arts and culture and sport and life skills projects between eThekwini and Bremen, including development of the IsithumbaSportgarten in KwaXimba and after school programmes for previously disadvantaged youth four times a week. The Art for Humanity project is jointly sponsored by the sister cities, Durban University of Technology and the UN, with members of civil society participating in an Art and Social Justice Conference – using the project to further dialogue amongst citizens in different countries (eThekwini MI & GR Document, 2012: 1-4). These examples demonstrate the involvement of government, NGOs, tertiary institutions and the private sector in municipal international relations and a consistent integration of organisations at supranational levels only to be met by fragmentation and decentralisation at the operational level. This suggests the applicability of Stoker's governance theory and Rosenau's post-internationalism as an interdisciplinary approach to municipal international relations.

As shown in Table 1, after 2004, eThekwini began to shift sister city relationship development to cities in the southern hemisphere. All projects centre on development interests such as knowledge exchange, trade and investment, and small business development. International projects are integrated throughout relevant departments for implementation, while for relations with Maputo, Mombasa, and Kigali both CIFAL and MILE help execute agreements. Durban and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) tourism and maritime organisations as well as the Durban Chamber of Commerce are involved with Gabon, Tema, Mombasa and Kigali since project objectives are trade and investment oriented and concern Durban

Port. In Gabon and Port Harcourt, where water, sanitation and waste management feature in agreements, the eThekwini departments of solid waste, procurement and infrastructure help carry out the projects (Unit Business Plan, 2012: 23-24). These are international agreements directed toward local service delivery, some of which require funding. Again, interdisciplinary theories of governance and international relations are evident in government's steering and guiding partnerships and networks, while domestic and foreign boundaries become porous and interactive.

Cross-Border Municipality-Driven Networks

In accordance with South Africa's MIR policy, and as Nijman (2009:15) suggests of urban actors, eThekwini is becoming increasingly visible as an actor in global affairs through cross-border networks. eThekwini accomplishes this not just through sister city and donor relations coordinated by the MI&GR but also by the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE) and in coordination with 'Imagine Durban.' To implement its Long Term Development Framework, and recognising that all sectors have roles in achieving targets and sustainable living for all, eThekwini, in partnership with Sustainable Cities International (SCI) created 'Imagine Durban' in 2010. 'Imagine Durban' engages multiple sectors through an action oriented framework with specific targets, pragmatic programmes and measurable project outcomes (IDP 2011/2012: 204).

In late 2009 eThekwini founded MILE, which is believed to be the first local government-mandated, practitioner-driven institute of learning. The four pillars of MILE as eThekwini's knowledge management co-ordinator on a local and international basis are: (1) capacity enhancement through Master Classes conducted by practitioners for practitioners, (2) intercontinental and international learning partnerships and networks with a focus on South-South cooperation, (3) collaborative research that leverages partnerships with tertiary institutions, and (4) municipal technical support service (MILE website). Consistent with IDP Plan 5 in Table 2, MILE is designed to position eThekwini globally as a learning city, but its influence can be seen in other aspects of the IDP as well. Table 3 displays examples of knowledge management and transfer largely through South-South cooperation.

Table 3: Metropolitan eThekwini Internationalism - Selected Examples of Cross-Border Municipal Knowledge Management and Transfer South-to-South Cooperation

Cross-border governments	Nature of knowledge management and transfer
Ghana	Information exchange on city development and master classes delivered by MILE for Accra local government
Namibia	From eThekwini to Namibia – municipal governance
Barcelona, Spain	Collaborations between eThekwini and UCLG that enable capacity-building for local governments of the global South
Colima, Mexico	From eThekwini to Mexico – peer learning (MILE model)
Dakar, Senegal	Learning exchange – urban governance, planning and housing
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	Learning exchange – urban governance, planning and housing
Sao Paulo, Brazil	From Sao Paulo to eThekwini – informal settlement housing

Development partners include NEPAD, Sustainable Cities International (SCI), South African Cities Network, World Bank, UCLG, German Institute for International Cooperation (GIZ), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and AFD – a French Development Agency. Development partners too have played a role in South-South cooperation. For example, at its 2010 conference on sustainable cities, which was held in eThekwini, UCLG conducted a pairing session with cities of the southern hemisphere furthering learning exchanges, such as the one between Sao Paulo and eThekwini. As a result, eThekwini shifted planning approaches to holistically focus on housing and social development, helping to facilitate IDP Plans 3, 4, 5, and 7 as stated in Table 2. SCI, a Canadian-based agency was instrumental in establishing 'Imagine Durban'. Together, 'Imagine Durban' and MILE facilitate public participation in long-term planning by seeking citizen responsibility for "making Durban a learning and caring city" according to municipal officials. This social inclusion project resulted in a learning exchange between eThekwini and cross-border municipalities funded in part by UCLG. The World Bank and AFD helped fund MILE's delivery of master classes in Accra. Funding partners from the northern hemisphere supporting South-South

cooperation signals a change from the twinning partnerships about which Bontenbal (2009:45) warned i.e. those characterised by paternalism, domination, and a superior attitude on the part of the northern party. On the contrary, data from interviews and documentary evidence from this study indicate that UCLG, for instance, calls upon MILE to mentor local government organisations in Namibia and Mozambique. Additionally, more than decade-long sister city relations between eThekwini, and Leeds and Bremen respectively, stem in part from the solidarity between citizens of those cities who joined opposition forces against the toppled apartheid regime.

Governance of these municipal international relations policy networks are steered by government but implemented by multiple actors, local and global – resembling Stoker's governance proposition about self-governing networks, and Rosenau's integration/fragmentation post-internationalism theory, as parties integrate into the network but fragment back into their relative spheres of influence on the ground. Such municipal international relations help transform eThekwini and South Africa into active participants in the global arena, no longer isolated or ostracised due to apartheid.

Interaction with National, Regional, and Global Organisations

eThekwini, through MI & GR and MILE, is also becoming visible in global governance through direct partnerships, affiliation or interaction with global, intercontinental, regional, international and national

organisations. Partnerships managed by MI & GR, extend across sectors and help implement the IDP. Paired with UNITAR as a global governance organisation, eThekwini is host to CIFAL Durban which is funded by the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and offers a series of regional, national, and international training on sustainable development solutions for local authorities in Anglophone Africa and relates to Plan 5 of the IDP (IDP 2011/ 2012: 148). Its partnership with an Indian-based NGO Confederation of Indian Industry assists eThekwini with execution of Plan 2 of the IDP as does its partnership with Lufthansa German Airlines – the latter of which includes a broad range of public and private stakeholders.

MILE and MI & GR initiated relationships with organisations give eThekwini a global presence as encouraged by the MIRP framework (RSA,1999: 9). Headquartered near Paris, METROPOLIS brings together representatives of major metropolitan areas to compare

experiences and develop remedies that lead to sustainable urban development (RSA, 1999: 27). Municipal officials indicate that both METROPOLIS and SCIN fund eThekwini local and international initiatives for IDP implementation (See also, MILE website). Independently and through its affiliation with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) – eThekwini is affiliated and interactive with IBSA and BRICS. IBSA is comprised of India, Brazil and South Africa. BRICS is the geo-political organisation of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa which represents at least 43% of the world population and approximately 23% of world GDP (Cassiolato and Vitorino, 2011: 9-10). Local government associations of the IBSA countries – Association of Local Governance in India (ALGI), ConfederaçãoNacional de Municípios (CNM), represented by the Amazonian Association of Muncipalities (AAM) and SALGA established a Local Government Focal Point (LGFP) within IBSA during IBSA's fifth summit held in Tshwane in 2011. During that summit, LGFP made a declaration on climate change for presentation at COP17 advocating the role of developmental local government in environmental matters (Zuma-Mathonsi, (2012: 21). These interactions between the local and international arenas suggest that local government can influence international law.

Involvement with Crafting and Implementing International Law

As the MIRP (RSA, 1999: 8) states, municipalities and municipal associations must address regional and global challenges that have local impact, but which need to be tackled on a broad basis; environmental law and governance is one such challenge. In much the same vein, Nijman (2009: 15) contends that cities are taking centre stage through their involvement in crafting or implementing international law – including environmental and human rights. Under the auspices of the UN, nation-states negotiated the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), followed by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Parties to the agreement have held a series of conferences – called Conference of the Parties (COP). Convened in different parts of the world, COP1 was held in Berlin in 1995 and COP17 was hosted by eThekwini in 2011. These conferences of the parties help shape international environmental governance and law. Metropolitan eThekwini personnel played an instrumental role in organising COP17, and negotiating outcomes such as the global Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (which included major breakthroughs such as a focus on adaptation to and not just mitigation of climate change, and the creation of a Green Climate Fund). According to interviews and documents,

independently and through organisational affiliation with SALGA, UCLG and others, eThekwini furthered the Durban Adaptation Charter for Local Governments which advances mainstreaming adaptation into local government development planning. In addition, eThekwini locally implements international environmental law through sister city and other agreements like the Durban Community Ecosystem Based Adaptation (CEBA) initiative which is a partnership between the municipality and The Wildlands Conservation Trust aimed at uplifting local communities by creating 'green' jobs for the poor and unemployed, restoring ecosystems that are important to the welfare of these communities and reducing collective vulnerability to climate change (see: http://durbanceba.org/). Bremen and eThekwini share a sister city climate change project funded by GIZ which includes creation of the Durban Climate Change Team to collect data that will inform adaptation goals (eThekwini Municipal Document, 2012: 3).

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, its covenants and protocols, form the basis of international human rights law. South Africa signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the same year it ushered in democracy, 1994. The country ratified the former covenant on 10 December 1998 and is yet to ratify the latter one. eThekwini's sister city projects implement human rights through an art therapy project with Bremen and a school twinning project with Leeds. Sponsored by Bremen Senate for Culture, groups of eThekwini individuals with disabilities participate in art therapy workshops which culminate in annual staged performances as part of 'Celebrate Durban'. Forty eThekwini schools are twinned with Leeds schools, sponsored by the British Council and Leeds City Council and encompassing curriculum and learner exchanges and the unveiling of a 'Voices Against Apartheid' project commemorating the role of Leeds citizens in opposing apartheid. These projects involve citizen to citizen cross-border interaction – not just between governments or politicians. eThekwini appears to be – independently and through organisational membership, involved in both crafting and implementing international environmental law as well as implementing international human rights law.

Conclusion

With reference to the South African Municipal International Relations Policy (RSA, 1999) and Nijman (2009), this article has shown three ways in which the eThekwini metropolitan municipality is emerging

as an actor in global affairs. eThekwini is party to a range of sister city projects and a member of a variety of cross-border interurban networks. It interacts with global and regional organisations, and influences international law in a manner that reflects public values and inclusion of the citizenry. While the role of citizens in decision-making about international relations is yet to be investigated, there is evidence that people-centred values underlie public service outcomes of municipal international relations. These outcomes include youth development in rural KwaXimba, skills development through the Commonwealth Good Practice Scheme project and people-to-people international exchanges. Placing this example of African municipal internationalism at the interdisciplinary crux of governance and international relations theory, this article has demonstrated that domestic and foreign borders are porous with interactive local and global forces alive in municipal governance. Given IDP-focussed sister city projects that span service delivery such as sanitation and waste management, housing, sport, climate change protection, arts and culture, this article has contended that eThekwini does not just aim toward urban competition in a global economy. Rather, eThekwini, with strategic donor support, is becoming a learning and caring city that co-operates with multiple sectors on international projects, and engages learning exchanges with cross-border municipalities – more recently with those of the global South – for collective public good. Despite the global trend toward decentralisation, eThekwini – like many municipalities worldwide – is not endowed with sufficient financial resources to carry out local development mandates. Funding partners of the North, such as CLGF, GIZ, and SCI have assisted with international relations and seem not to dominate North-South partnerships with eThekwini, but to work with eThekwini and other municipalities of the South on municipality-driven development terms. This factor is arguably a step toward a more just world order and worthy of further research.

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Research – its Role in Sustainable Development in South Africa

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Abstract: The executive branch of government formulates and implements innovation policy and strategy for socio-economic development. Increasingly, there is a need for research to inform policy-making, that is, evidence-based information which could feed into the national discourse on sustainable development. Also relevant is the contribution of innovation through research, leading to national competitiveness, and hence sustainable development. Understanding the role of research in South Africa is critical to developing better socio-economic and innovation policies. Similarly, building an effective National System of Innovation (NSI) strategy requires identifying blockages and strengthening linkages among the NSI actors, namely: government, industry, universities and research institutions. In 2008, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) formulated a Ten Year Innovation Plan (TYIP) (2008-2018), the intention of which is to help drive South Africa's transformation towards a knowledge-based economy using various output indicators. This article is contextualised within the public administration development framework and explores the role of public administration processes and policies as tools for ensuring the realisation of the government's sustainable development objectives in the context of the NSI. The central premise of the article is that research is an essential component of the NSI in creating sustainable development.

Keywords: development, sustainable development, research, knowledge, innovation

Introduction

Sustainable development is a global concern, especially in developing countries where human development, science and technology do not receive adequate attention from policy makers, if any at all. The majority of developing countries are experiencing not only uneven, but also unsustainable development, in which some sections of the population continue to benefit from the advantages of modern science while others lag behind. In such contexts, research in science and technology, supported by informed policies on knowledge creation, innovation and commercialisation has the potential to benefit society at large. Innovation has become a vital requirement in economic growth and change (OECD, 2003:9). Scientific and technological knowledge is an essential element of innovation, and the foundation for economic development. Fritsch and Slavtchev (2006:1) emphasise this in asserting that: "scientific knowledge can play an essential role for innovation and economic development". "Knowledge-based economy", "knowledge economy", "knowledge society" and similar terms are familiar in education and development discourses, pointing to the primacy of knowledge and the need for developing countries to invest in and capitalise on knowledge production, dissemination and application (Abrahams, 2003:2). A Human Sciences Research Council audit report (2003:2), citing Castells (1996), captures the centrality of research leading to innovation and economic competitiveness as follows: "… the ability of countries to compete in the international economy is directly related to their technological potential". In this context it is arguable that scientific and technological research and innovation are major drivers of global economic growth and well-being.

In an increasingly knowledge-based and globalised economy, investment in scientific and technological knowledge and innovation offers valuable dividends because (Doutriaux&Sorondo, 2005:2):

> "Knowledge and innovation are increasingly recognized as sources of global competitiveness and economic well-being. Research on systems of innovation has shown that a country's capability to introduce new and innovative products and services that contribute to its wealth is related to its research activities, to its proportion of scientists and engineers, to its policies and programs supportive of research and its commercialisation."

Free market neo-liberalism has failed to address poverty and growing social inequality throughout the world (Kaplinsky, 2005:6;

Jomo&Baudot, 2007:14; UNDP, 2003:2). This article focuses on the potential of South Africa, a developing country, to achieve sustainable development by focusing on and harnessing research through its National System of Innovation (NSI) to serve the needs of all citizens. In the context of South Africa, this assertion is supported by official figures released by the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD, 2010), which include: high levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment (23.5% in March 2009); around 24% of households still living in informal settlements or traditional structures; 8% of people having no access to potable water; 23% not having access to sanitation; 27% without access to electricity (2008 figure); increasing maternal deaths (probably a consequence of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS); and an adult illiteracy rate of 25.9% (2007 figure). These concerns pose a threat not only to the achievement of a sustainable society in the long term, but also to the ability of government to meet its short-term developmental objectives (NSSD, 2010), which make it imperative for South Africa to focus on achieving sustainable development through Triple Helix III in its National System of Innovation (NSI), where university research and business research and development (BERD) play a vital role. This is essential because universities are important generators of new ideas and promoters of innovation (Industry Canada, 1999:7; Etzkowitz&Leydesdorff, 2001:11; ISIG, 2000:34; Gault, Zhang & Gupta, 2004:6).

Conceptualising Sustainable Development

In order to explain sustainable development meaningfully, it is necessary to briefly examine development from a holistic perspective. Development is a contested theory with multiple aspects. A tendency exists to equate development with economic growth or progress. While the economic aspect is key, development also involves transformation of institutional, social and administrative structures and belief systems, and has national and international dimensions. A number of theories of development are explained in the next section. Todoro and Smith (2003:110-144) provide an illuminating discussion on theories of development, which are briefly explained here. According to these authors, the linear-stages-of-growth model, an economic development theory emphasising successive stages of growth all countries must undergo, prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s, it was replaced by two competing ideological perspectives. The first, theories and patterns of structural change, described internal processes of structural change a typical developing country must undergo in order to generate and sustain rapid economic growth. The second,

international-dependence revolution, saw underdevelopment as a product of constraints occasioned by a number of external and internal institutional and political factors, including (Tadoro& Smith, 2003:111):

> international and domestic power relationships, institutional and structural economic rigidities, and the resulting proliferation of dual economies and dual societies both within and among the nations of the world.

The neoclassical/neoliberal or free market counter-revolution prevailed in the 1980s and early 1990s. It emphasised free markets, open economies and privatisation of moribund state-owned enterprises. Under-development, according to this theory, is a result of government over-regulation of the economy. All these theories can be faulted on the grounds that none of them considers sustainability as a cornerstone of development. Sustainable development is essential. Many definitions exist for the concept of sustainable development. The most prominent is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987:3) which defines sustainable development as that which "meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

This definition recognises the need to meet the needs of the world's poor and constraints posed by the state of technology (hence knowledge) and social organisation to the environment in sustaining present and future generations' needs. Sustainable refers to maintaining or enhancing resource productivity in the long term. Livelihood means having enough supply of food and cash to meet basic living needs; security refers to secure ownership of, or access to, resources … to meet contingencies. Sustainable development has been a major concern since 1962, when Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, which linked agricultural pesticides to damage in animal and human health. Since 1997, the International Institute for Sustainable Development has maintained a timeline highlighting major events associated with sustainable development. The Rio Conference on the Environment (1992) offers a vision of a society in which development is not underlined by mere economic growth, wealth creation, affluence and blind squandering of natural resources (quantitative or ruthless development), but a new vision of development of a qualitative and controlled nature, based on achieving a balance between all human values and nature (Decleris, 2000:17). Sustainability, in simple terms, means that something lasts over time. According to Decleris (2000:18), besides its legal

aspect, sustainable development has clear philosophical, scientific, economic and political dimensions. The time period is of concern, which ambiguously described in the standard definition as "now and in the future", has differed widely (Kates, Parris & Leiserowit, 2005). The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002:1) places responsibility on states to pursue sustainable development:

> we assume a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing three pillars of sustainable development - economic development, social development and environmental protection—at local, national, regional and global levels.

These three pillars need to be explored within the NSI context. South Africa formalised the definition of sustainable development by including it in law. The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA, Act No. 107 of 1998) defines sustainable development as follows:

> *sustainable development means the integration of social, economic and environmental factors into planning, implementation and decision-making so as to ensure that development serves present and future generations.*

The theory of sustainable development is still evolving (Decleris, 2000:33), but the social problems that must be solved by sustainable development need to be prioritised. The proposed features and principles of the legal theory of sustainable development and its application in practice are relevant (Decleris, 2000:34). Due to the cross-disciplinary nature of the concept of development, a substantial part of the theory used by researchers is adopted and adapted from constituent disciplines such as economics, sociology and agricultural science.

Role of Research in Supporting Sustainable Development

Given that the executive branch of government formulates innovation strategy and policy for socio-economic development (Scerri, 2008; Feinson, 2010; Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010b), there is an increasing need for research to inform policy-making, in particular, evidence-based policy-making, which can feed into the national discourse on sustainable development. Also important is the contribution of innovation through research leading to national competitiveness, hence (sustainable) development.

A dearth of research on the role of research in the NSI impedes the formulation, implementation and evaluation of government

innovation policies and reflects the lack of a strong analytic framework for understanding the contribution of research within the NSI. According to Mowery andSampat (2007:7), such a framework needs to adopt a more evolutionary, historically-grounded approach to understanding the role of research in the NSI. As such, research on the NSI is an indispensable starting point for analysis of the current and likely future position of NSI actors.

Research provides opportunities to release intellectual, cultural and social innovation potential. No stand-alone research has thus far been documented that focuses exclusively on the role of research in the NSI. Kahn (2008:176) asserts that: "to manage one must measure." According to the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development and Eurostat (OECD & Eurostat 2005), measurements of research input include expenditure on innovation and the performers of the research, whereas output indicators include new or improved products or processes from a number of intellectual property rights and, scientific publications and degrees awarded.

Innovation

Innovation can make a difference in addressing urgent development challenges such as providing access to drinking water, eradicating neglected diseases or reducing hunger (OECD, 2012:3). The OECD notes that innovation plays a pivotal role in economic development in developing countries and is not just about high-technology products. More importantly, innovation is about using local capacity and local innovations to address challenges in specific local contexts. The NSI perspective is primarily concerned with the flow of knowledge and its impact on economic growth (Niosi, 2002). The potential for future economic development increasingly lies in the potential of research that may be underutilised; an ever-renewing source of new ideas (Nelson, 2004; Etzkowitz, Dzisah, Ranga& Zhou, 2007). In this context, it makes sense to examine the role of research that seems centrally implicated in governing innovation knowledge flows (Niosi, 2002:292). According to the OECD (1997:11) the NSI is concerned with knowledge flows. The smooth operation of innovation systems depends on the fluidity of knowledge flows among NSI actors such as enterprises, universities and research institutions. Both tacit knowledge and know-how exchanged through informal channels, and codified knowledge or published information, patents and other sources, are relevant. The mechanisms for knowledge flows include joint industry research,

public/private sector partnerships, technology diffusion and movement of personnel (OECD, 1997). Despite recognition of the key roles of formal interaction and partnership among the NSI actors (Breschi&Lissoni, 2001; Jensen, Johnson, Lorenz &Lundvall, 2007; Maharajh& Kraemer-Mbula, 2010), empirical research on these interactions remains scarce in South Africa (Maharajh& Kraemer-Mbula, 2010). Most research in the field of innovation is focused on the business sector and has virtually ignored other actors in the NSI. Such neglect creates the impression that innovation management is pursued only by listed companies. Contextualised research focusing on the role of research among the various NSI actors is required (OECD & Eurostat, 2005; Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010b) to inform public policy and improve welfare of citizens through sustainable development. There is a dearth of research examining internal and external factors that would lead to the promotion of stronger research linkages between NSI actors as a means of publicising and/or strengthening their contributions to innovation and socio-economic growth (Scerri, 2008; Gault, 2010; Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010a:33). Efforts to encourage technology transfer to industries and increase the returns from Government-backed research investment have been hampered by this deficiency in research (Mowery &Sampat, 2007; Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010a:34). It is generally assumed that NSI actors conduct different kinds of research i.e. fundamental, basic, applied and strategic research. The current emphasis on the countable, rather than the nature of contribution of the research, within the NSI could have unfortunate consequences for innovation policy in the industrial and industrialising world (Mowery &Sampat, 2007:2-4).

What is a National System of Innovation?

The precise definition of "National Innovation System" has remained unclear. Scholars such as Edquist (2005), Buys (2006), Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae (2010a or 2010b) conceptualise NSI as the institutions and actors that affect the creation, development, and diffusion of innovations. For the purposes of this article, the definition offered by the Department of Science and Technology, is appropriate (Department of Science and Technology, 2002:22):

> …set of functioning institutions, organizations and policies which interact constructively in the pursuit of a common set of social and economic goals and objectives, and which use the introduction of innovations as the key promoter of change.

A *system* may be defined as "a set or arrangement of things so related or connected as to form a unity or organic whole" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). Systems are made up of components, relationships, and attributes (Carlsson&Jacobsson, 2002). The systems approach is ideal for understanding the activities of actors in the NSI, their linkages and the outcomes of their activities and linkages, leading to economic and social impacts (Etzkowitz, Dzisah, Ranga, Zhou, 2007; Gault& Zhang, 2010). Complex systems such as the NSI are dynamic, changing and evolving in sometimes unexpected ways; and they often display non-linear properties (Bernal, 1967:7). *Innovation* does not occur in isolation but within a complex, interactive and interdependent network of multiple actors and influences, and within dynamic systems (Varis&Pellikka, 2004). The concept of innovation systems was pioneered in writing by writers such as Nelson and Winter (1982), Rosenburg (1982), Freeman (1987), Edquist (2005), among others. South Africa's NSI consists of six main actors: (1) industry (both privately and publicly owned) (2) institutions of higher education (3) science councils (both performing and agency) (4) government departmental research institutes (5) museums and other statutory bodies and (6) non governmental organisations, which play the role of funders and performers in the system. All these institutions are embedded within the financial system of innovation, the country's legal framework and a national polity that includes learned societies, associations, trade organisations and other civil society organisations (Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology; National Research and Technology Audit, 1998; Women in Science policy document, 2006). Examination of research contributions by the NSI actors which, when combined will provide a holistic picture of research within the NSI. The concept of NSI is based on the premise that understanding the linkages among these actors is the key to improving technology performance (OECD, 1997). The innovative performance of a country depends to a large extent on how these actors relate to each other as elements of a collective system of knowledge creation (OECD 1997:9). In addition to what is said in the preceding paragraph, it is necessary important to explore the NSI models and framework towards understanding the role of research in the NSI. For example, the Triple Helix model of university-industry-government relations provides an avenue for studying the complex dynamics among these actors in relation to the South African socio-economic development (Leydesdorff& Meyer, 2006). According to Etzkowitz et al. (2007:34-88), a typology of innovation systems incorporates various perspectives. First, there is Triple Helix I, a static triple helix in which the

government encompasses academia and industry and directs the relations between these two actors. Triple Helix II is a *laissez-faire* triple helix, consisting of separate institutional spheres, where government, university and industry operate separate from each other. In this model, the university provides basic research and trained persons. The third, Triple Helix III, is an interactive model, which consists of overlapping, yet relatively independent, institutional spheres. In this model, the university plays a significant role in the NSI (Etzkowitz, Dzisah, Ranga& Zhou, 2007:34-88; Lundvall, 2007:23-30).Triple Helix III is the current and most useful NSI model where the actors or stakeholders are not operating in silos, but rather working interactively in creating new knowledge and innovation.

National System of Innovation in an International and Regional Context

In the international context, broad research on the various NSI actors such as the government, universities and industries have been conducted (Fagberg, Mowery & Nelson, 2004:21; Dutrenit& Dodgson, 2005:27). In developed countries such as the USA, 'addressing national priorities' is seen as an important indicator of research quality (Yates, 2005:394). This statement should hold true for all countries. While research on the concept of NSI as a whole is still at the early stage, research on NSI in developing countries is at an even more preliminary stage (Intarakamnerd, Chairatana&Tangchitpiboon, 2001; Maharajh& Kraemer-Mbula, 2010:134). In this regard, the need for undertaking NSI research in developing countries such as South Africa cannot be overstated (Oerlemans& Pretorius, 2006:589-593; Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010b:53-54). In Africa, the African Union (AU) Commission and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) set out a "Consolidated Science and Technology Plan of Action (AU-NEPAD (African Union-New Partnership for Africa's Development), 2010)", which articulates Africa's common objectives for science and technology as one of the means to promote socio-economic transformation of the Continent and its integration into the world economy. The Plan rests on four pillars – capacity building, knowledge production, technological and innovation. These pillars can only be managed insofar as there is a synergy among policies, strategies, plans and measurement. This is recognised in the AU-NEPAD plan which seeks to improve "the quality of science, technology and innovation policies of African countries through processes that promote sharing of experiences and policy learning" (Kahn, 2008:164; AU-NEPAD, 2010). The innovation systems

framework provides a useful theoretical basis for undertaking research in developing countries such as South Africa. In this context, it is necessary to complement emerging literature with empirical analyses so as to adapt the NSI framework to developing countries where innovation policy is still at an initial stage (Lall&Wangwe, 1998:438; Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010a:31). To address a number of the socio-economic challenges facing South Africa, certain key features of the NSI framework, which originated from the industrialised countries will have to be adjusted and adapted (Gault, 2010:21; Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010b:39-56). Efforts to adapt the innovation systems framework to reflect the realities of Africa remain limited (Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010b:39-56). To contribute to socio-economic development, the innovation system approach needs to be adapted to the South African context (Johnson, Edquist & Lundvall, 2003).

Components of a National System of Innovation

The three key components that comprise an NSI may be identified as Innovations, Knowledge Flows and Policy. Each is briefly described in the sections that follow.

Innovations production is an integral element of a National System of Innovation (NSI) and may be approached from contextually different perspectives and problem formulations. There is no common innovation contextual denominator to bridge different research traditions (Trott, 2005:12; Goffin& Mitchell, 2009:25). In this context, various models of innovation need to be consulted during the research process. For example, Rothwell (1992) and Trott (2005:25) present five generations of innovation models that have dominated the field of innovation, namely: technology-driven, market-pull, simultaneous coupling, interactive parallel and integrated networked models as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: A Chronological Development of Models of Innovation

Generation	Emergence	Model	Characteristics
First	Early 1950 to mid-1960s	Technology push	Simple linear sequential process; emphasis on R&D; the market is a recipient of the fruits of R&D.
Second	Mid 1960s to early 1970s	Market pull	Simple linear sequential process; emphasis on marketing; the market is the source for directing R&D; R&D has a reactive role.

Third	Early 1970 to early 1980s	Coupling model	Emphasis on integrating R&D and marketing
Fourth	Early 1980 to mid-1990s	Integrated parallel model	Interactive model – Combinations of push and pull
Fifth	Late 1990s	Integrated, networked model	Emphasis on knowledge accu-mulation and external linkages

Source: Adapted from Rothwell (1992;1994); Trott (2005:25); O'Sullivan & Dooley (2009:48).

According to Tawfik (2009:7), a high rate of innovation contributes to more intellectual capital, market creation, economic growth, job creation, wealth and higher standards of living and pay-back to the innovation cycle. *Knowledge flows* is another integral element of NSI in the context of research. According to Schumpeter (1939:14), innovation is the process of converting new or existing knowledge to value for the benefit of individuals, groups or communities. Innovation is the degree to which value is created through the transformation of new knowledge and technologies into profitable products and services for national and global markets (Milbergs, Kalweit&Boege, 2007:27). Analysis of knowledge flows may be undertaken from available statistics relating to R&D, human resource aspects and linkages among NSI actors in South Africa.*Policy* is another key element of NSI, which cannot be easily measured, but is, nonetheless, significant to estimating NSI. Policies provide an insight into government priorities and the manner in which government attempts to drive institutional behaviour (De Coning, 2006). Definitions of policy, as cited by De Coning, Cloete and Wissink (2011:6) and De Coning (2006:14), vary: "a declaration and implementation of intent" (Ranney, 1968:7); "the authoritative allocation through the political process, of values to groups or individuals in the society" (Easton (1953:129); "a comprehensive framework of and/or interaction" (Dye, 1978:4-5) to "a kind of guide that delimits action" (Starling (1979:4).

It is imperative that the South African government's policies on sustainable development and innovation policy be explored. Public administration is a continuous process in all states. In this sense, it is always undergoing reform. According to De Coning (1994:26), Public Administration is the study of various processes and specific functional activities of government institutions that must operate within a particular environment in order to improve the general welfare of society by providing services and products. Therefore,

it is necessary to explore those activities performed by the NSI actors that contribute to innovation and, ultimately, sustainable development. De Coning and Wissink (2011:16) affirm that development policy goals are normally better achieved by voluntary acceptance and compliance (the carrot approach). Increasing attention to promoting innovation has prompted the South African government to set up institutions for the transfer of knowledge to industry. Development activities within South Africa are largely informed by legislation and other policy documents such as White and Green papers, National Plans and S & T policy initiatives. Innovation and development legislation and policy documents such as the National Advisory Council on Innovation Act (No. 55 of 1997), the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative, ASGI SA (adopted in 2005), the Research and Development (R&D) Strategy and the National Framework for Sustainable Development (NFSD), which spells out South Africa's vision of a sustainable society, are essential. According to the OECD (2007) public policy conditions include R&D funding policy, taxes, intellectual property, regulations, standards, and market access policies. According to Meyer, Theron and Van Rooyen (1995:11), the lack of suitable socio-economic and environmental policies has been one of the major factors hampering sustainable development in Africa and other developing countries globally. Other contributing factors include progressive thinning of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect and climatic changes, deforestation, reduction of biodiversity, and other similar, extremely serious problems (United Nations, 2000:54), for which the contribution of research is relevant. Sustainable development has been hampered because little attention has been given to policy analyses, formulation, execution and enforcement of implementation. Meyer, Theron and Van Rooyen (1995:11) add that the available policies are inconsistent and disconnected.

Challenges for Sustainable Development in South Africa

South Africa has historically developed a resource-based economy. In 2008, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) drafted the South Africa Ten Year Innovation Plan (TYIP) (2008 – 2018), the intention of which was to help drive South Africa's transformation towards a knowledge-based economy using various output indicators (Department of Science and Technology, 2008). However, according to the National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI, 2010) the DST is unlikely to achieve some of its outlined output targets for a number of reasons, the main one being the lack of alignment within government structures. The TYIP sends a signal to the public of the government's commitment to building a

comprehensive and sustainable research sector in support of a knowledge economy. This transformation depends on simultaneous contributions from the various NSI actors such as business (with its expenditure on research and development, BERD) and leading government departments, the higher education sector and public research institutions (Walwyn, 2008). Therefore, undertaking research within the context of NSI provides a suitable basis for designing specific innovation strategies and policies and unpacking the specific characteristics and roles of all actors in the South African NSI (Kraemer-Mbula&Wamae, 2010a :31).

Conclusion

This article concludes that developing an acceptable level of understanding of the role of research in South Africa is essential to developing better socio-economic and innovation policies. Similarly, building an effective National System of Innovation (NSI) strategy requires identifying bottlenecks in the NSI and strengthening linkages among the various actors, namely: government, industry, universities and research institutions.

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