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Special Issue on "Public Sector Reforms in Africa"

Guest Editor: Omano Odigheji

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Public Sector Reforms in Africa

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Introduction

Public Sector Reforms and the Quest for Democratic Developmentalism in Africa

Omano Edigheji*

Abstract

Developmentalism has been one of the main justifications for public sector reforms. In what concerns Africa, this, in part, has been based on the assumption that public sector reforms, which will make the state effective, efficient, responsive, accountable and productive, are necessary conditions for the development of the continent. Not surprisingly, a plethora of public sector reforms has been initiated and implemented. The intersection, synergies, complementarities and, at times, disjunctures between the reforms and the continent's quest for development, may not have received the scholarly attention it deserved, beside a few exceptions, including the work of the late Professor Guy Mhone. Therefore, this introductory article will focus on the public sector reforms in Africa, especially as from the 1980s, and will necessarily draw heavily on the work of Guy Mhone.

Résumé

Le développementalisme a été l'une des principales justifications de la réforme du secteur public. En ce qui concerne l'Afrique, cela a été en partie fondée sur l'hypothèse selon laquelle les réformes du secteur public, qui rendront l'État efficace, efficient, dynamique, responsable et productif, sont des conditions nécessaires pour le développement du continent. Sans surprise, une pléthore de réformes du secteur public a été initiée et mise en œuvre. L'intersection, les énergies, les complémentarités et parfois la disjonction entre les réformes et la quête de développement du continent, n'ont pas vraiment reçu l'attention méritée au niveau universitaire, à part quelques exceptions comme l'œuvre du professeur Guy Mhone. Par conséquent, cet article introductif mettra l'accent sur les réformes du secteur public en Afrique, en particulier dès les années 1980 et s'inspirera fortement des travaux de Guy Mhone.

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Background: The Social, Economic and Political Contexts of Public Sector Reforms in Africa

Guy Mhone rightly argued that "issues related to public sector and civil service reform should be located in a broader framework that addresses the nexus of the problems related to governance and democratization and sustainable development" (Mhone 2003a:19). Any critical analysis of the public sector reforms in Africa must therefore focus on how it addresses the key social, economic and political challenges facing the continent.

The development and governance deficits of Africa are generally acknowledged by academics and policy practitioners. Bad governance, authoritarianism, one-party rule and military dictatorship have been some of the major features of Africa's politics. Its economy remained primary sector based. Majority of its people are overwhelmed by poverty and have no access to basic services. Guy Mhone's understanding of the underdevelopment of Africa is encapsulated in his concepts of enclavity and dualism of the continent's economies (Mhone 2000). The enclave nature of Africa has meant that majority of the African people are excluded from the formal economy. One reason for this development is that "the majority of the labour force in Africa continues … to be unemployed and underemployed" (Mhone 2000:1). While various reforms – including the Brettonwood institutions-inspired structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and the good governance project largely inspired by international development agencies and donor countries; social, economic and political reforms – were undertaken in the 20th century, they did not resolve the Africa's development and democratic deficits.

Hence, at the turn of the 21st century, Africa remains the poorest region in the world. Compared to other continents, Africa has the lowest tele-density and internet connectivity, the highest rate of people living below the poverty line (by 2002, 44 per cent of the people in sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty level of $1 dollar a day), the highest rate of HIV-AIDS infections, the highest rate of infant mortality and maternal death rates, the highest level of unemployment and the lowest rate of access to basic services. Therefore, if this trend continues, Africa is likely to miss out on the information revolution, just as it missed out on the industrial revolution and there will be increased widening gap between Africa and the rest of the world. Also, Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, is unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of halving extreme poverty, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education by 2015.

At the political level, the 20th century was marked by the de-colonialisation struggle, political independence, one-party rule, military dictatorship and the subsequent wave of multi-party democracy in the 1990s. In spite of this

positive development – that is, the spread of multi-partyism – the majority of the African people have been largely excluded from the process of governance. In particular, across the continent (like other regions of the world), citizen power has been substituted with elite and corporate power. One of the consequences of this development is that citizen democracy is being replaced by consumer, client and user democracy; and in the context of high rate of unemployment and poverty, the majority of African people have become marginal to the process of development and governance. At best, their role is limited to voting for office bearers. Even this role is being undermined by the incessant rigging of elections that has characterised political life in most African countries. As a result, most governments in the continent lack legitimacy, and therefore suffer credibility problem.

What this brings to light is that while liberal democracy is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for democratic development. As Mhone (2003b:19) notes, "the conventional understanding of democracy as currently pursued…coupled with economic liberalism as the dominant approach to economic and social policy, is at odds with the need to promote sustainable human development and good governance, and hence is ultimately detrimental to the consolidation of both formal (procedural and representative) and substantive (or emancipatory) democracy in the long run". Democratic development and governance will require popular/citizens participation, which in turn requires economic base. By this we mean that, for the African people to effectively participate in the governance and development process, they require more economic assets. In other words, more economic assets in the hands of the poor in Africa as elsewhere, is a *sine qua non* for their democratic participation and, consequently, the sustainability of democratic governance.

Mhone (2003b:41) argues that "in order to precipitate developmental momentum, redistributive measures are needed" as though they may not necessarily be compatible with procedural democracy, they are compatible with developmental democracy. The key question therefore is how do the public sector reforms address these apparent tensions? Answering the question is to address how to democratize the politics and economies to give ordinary people greater say, not only in the determination of their own affairs, but also in the process of governance at all levels – community, local, state/provincial and national levels. This is one of the benchmarks that Mhone sets for us in assessing the public sector reforms in the continent.

It is important to note, at this juncture, that Africa has been a laboratory for a number of social and economic reforms. In the first decade of political independence - that is, from the early 1960s until the mid-1970s – the emergent African political leaders attempted to provide basic services to majority of the people. Towards this end, a number of public utilities were established,

which considerably enhanced the capacity of the African state to provide basic social services to the African people. At the same time, the SOEs were the institutional foundation for import substitution industrialization in Africa. The state was seen as central to the process of socio-economic engineering that the newly independent countries required, hence the establishment of the SOEs, among a range of institutional innovations intended to enhance the capacity of the state. This background is important because the privatization exercise that constitutes a central element of the public sector reforms as from the 1980s strikes at the heart of hallowing out the state in Africa and its ability to provide public goods to the African people.

The prevailing development paradigm, up to the late 1970s, emphasized equity, social justice and improvement of the material conditions of people, with the state occupying a prime place in the development process. In other words, developmentalism was one of the main underpinnings of Africa in its first decade of independence. Mhone defined developmentalism "as a conscious, strategic stance taken by government to promote accelerated growth, structural transformation, social development and the repositioning of the economy in the international division of labour by consciously influencing the performance of the market" (Mhone 2003:39). Such an approach that places the majority of people at the centre of development, argues Mhone, has to be "rooted in participatory and consultative approaches to policy making and implementation". Unfortunately, the majority of Africa's people and their organisations were excluded from the governance process, as the state became captured by special interests and a basis for primitive accumulation by political leaders and state officials. In this context, public policies were made without regard to economic logics, human well-being and democratic governance. In particular, governance and public policy were, and remained, dominated by professional politicians and consultants. More disturbing is that the public sector reforms have been driven in technocratic fashion, with limited inputs from citizens. The non-state actors that are incorporated are middle class-run civil society organisations, most of which are not embedded in any community. In this context, peoples' organisation, namely community/grassroots groups have been excluded from the process of governance and development. This is one of the major deficits of Africa in the new millennium. Whether the public sector reforms introduced in the last thirty years or so have addressed this issue effectively remains to be seen.

At the beginning of 21st century, there was again a paradigm shift, especially following the failure of policies of market fundamentalism and the ever-widening gap between the poor and the rich, and between developing and developed countries, as well as increasing poverty. This, even in the context of modest growth experienced by Africa since the mid-1990s, has

not benefited majority of its people. In fact, it has reinforced and accentuated the enclave and dualistic nature of African economies. While this growth pattern has been beneficial to the enclave formal sector, it has been unable to engender inclusive and equitable growth. As a result, argues Mhone (2000), it has accentuated the structural limits of African economies by, among other things, excluding and marginalizing the majority of the continent populace from engaging in productive and income generating activities that could result in sustainable increases in their living standard. It is in the light of this that some might consider a public sector reform agenda that aimed primarily to promote a narrow vision of development, and where efficiency and effectiveness is judged mainly by contribution to quantitative growth, as deficient.

In Africa, as in other regions, there is a recognition that the socio-economic climate is not sustainable in the long-run – as the recent global economic meltdown reinforces the correctness of the need for a need approach. The paradigm shift in development thinking is evidenced by the adoption of the MDGs by the UN and the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). These are complemented by the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU). Significantly, both the NEPAD and AU objectives are cognizant of the fact that good governance, peace and security are necessary conditions for development. While political leaders have committed themselves to these goals and objectives, these have not been domesticated, that is, translated into national policy. As such, national social, economic and political policies remained largely at odds with the goals of the NEPAD and AU Constitutive Act. More importantly, the shift in paradigm may in the long run fundamentally alter the pattern of accumulation, as the formal sector continues to be seen as the basis for growth. This is likely to resolve the duality of the African economies in a manner that assets in the informal sector are harnessed to propel growth and economically empower the majority of the African population. A key question that should therefore agitate the minds of critical observers of Africa is, what are the factors that accounted for the disjuncture between goals of NEPAD and national policies and praxis? And what has been the role of the donors-driven public sector reforms in alleviating or accentuating this problem? Another critical question that demands attention is, what has been the contribution of the public sector reforms in hampering or enhancing the continent's ability to harness the assets in the informal economy so that it can become the engine of inclusive and equitable development. The contributions of the public sector reforms to address these critical issues, I argue, are important benchmarks to judge the effectiveness or otherwise of the public sector reforms.

It needs to be noted that, by the second half of the 1970s, the development and nation-building projects of Africa had ruptured, due to both internal and external factors. Importantly, this period witnessed a global shift in development paradigm. Development came to be conceived narrowly in terms of economic growth, and the public sector reforms implemented since the 1980s are primarily geared towards this narrow concern; and effectiveness and efficiency became judged and assessed in terms of contribution to growth. Mkandawire (2008) points out that the reform agenda gives premium to "restraining" institutions rather than "transformative" institutions. In fact, the paradigm focused exclusively on short-term macro-economic stabilization, with little concern for issues of long-term growth and equity. The grand normative of the public reforms has therefore been economic growth, underpinned by a philosophical base of what Paul Omoyefa, in his contribution to this edition, refers to as the re-colonialization of Africa. Getting the economic fundamental rights and macroeconomic stabilization became the dominant thrusts of public policy. Needless to say that both state-led development and market-led development – the latter which continued to dominate public policy at the turn of the 21st century – have the same outcomes, namely the underdevelopment of Africa and its marginalization in the global political economy. However, in Africa as elsewhere, the 21st much more emphasis, at least at the level of discourse, is given to human well-being. And the current global economic meltdown – the worst since the great depression in the late 1920s – have brought into sharp focus the need for an inclusive development, and for the state to play active role in the development process. Clearly, the poor in Africa and elsewhere deserves a bigger bailout than the financial sector – if socialism is good for the banks, it will be better for the poor. A strong and active public sector in particular, and the state in general, is therefore necessary for the provision of public goods to majority of the African people. What is clear from the current economic crisis is that it has come to disrupt the paradigms within which the public sector reforms in Africa since the 1980s is predicated. A new paradigm that emphasizes an active public sector that promotes inclusive development is therefore urgently required.

A key challenge now is how to promote democratic governance and sustainable human development. As Guy Mhone (2003:18) puts it, "the question arises as to the degree which the…democratic dispensation and economic and social policies emanating from it can be consolidated and made sustainable in the long term". It is against this background that we need to assess the public sector reforms that have been implemented across the African continent as from the 1980s, the focus of this special issue of *Africa Development*.

The reforms are predicated on what is generally referred to as the New Public Management (NPM). As I note in a forthcoming article, NPM refers to a practice whereby the public sector is shaped and driven by private sector ethos, and it is run along corporate sector techniques. Cost effectiveness and efficiency become the dominant considerations for how the state is run. Components of the NPM include management decentralization within the public service, downsizing and right-sizing, outsourcing of government services, commodification, public-private partnerships, performance based contract for civil servants, granting of greater autonomy to state managers, especially those that run SOEs, and establishment of autonomous agencies – some of which were made to compete among themselves – within the state. NPM also entails devolution of budgets and financial control and the rise in the use of market competition in the provision of public services as well as increasing focus on efficiency, outputs and customer orientation (Edigheji, forthcoming). Other key elements of the NPM are commercialization, decentralization and privatization. These concepts are defined in some of the articles in this volume of *Africa Development.*

The reforms are generally cast in technical terms without regard to their broad implications. It needs to be noted that the public sector reforms informed by the NPM have broader implications for our body politics, governance and development. I have argued elsewhere that the reforms recast the relationship between citizens and the state. Instead of the state being responsive to citizens, the reforms promote an agenda that makes the state responsive only to users, clients and consumers (Edigheji, forthcoming). This has broader implications for the concept of citizenship and the nature and character between citizens and the state. The concept of public goods and its beneficiaries are also recast. Public goods now means provision of goods to make the market function efficiency, and access to services (which is monetized), dependent on ability to pay. Public sector institutions have become much more profit oriented. As a result, even when governments articulate a progressive agenda, the agenda of state-owned enterprises are at discord with a developmentalist agenda. One unfortunate outcome of the public sector reforms is that inclusive development has become elusive in the continent; and so, in general, the reforms have worsened inequality in the continent.

Structure of the Journal

In the discussion of public sector reforms in Africa, scholars and development agencies tend to treat the reforms in technical terms. However, Mhone (2003:19), calls for the interogation of their philosophical and normative underpinnings. It is to the former that Paul Omoyefa dedicates his article.

Paul Omoyefa's main argument is that African leaders do not understand the philosophical basis of public reforms, which, according to him, are such that they enable western powers to encourage African leaders to generate enough funds to pay off the external debts. Omoyefa therefore concludes that these reforms are foisted by the western world on Africa.

The cognizance of the dictatorship of the donor community and the consequent lack of African ownership of some of the key reform agendas, including the public sector reforms, led to the Paris Declaration of 2005 as a new aid architecture for Africa. This is the subject of Lennart Wohlgemuth's article. The principles of the declaration require that Africa takes more responsibility for its development; aid should facilitate African ownership; donors should be aiding not dominating; donors should align their programmes to that of Africa's governments; and there should be mutual accountability between donors and the African state. Wohlgemuth expresses optimism about this new aid architecture. While this optimism might be well placed, a question that remains unanswered is whether this is accompanied by new philosophical underpinnings. I argue that if the philosophical underpinnings of the aid agenda remain the re-colonialization of Africa, it is unlikely that it will be able to resolve the African developmental challenges and would not lead to what Mhone argues should be the grand normative of public sector reforms in Africa, namely inclusive and sustainable human centred development.

One often-ignored part of development aid and the public sector reforms it engendered, which Wohlgemuth noted in his article (though in passing), is the imposition of a number of administrative rules on the public sector. What is clear is that at the same time that the donor community requires the downsizing of the public service, their workload seems to be increasing. Thus, while the state is being incapacitated, the workload of public servants is increasing. This brings to mind another important disincentive through the imposition of widespread rules on the public sector. The rules are such that they make senior servants to spend most of their days completing forms, turning them to compliance officers, and consequently having very little time to engage in strategic thinking and planning. Unable to cope with this onerous task, some senior servants have left the public service. In general, the various aspects of the public sector reforms have not fundamentally altered the performance of the African state. This is evident from the remaining articles in this volume.

Lewis Dzimbiri's article focusses on one component of the public sector reforms, namely performance management system (PMS), with Botswana as a case study. PMS places emphasis on individual contracts and performance. In this system, he argue, the emphasis is on performance, rather than on rules and regulations. Dzimbiri notes that the introduction of the PMS has

resulted in better service delivery in the country. But, unfortunately, it has also resulted in reform fatigue among public servants, in addition to other challenges that emanated from the public sector reforms in Botswana, just like most other African countries. In fact, across the continent, civil servants are so busy with the (re) introduction (re)implementation of various institutional reforms that very little time is left for formulation and implementation of comprehensive development strategies. Very few countries in the continent have industrial policy strategies that are articulated with agrarian strategies, macro-economic policy and social policy. In addition, the implementation of the PMS in Botswana also highlights one often neglected problem of public sector reforms across the continent, which is that even civil servants entrusted with the implement action of the reforms have no capacity to do so.

A similar point is made by Muriisa in his article on decentralisation in Uganda, where he notes that a major challenge of decentralization is that sub-national governments lack the capacity and personnel to exercise responsibility of service delivery. Unfortunately, the various capacity building initiatives that accompanied the introduction of the public sector reforms have not resolved the capacity crisis, which is coupled with lack of adequate funding. It needs to be noted that the discussion of PMS have to be placed on a broader context, which is the need to build developmental states in Africa. It is generally recognised that weberianness – that is meritocratic recruitments and long-term rewarding careers - are necessary institutional attributes for developmental states, which should be seen as important condition for a human centred development. PMS, with its introduction of short-term performance-based contract, undermines the latter; that is, it erodes the principle of career paths for civil servants and thus hampers the ability of Africa to construct developmental states.

In his article, William Muhumuza focuses on decentralisation in Uganda. He points out that while various reasons may have been advanced for decentralisation, the real motive for decentralization are two convergence interests: namely interests of external donors to, among other things, spread liberal values and marketization; and interests of the African political elite in self preservation and political survival – a similar point made by Omoyefa in his article. In the Uganda case, Muhumuza observes that decentralisation has been motivated, on the one hand, to ensure greater citizens participation and, on the other hand, to enhance the legitimacy of the Museveni regime as a source of political patronage. In general, he argues, decentralisation is adopted as a means of political survival. He also points out that it is important to recognise that decentralization in the continent in the last three decades is part of a neo-liberal agenda, and concludes that it has been implemented without due regards to democracy and democratic principles.

Muhumuza highlights some of the problems associated with decentralisation in Uganda. These include increased administrative cost, lack of adequate resources for local authorities to meet their developmental needs, political patronage, stifling of fiscal autonomy of local authorities and corruption. Furthermore, like all aspects of the New Public Management and the neo-liberal ideology with which it is predicated, the decentralization exercise in Uganda has achieved limited successes because it failed to take local context into consideration; and this is corroborated by Muriisa's argument that "decentralization policy comes from the response to externally determined programmes that differ from local needs". In the light of the above, Muhumuza concludes that decentralisation has not been development enhancing.

Like Muhumuza, Roberts Kabeba Muriisa in his article also focuses on decentralisation in Uganda, which he notes has been intended to improve service delivery and increase citizens participation in the development and governance processes. He argues that, to a large extent, the decentralisation process has been promoted by the World Bank. Muriisa introduces two important concepts, namely: (1) 'freedom to access', which means the freedom of the grassroots to have access to basic services, and (2) 'freedom to decide' which means that after decentralisation, people can decide what they need. Against these conceptual frameworks, he focuses on decentralisation and its impacts on efficiency. In particular, he discusses various ways in which efficiency can be measured or judged. First is allocative efficiency, which basically means that there is a match between local needs and the cost. Second is productive efficiency, meaning the services being provided and the associated costs. The third way to measure efficiency is to see whether the service is cheap and efficient. Fourth, is effectiveness, meaning the extent to which the service provided meets the original goal. Sixth is the question of accountability. Here, one moves from the balance sheet and poses some related questions, namely (a) do the services provided ensure accountability to people, and (b) are the people involved in deciding on how to spend the funds.

Thus, like Muhumuza, Muriisa points to the fact that inadequate funding has been one of the banes of decentralisation. What is clear is that, at a time when local authorities have increasing responsibilities, these have not been matched by increased funding from the national state. This is a context of considerable lack of financial autonomy by the districts, like most local government authorities across the African continent. In a similar vein, downsizing or right-sizing of the public service has been oblivious to increase in demand for services, as Muriisa shows in the case of Uganda where, though primary school enrolment has more than doubled, pupils enrolment has not been matched by increased teacher recruitment. The result is that provision

and quality of public goods suffer. Using the above as criteria to measure decentralisation in Uganda, Muriisa concludes that though it is a good policy, its implementation has not achieved the desired results. He then proposes measures that need to be taken for decentralization to achieve its desired result of enhanced provisions of service delivery, central to which is improving funding to local councils and establishment of accountability mechanisms.

Honest Prosper Ngowi's article focuses on another component of the public sector reforms, namely privatization. This focus is particularly important because it represents one of the most significant expressions of neo-liberalism to reduce the role of the state in development. In addition to his analysis of privatisation in the Tanzanian context, Ngowi introduces another important concept, which he terms 'agentification' and by which executive agencies are established to undertake a particular function or a particular service delivery task that are considered non-core to the public service. Agentification correlates with what Mkandawire (2007) refers to as institutional mono-tasking, that is, requiring institutions that could perform multiple development tasks to undertake just one task. This agentification or institutional mono-tasking, as Ngowi shows in his analysis of the Tanzanian case, has adverse impact on the capacity of the public sector in particular, and the state in general, to provide public goods to citizens. He provides a historical context of the subject matter. According to him, the public sector in Tanzania as from 1967 was responsible for the provision of services to citizens. However, as from the mid-1980s, due to privatisation and agentification, the role of the public sector in service provision has considerably diminished. He notes that 17 areas have been privatised, including estate and building, office, executive, clerical and professional services.

Ngowi highlights some of the challenges of privatisation, which include the infancy of the Tanzanian private sector, which has not enabled it to benefit from the privatisation process; the local private sector's lack of capacity and finance to take advantage of the process; and a lack of understanding by the public of privatisation, and its consequent resistance to it. In the context of the highly informalised infant industry, the main beneficiaries of privatization in Tanzania have been foreign firms. This supports the earlier assertion, by Omoyefa, that the public sector reforms are intended to re-colonise the continent.

Ngowi's article also discusses the agentification of the public sector. This means the use of executive agencies to deliver public services. Presently, there are 20 executive agencies, out of 24 ministries, that undertake a range of public services. But one problem with agentification is the fragmentation of the public sector and, consequently the erosion of the state's capacity. In addition, as Mkandawire correctly observes, agentification leads to institutional

dualism because these special agencies are better resourced compared to the normal bureaucracy of other state agencies. As a result, not only do officials in the latter have a sense of superiority but, as Ngowi noted, the dichotomy leads to brain-drain from the normal bureaucracy to these agencies. Another problem of the public sector reforms which Ngowi correctly identifies, with respect to agentification in Tanzania (which is also applicable to the private-public partnership), is the ability of the state to monitor the performance of the private partner/agent. In the context of low state capacity that has been partly brought about by the reforms, the African state has not been able to ensure that the private agents/partners honour their various agreements. In such a situation, the quality of services and access to them are highly circumscribed. In spite of these shortcomings, the author highlights some positive implications of agentification. In conclusion, he argued that both privatisation and agentification need to be properly managed, and calls for the creation of a better environment to achieve the desired results of privatisation and, in particular, agentification which, he maintains, requires further study.

In his own article on privatization, Kenneth Nyangena uses water and sanitation services in Kenya as a case study. He notes that privatisation was a major policy tool in the 1980s, aimed to improve access to water and sanitation. However, by the 1990s, this goal had not been realised. Subsequently, there was a shift in paradigms, as local authorities began to focus on commercial-isation. This implied that they established companies that were run purely on commercial basis, which included the commercialisation of water and sanitation. Nyangena also focuses on the shortcomings and challenges of privatisation in Kenya, namely:

(a) lack of a clear policy for privatisation and the management of water;
(b) lack of proper definition of the roles of different levels of government;
(c) lack of resources;
(d) bad management;
(e) lack of linkages between central government and CSOs in the delivery of water;
(f) lack of stakeholder participation in the management of water and sanitation; and
(g) the concern of autonomous local authorities companies for profits than for social goals, thereby violating the social contract between the state and its citizens.

Conclusion

The failure of various reforms so far embarked upon in Africa, as high-lighted in the various articles in this special issue of *Africa Development*; and the current global economic crisis, which has considerably discredited the

paradigm in which the reforms are predicated, calls for a new paradigm and a new approach to public sector reforms. The work of Mhone laid an important foundation for a re-think of public sector reforms and a re-tooling of the state in Africa. As he rightly argues, developmentalism has to be the grand normative of any public sector reform agenda in the continent, and it requires a developmental state, which has to promote both procedural and substantive democracy. This is a good proposition. However, further research is required to tease out the challenge that might arise from the pursuit of a developmentalist agenda in the continent.

Needless to say that the current global economic crisis offers an opportunity for the implementation of a developmentalist goal, without the African state being punished by global markets. In addition, the donor community will have little creditability to dissuade African states from pursuing such a course, given the fact that their own governments have recently become more interventionist. But more importantly, the African people are yearning for developmentalism.

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Public Sector Reforms In Africa: A Philosophical Re-Thinking

Paul Sunday Omoyefa*

Abstract

Public sector reform (PSR) has been quite popular in African. However, the inadequate understanding of the philosophical basis of the reforms has led to many African countries to equating PSR with privatization and commercialization of public enterprises, downsizing of the public service workforce and the war on corruption. While many African countries are pursuing with the necessary vigour these policies, which were induced by former colonial masters and so-called development agencies, there has been little or no success as compared with the pre-PSR era. The aim of this paper is to bring out, in clear terms, the fact that the present PSR cannot achieve success because of the threat of sustaining continued control of the African economies and policies by the Breton Woods institutions, the sale of public enterprises to multinational companies, the migration of the best African brains to Europe and America, corruption and neo-colonialism. In essence, this paper advocates a philosophical re-thinking of PSR. This will start with reforming the minds of African leaders to reform the body politic. This study shows that PSR in Africa that fail to take note of the ethical and communal values and peculiar situations of various African countries will definitely fail.

Résumé

La réforme du secteur public (RSP) connait une grande popularité dans les pays africains. Cependant, la mauvaise compréhension de la base philosophique des réforme*a conduit de nombreux pays africains à assimiler la RSP à la privatisation et la commercialisation des entreprises publiques, la réduction des effectifs de la fonction publique et la guerre contre la corruption. Bien que de nombreux pays africains poursuivent* avec la vigueur nécessaire ces politiques qui ont été induites à la fois par leurs anciens maîtres coloniaux et leurs supposés alliés en matière d'affaires internationales, il y'a eu peu ou pas de succès par

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rapport à l'ère pré-RSP. Ainsi, l'objectif de cet article est de mettre en évidence, en termes clairs, que la présente RSP renforce le contrôle des économies et des politiques africaines par les institutions de Bretton Woods, la liquidation des entreprises publiques au profit des entreprises multinationales, l'émigration des meilleurs cerveaux africains vers l'Europe et l'Amérique, la corruption et le néo-colonialisme. Ce document préconise essentiellement une nouvelle réflexion philosophique sur la RSP. Celle-ci va commencer avec la réforme de l'esprit des dirigeants africains pour réformer le corps politique. L'étude montre que la RSP en Afrique qui ne tient pas compte de l'éthique, des valeurs communes et des situations particulières des différents pays africains, est vouée à l'échec.

Introduction

Public sector reform (PSR) is now a household name in Africa, and almost all African countries are caught in its web. Good governance and efficient public administration are regarded as wishful thinking without PSR. Also, accountability, transparency and a merit-driven public service are thought be unachievable except where PSR programmes are drawn up. Efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of government to the yearnings of its citizens are likewise seen as only to be gauged through the lenses of PSR. African governments are churning out policies regardless of their relevance and impact on their people provided these policies are part of the new public sector management in the name of PSR. The international donor agencies such as World Bank, UNDP, OECD and some developed nations are not left out in the African mania for public sector reform. In fact, the idea of PSR is suggested and imposed on the African countries by those external interests. This is done, not out of altruism towards the African polity and economy, but as a way of furthering what Mukandala (2000) calls 'continued domination of the colonial logic' in every aspect of the African economies. To stress the importance attached to this agenda, the World Bank created a fully fledged Public Sector Group in 1997. A 12-member Public Sector Board, headed by a top-flight director at the bank's headquarters, governs this group. Its major role is to help the governments of donor and loan-recipient countries achieve efficiency and accountability in their public sector institutions.

While the African leaders innocently and ignorantly accepted the externally induced programmes of reform in their public sector institutions as a way of bettering the lives of their citizens, the developed countries that are driving the force of these donor agencies are interested in recolonizing African countries through the back door. It is a subtle form of neo-colonialism and consequent perpetual slavery. So, the two parties are working at cross-purposes, with different agendas, different minds, different focuses and different motives while operating on the same platform and policies.

This paper is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Its message is that we approached PSR wrongly in years past. Much literature was devoted to providing the parameters for carrying out successful PSR, but seldom was the need for PSR in Africa in the first instance questioned; and even when there was felt to be a need for PSR, its philosophical foundation was not examined.

This paper deviates from previous approaches. Here, we are looking at the foundational existence of PSR through the lens of philosophy; for it is when we are sure of the philosophical foundation of PSR that we can know whether there is need for reform in the first instance or not. This paper therefore looks at PSR in a meaningful context. This is important as many scholars do not appreciate the fact that the public sector cannot be divorced from the private sector. This paper also considers the historical development of PSR in Africa and the philosophy behind the current ubiquitous wave of reform in the continent. It examines how African leaders see PSR, for the way they see it is different from the way the donor agencies see it, and this accounts for the monumental failure of PSR. The final part of the paper offers suggestions on how African countries can free themselves from the doldrums of current PSR.

Public Sector Reform: Definition and Purpose

While there have been different views and definitions of PSR, many people and researchers see it as the attempt by governments to change ways of doing things. That is why Schacter (2000) defines PSR as the 'strengthening the way the public sector is managed'. The presupposition is that things are not properly managed in the public sector, that unnecessary wastage has crept into the ways the public sector is being run, and that too many people are doing poorly what fewer people can do efficiently. So, changes from the old way of doing things must take place. PSR calls for a new public management style of achieving results in place of the traditional ways of doing things. To this end, there has emerged a deliberate policy as well as action to change organizational structures, processes and people's behaviour in an attempt to improve government administrative machinery for performance at optimal level. The overall goal is excellence in performance in public sector management. Since reform means an improvement in something, a change for the better as a way of correcting wrongdoing or defects in a system; and as the public sector 'can be understood to be the key apparatus for the execution of the functions of the state or government' (Mhone 2003:12), then PSR is the total overhauling of government administrative machinery with the aim of injecting real effectiveness, efficiency, hard-core competence and financial prudence into the running of the public sector. This

rebranding of the public sector is targeted to meet the demands of a rapidly improving and changing global socio-political environment.

When we mention PSR, it is often the case that many researchers have a myopic view of it as confined within the government administrative machinery. It goes beyond that. For meaningful PSR, both the private sector and the civil populace have to be embedded in it. The tripod cannot be separated if any meaningful changes are to take place in a country. For it is an incontrovertible fact that the need for reform in the public sector derives its impetus from the perceived success of the private sector. Also, the citizens, who constitute the end users of the products of the reform, are driving both the public and private sectors. In essence, what would have been an appropriate name for public sector reform is 'body politic reform'. The wrong understanding of the foundational meaning of PSR accounts for the erecting of a defective edifice for public reform programmes.

The Purpose of Public Sector Reform

PSR was initiated against the background that governments required a departure from the traditional methods of administration and the urgent need for a renewed public sector to propel government in its quest for sustainable socio-economic, political and technological development. So, there was a need for structural re-engineering of the public sector with the infusion of new values of professionalism, accountability, responsiveness and a focused sense of mission for maximum efficiency in the economy.

Based on the above, the main objectives of PSR are as follows:

1. To achieve better delivery of the basic public services that affect living standards of the poor (World Bank 2000:ch. 6).
2. To create a climate conducive to private sector development (World Bank 1997:103).
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 as well (Mhone 2003:10).

From the above, we see that PSR aims at institutional restructuring of the public sector, with the application of principles obtainable in the private sector as a basis for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions. Arising from this wrong notion of how the public sector should be run and managed is that government, which ought to be in service to the people, is now being seen as a profit-making institution to be driven by market forces. Thomas (2000:136) corroborates this view when he says that only government institutions 'associated with higher income growth'

are regarded as efficient and effective. In essence, PSR in Africa is carried out with the mindset of seeing government as a profit-making enterprise rather than in service to the people. In fact, that is why we see African leaders talking about a bloated civil service, which needs to be downsized, and the uncontrollable craze to privatize and commercialize all government enterprises.

Understanding Current Public Sector Reform in Africa

It is imperative for us to know how PSR enters the governance of African countries. This will help us appreciate the motives of the international donor agencies in conscripting African countries to embrace PSR. According to Mhone (2003:12) 'the call for comprehensive public sector reform was first articulated in the World Bank's 1981 report entitled *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (also known as the Berg Report)'. The focus of the Berg Report is economic growth and development in Africa. The report noted that African economies were witnessing retrogression rather than accelerated growth, and then identified four problem areas that were obstacles to economic growth in Africa.

These problem areas, according to Mhone, were as follows. The first was poor macroeconomic management in the form of persistent fiscal deficits, negative interest rates, price inflation and controlled exchange rates. The second concerned an over-extended public sector in which ubiquitous parastatals (such as marketing boards, nationalized import substitution industries and so on) were seen to be inefficient entities that squandered resources, while also distorting prices insofar as they had the mandate to control and regulate certain markets seen as strategic by governments. The third set of problems related to management of the trade regime, which was seen to militate against free trade internationally through high rates of protection and exchange rates that overvalued local currencies. A fourth set of problems concerned the fact that many governments that claimed to be socialist were spending too much money on public service itself as a guarantor of employment, on social services and other consumption-related expenditures, which were seen as unsuitable in the long term, especially when the prospects of the growth were dim in the global environment at the time (Mhone 2003:12-13).

The reason for itemising these factors militating against African economic growth, which PSR is intended to tackle, is to show clearly that the main philosophy behind current PSR in Africa is the vested economic interest of the international donor agencies, and especially the World Bank.

We can see that PSR was not designed to tackle malfunctioning of the public sector; it was not meant to evolve a blueprint for the infrastructural development of African states; and neither was it meant to develop the

abundant human resources of the continent. Rather, it was an accidental policy derived by the World Bank and UNDP to protect their loans and the credit facilities granted to African countries. PSR was driven by the idea of

> a call to arms for advancing a new agenda of development assistance, the perception being that financial or technical assistance would not be put to good use until such concepts as transparency and accountability, due process, probity and efficiency were institutionalised in the systems of government of recipient countries (UN 2005).

In essence, the international donor agencies induced African countries to embark on PSR for the following reasons:

1. PSR would enable African countries to generate enough funds to service the debts they owed to international financial institutions. Through PSR, many state agencies, parastatals and enterprises were commercialized. This was meant to yield more money to the government purse – not to provide infrastructural facilities for the citizen, but to make government financially buoyant enough to continue servicing debts and credit facilities from the World Bank, IMF as well as Paris and London clubs. These institutions are of the view that insolvency on the part of the African governments would turn their credit facilities into bad debts. With PSR, they impressed on African governments the need for both a Debt Management Office and a Due Process Office to monitor the income and expenditure of government for their own purpose. In some cases, they would impose one of their own at the World Bank on African leaders either as the Minister of Finance or Chief Economic Adviser. In fact, this is the trend in most African countries nowadays.

2. Also, with the help of PSR, privatization has become the order of the day in Africa. Many state-owned enterprises, corporations and companies are privatized in the interests of core investors. The core investors require huge finance to buy up the controlling shares of the privatized companies. The international financial institutions are aware of this fact, which would shut out local players with little financial capability. At the end of the day, multinational companies with their headquarters in Europe and America, would buy up those privatized companies. Even when few Africans have the financial capability, emphasis would be shifted to technical expertise, which would give foreign companies an edge over the indigenous companies. In this regard, PSR is meant to empower foreign nationals and to help multinational companies have total control of all the sectors of African economy.

3. PSR is another subtle way for the developed countries to make incursions into African armed forces and national security for their selfish economic ends. In the name of reform, the developed countries suggest the need for professionalism in the armed forces of African countries. They offer appropriate technical assistance by bringing their officers to train local officers. In the process, they learn the strength and weaknesses of African armed forces, while also condemning these forces' current military hardware as outmoded and urging replacements to be supplied by the so-called developed countries. By this means, they establish ready-made markets for their manufactured arms and ammunition and promote their own economic interest.

4. Moreover, through PSR, wholly supervised by the international financial institutions and their collaborators, the concept of downsizing and rightsizing creep into the civil service. Through the exercise the best brains in the continent are identified and poached away to Europe and America to help develop their own economies at the expense of African economies. That is why it is so difficult to stem the trend of the brain drain now pillaging African countries.

It is apparent from the above that the philosophy behind current PSR in Africa is the furthering of the economic interests of the developed countries and the international donor agencies. The important question at this juncture is: Do African leaders realize this philosophical basis of PSR? How do they think of the reforms? This will be addressed in the next section of this paper.

How Do African Leaders Perceive Public Sector Reform?

Almost all African leaders see PSR in terms of initiated actions to change or better the existing situation in public policies. That is why Schacter (2000) sees PSR as synonymous with government. In the opinion of Schacter, like many African leaders and to some extent some scholars, PSR starts with government action and also ends with government. This is a wrong notion of PSR, which has contributed in no small measure to its failure in practice.

PSR should be seen in terms of an idea, initiated actions and, most importantly, the consequences of the actions. The consequences themselves are multifaceted in the sense of a minimal impact on government itself, a greater impact on the private sector and the greatest impact on the people. This is so because whatever actions initiated by government directly affect the private sector, which is the engine room and driving force of many economies. Furthermore, the general populace bears the brunt of government policies. In essence, it is the consequence that holds the key to the success of any reform and not the actions.

It is the myopic conception of PSR as an action alone that detaches government completely from the populace. What government calls PSR is actually the changing and swapping of policies, not for the betterment of the governed but for the donor agencies and countries. African leaders have forgotten the saying that 'there is no free lunch in Freetown'. The free market economy being preached by the donor agencies and international financial institutions does not allow doing business without making profit. Theirs is a minimum effort with a maximum profit. So, there are no common and harmonized objectives between African leaders who are to implement the reform and their so-called friends, that is, the international financial institutions who imposed the reform on them. African leaders erroneously think that PSR will lead to improving the well-being of their citizens while the international financial and donors agencies see it as a way of finding outlets for their goods and services, and thereby dominating the economies of African countries. In clear terms, the African leaders see PSR in the following ways.

African leaders regard PSR in term of privatization of government enterprises. This is the selling of government-owned enterprises and companies to private individuals and companies. The driving force of privatization all over the world is economic interest. According to Turner (1998), 'the basic economic argument in favour of privatisation is that it leads to more cost-efficient service for consumers, relieves government of expenditure burdens and reduces corruption'. As a result of privatization, many of the enterprises that represent the national pride of African countries have been sold off to multinational companies. A classic example is the African aviation industries. At present, few African countries have national carriers, the others having been privatized and bought by European and American nationals. The irony of the situation is that those countries at the forefront of privatization in Africa still have own their national carriers functioning well. We have British Airways, KLM for Netherlands, Lufthansa for Germany, Iberia for Spain, Air France, etc., but where is Nigeria Airways, Senegal Airways, Cameroon Airways and so on? Even the few existing national carriers in Africa such as Air Malawi, Air Tanzania, Air Mauritius, Air Angola and Air Gabon are meant to serve as feeders to the major airlines that ply European and American routes. These African national carriers are not certified to fly to major international airports. Rather, they are required to fly passengers from their various countries to South Africa, Nairobi, Lagos or Dakar from where the other European and American airlines take them to different parts of the world.

The argument that privatization would reduce corruption is also defective. Experiences have shown that it has institutionalized corruption into the body

politic more than before. Turner rightly captures the real situation of things in these words:

> The process of privatisation creates new possibilities for corruption in the determination of the price paid for the enterprise, the terms of the privatisation agreement and the nature of the bidding arrangements. The possibility exists that favoured individuals and companies may acquire valuable assets at below-market prices. The winners would be the public officials who organized the deals and the new owner (Turner 1998:1).

Recent revelations concerning the privatization programme in Nigeria confirm this assessment. Port Harcourt and Kaduna refineries and petrochemicals were alleged to have been offered to Blue Star Company at give-away prices lower than the real worth of these entities. The outcry that followed and the subsequent withdrawal of the company attested to this fact. The same fate befell the former Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL), the country's only national operator, which was grossly undervalued before it was sold to Transcorp Plc, a company in which many Nigerian top government officials are shareholders.

The international agencies and developed countries have impressed on African leaders that government should not be seen as Father Christmas, rendering selfless service to the people. Rather, government should be seen to be creating wealth like any profit-making organization. To this end, African leaders view PSR as commercialization of all state-owned enterprises so as to make the required profit. Consequently, every sector of the economy is commercialized in the drive towards new public sector management. Water, electricity, health, education, agriculture, etc., are all commercialized in African countries whereas these services are heavily subsidized in the developed countries. As noted under privatization, commercialization also encourages official corruption rather than controlling it. With privatization and commercialization, government deliberately withdraws from direct provision of certain essential services and only concerns itself with the establishment of the bodies to control activities. Experience in this regard has shown the regulatory bodies being interested more in the number of tours made in the name of monitoring and evaluation than performing the actual function of qualitative, efficient and effective regulation.

African leaders also see PSR in terms of the downsizing of the national public workforce. The misconception is that government size is becoming bloated with the attendant deep cuts in national financial resources and little to show in terms of service delivery. The compelling goal here is to cut down on government expenditure, and the belief is that once the downsizing of the public service is carried out, government would use the excess of

money on the wage bill to carry out other meaningful projects. Just like the privatization and commercialization programmes, the idea of downsizing is based on a wrong presupposition. Experience has also shown that downsizing has never achieved the desired objectives. Many professionals and well-trained personnel are retrenched to pave the way for mediocre replacements who have godfathers in the system. At the end of the day, the considerable resources spent in training these professionals would go down the drain. The multinational companies, who have spent nothing on them, would now enjoy their services. The loss of the public sector would become the gain of the private sector. Most of the services being rendered by the retrenched workers would be outsourced to companies owned by top government officials. Here, we have another facet of corruption in the body politic.

Arising from the above, it is clear to a discerning mind that African leaders accepted the induced PSR without realizing the facts behind it. They thought it would give their countries a great social, economic and political leap forward. However, it was meant to pauperize their economies the more, it was meant to recolonize them and it was meant for their perpetual domination by the so-called developed countries. These discordant objectives account for the lion's share of the failure of PSR in Africa. Now we turn to the consequences of these disparate goals of the international financial institutions and African leaders with regard to PSR in Africa.

Public Sector Reform in Africa: What Went Wrong

According to the evaluation carried out by World Bank with regard to its programmes in PSR in Africa, a report of 1999 shows that only one-third of the Bank's projects had produced a satisfactory result. The report goes further to say that the sustainability of this one-third was not guaranteed (World Bank 1999). From this, it is clear that PSR in Africa has achieved little or nothing, despite the colossal investment in terms of finance and valuable manpower as well as loss in terms of integrity, cultural heritage and value system on the part of African countries. Even when the World Bank (2000:100) reported that PSR had 'great potential to reduce poverty', the Bank was displaying a false sense of security, having failed to realize that a reform without roots in the culture and belief of the people would definitely fail. No wonder that PSR in Africa has, in reality, increased poverty levels among people instead of reducing it, as envisaged by the World Bank.

The desired positive results from PSR in Africa could not be achieved for the following reasons:

1. The World Bank Report (2000a) and Schacter (2000a) lay the failure of public sector reform at the doorstep of the donor agencies, which

they accused of employing a technocratic approach to PSR. According to Schacter, this technocratic approach is based on a blueprint solution in which there is an assumption that public sector reform problems and their solutions could be fully specified in advance, and that projects could be fully defined at the outset and implemented on a predictable timetable, over a fixed period' (Schacter 2000:7). In essence, the concept, formulation and execution of PSR in Africa had been done in the cosy offices of the donor agencies far away in Europe and America for delivery on African soil. The fact that what they thought to be the situation is quite different from the actual realities on ground accounts for the monumental failure of PSR in Africa.

2. Another important factor responsible for the failure of PSR in Africa is the non-provision for participation of locals at the leadership level of the reform. This problem is a by-product of the first one. The donor agencies and the international financial agencies completely shut out locals both in the leadership and ownership of the PSR agenda. They are of the view that the required technical expertise, leadership qualities and financial capacity to carry out the reform can only be provided by them. For them, the local bureaucratic and political leadership are too inefficient and corrupt to be actively involved in the reform. This notion is anchored on a false premise that 'outsiders can build state capacity despite the lack of effective internal demand for more capable governments' (Brautigam 1996:99). While it is true that designing and managing a PSR programme requires a high level of administrative capacity, the fact cannot be denied that it is not only the so-called foreign experts who are endowed with high administrative acumen and technical know-how.

3. The international donor agencies and financial institutions fail to realize that it is not all developing countries as known in Africa that necessarily require reform of their public sectors. The very idea of reform means the existing situation is not right and requires change for better. However, many countries in Africa, such as Swaziland, Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya, have public sectors that are well managed at present, even without the much-touted PSR. In these countries, there are possibilities for dislocation in their system if PSR is introduced. So, the idea that every developing country must undergo PSR is erroneous. The attendant failure of PSR in Africa can therefore be traced to the forceful introduction of the reform to countries that did not need it in the first instance.

4. Also, even where PSR is desirable, both the African leaders who are eager to embrace it and their allies in the developed countries fail to realize that PSR has a long gestation period for PSR before it can have a meaningful impact on the economy. For instance, the PSR carried out in Great Britain in 1854 took 30 years to achieve the desired result (Schacter 2000). However, the reverse is the case now. Driven by their selfish economic motives and coupled with the ignorance on the part of African leaders, the donor agencies expect the current PSR in Africa to yield the desired result in a shortest possible period. This has in no small measure affected the success of PSR in Africa.

5. The failure to take into consideration the ethical and communal values and peculiar situations in various African countries by the promoters of PSR has dealt a devastating blow to the reform agenda; for, it is quite difficult to change people overnight from their long-established ways of doing things as well as their cherished cultural beliefs. One does not require a soothsayer to know that there is a need for a fundamental restructuring of African thought with regard to its public sector reform. The earlier this is done done the better, so as to avoid further damage to the system.

Public Sector Reform in Africa: Towards a Philosophical Re-thinking

Just as intense training of the body changes the body outlook, it is the intense training of the mind that will definitely give it a new orientation. In the same manner, the basic and fundamental approach of Africa to the reform in its public sector is the reform of the minds of African leaders. This is highly important because it is only a reformed mind than can reform the body politic. In this endeavour, African leaders must wake up from their intellectual slumber to ask themselves some simple but challenging questions. First, why is it that PSR in Africa heavily depends on donor agencies and the initiatives of the developed countries? Secondly, do African leaders genuinely understand the philosophy behind this externally imposed reform? Thirdly, does the designing and implementation of the reform fit into the cultural ethos and values of Africa? Fourthly, must reform be carried out just in the name of reform, even when it is undesirable? Fifthly, do not African leaders think that reforming themselves from their old ways to render quality service to their people is the necessary reform required? These and other pertinent questions could set in motion the necessary intellectual renewal towards what PSR represents.

So, for a genuine philosophical re-thinking of PSR, the following issues must be given serious consideration:

1. African countries require institutional leadership that can produce a strong united government built on what Jocelyne Bourgon, the former head of the Canadian Public Service, called 'a common mission, a common sense of purpose and common values' (Bourgon 2002). The issue of institutional leadership is vital to the overall development of Africa. As the World Bank noted: 'underlying the litany of Africa's development problems is a crisis of governance. By governance is meant the exercise of power to manage a nation's affairs' (World Bank 1989:60).This type of leadership would know what it requires to offer purposeful leadership to their countries. They will not be leaders imposed on their people by the developed countries. The process of bringing them to power has to be transparent. They must be able to appreciate the peculiarities of their situations as different from what is appropriate in another country. This type of leadership must have a reformed mind, which knows that not everything introduced by the developed countries and international donor agencies would be beneficial. Their minds must also be reformed from corrupt ways of doing things. They must realize that ill-gotten wealth would not give them lasting peace. Rather, they must see government as service to the people, in which they use their native wisdom in conjunction with some elements of contemporary appeals to offer quality service to the people, just as Nelson Mandela and Julius Nyerere did. So, African countries should redirect their attention first to institutionalizing selfless and purposeful leadership before talking about PSR. If this is achieved, government apparatuses would be managed well enough to deliver the necessary public goods that would render reform in the public sector irrelevant or minimal.

2. Where PSR is absolutely necessary, the African leaders should jettison the idea of accepting in full its presentation by the donor agencies and their counterparts in the international financial institutions. Instead, consideration should be given to how the overall package of PSR would work in their countries. It had been introduced earlier to other developing countries outside Africa. Report had it that countries in Oceania, especially Australia and New Zealand, who embraced PSR were quick to realize some of the salient virtues of their traditional administration as different from those embedded in the imported PSR. These cherished virtues were inculcated in their own PSR; so, it was not total acceptance of the already conceptualized and mechanized

PSR programme handed down to them by the donor agencies. Also, some East Asian countries such as Malaysia and Singapore accepted certain principles of the imported PSR while rejecting others. For instance, they accepted the concept of total quality management (TQM), which they injected into their public administration, but went for outright rejection of commercialization of their public utilities (Pollitt and Boukaert 2000). All these choices were made after giving consideration to their unique socio-cultural and ethical values. The result was a strong economy and stable polity. On the other hand, African countries wholly accepted the reform packages without thought and consideration of their socio-cultural milieu and the particular needs of their citizens. In essence, there is a need for the reorientation of African leaders who believe that whatever comes from the developed countries and a donor agency is perfect and fault-free.

3. There is also a need to exploit indigenous knowledge in carrying out any required reform in the public sector. It has always been a case of the donor agencies relying on their own foreign technical expertise and public management wizardry in implementing reform agenda in the African public sector. They have forgotten that PSR 'is a social and political phenomenon driven by human behaviour and local circumstances' (Schacter 2000:7). So, for a meaningful and impact felt reform to be successfully carried out, it must take into consideration the behavioural pattern, the social context as well as the cultural milieu of the people whom the reform is meant for, together with the vehicle of the reform, that is, the dramatis personae. There must be a departure from the situation whereby consideration is never given to the would-be recipient of the outcome of the reform and no inputs into the reform policy formulation by local technocrats and policy-makers are permitted. Professor Mhone suggested as much when he wrote that 'there is a need to indigenise the notion and practice of governance by exploiting and adapting indigenous knowledge systems, particularly those prevailing in non-modern sectors of African society by which the majority of African people live and abide (Mhone 2003:18). When governance is indigenized, it will enable people to understand the purpose of government, and this would reduce dislocation in the system, which usually accompanies PSR.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt to redirect African thought to the concept of PSR. It is not meant to disparage whatever might be genuine attempts by the developed countries to render developmental assistance to the developing coun-

tries, especially Africa. Also, the paper is not meant to classify all assistance from the donor agencies as a Greek gift. Rather, the main objective has been to expose the taproot of the failure of PSR in Africa so as to find a lasting solution to it.

What we have done in this paper is to show that current public sector reform in Africa is completely detached from the people whose living standards the reform is meant to improve. Utilitarianism remains the ethical standard upon which this type of reform should be based. The maxim of utilitarianism is 'the greatest happiness and good for the greatest number of people'. This has not been the case with the reform in the African public sector where public good is traded off for selfish interest. The consequences of our public policies and programmes should first be considered before the action is carried out. This is what this paper advocates.

The fact cannot be denied that the current faulty public sector reform in Africa has its own advantages. For one, it awakens the consciousness of people to how responsible governance can be achieved. Not that alone, public sector reform lays emphasis on government that is 'open and responsive to civil society, more accountable and better regulated by external watchdogs and the law' (World Bank 1994). Citizens are being regarded as stakeholders in governance rather than onlookers fitted with shock absorbers to accept whatever policies are churned out by the political leadership. However, the benefit of the current effort is insignificant compared to the retardation that it has brought to the socio-economic and political lives of African citizens, hence the need for a philosophical re-thinking that this paper calls for.

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Can Africa Make Use of the New Aid Architecture?

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Abstract

In 2005, an agreement was reached in Paris between a large number of donor countries and institutions and recipient countries on how to make aid more efficient. This new agreement, called the Paris Declaration, if it is handled rightly, can open up increased ownership of their development agenda for the recipient countries. The agreement is in itself nothing new – it contains ingredients that had been discussed since the 1970s and agreed upon a number of times. The newness is that a number of recipient countries were active in developing the underlying concepts and that there is the opportunity, for those who can take it, of seizing the initiative in the development dialogue. This article argues that the agreement will not lead to automatic improvement but will require the active participation of the host countries.

Résumé

En 2005, un accord a été conclu à Paris entre un grand nombre de pays donateurs, des bailleurs de fonds et des pays bénéficiaires sur la manière de rendre l'aide plus efficace. Ce nouvel accord, appelé la Déclaration de Paris, si elle est correctement mise en œuvre, peut amener les pays bénéficiaires à s'approprier davantage leurs programmes. L'accord en soi n'est pas une nouveauté. Il contient des éléments qui ont fait l'objet de discussions depuis les années 1970 et convenus à plusieurs reprises. La nouveauté est qu'un certain nombre de pays bénéficiaires ont été actifs dans l'élaboration des concepts sous-jacents, et qu'il existe une opportunité, pour ceux qui peuvent en profiter, de saisir l'initiative dans le dialogue sur le développement. Cet article défend que cet accord ne conduira pas à des améliorations automatiques, mais qu'il nécessitera la participation active des pays d'accueil.

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The Swedish Case

That this development is far from new will be illustrated by the Swedish discourse during the 1990s. In October 1996, the Swedish government set up a working group in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with the task of drawing up proposals for 'a new Swedish policy towards Africa'. The expectation was that the report would serve as a basis for a new, more grounded and relevant Swedish Africa policy, which would represent a departure from previous efforts at cooperation.

To elicit ideas and experience from Africa itself, the working group arranged two conferences, attended mainly by African delegates. The first took place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in January 1997 under the auspices of the African Development Bank and the Nordic Africa Institute. This dealt with the African development debate in relation to four themes: (1) Africa's democratic culture, including gender equality, security and conflict management; (2) Africa in the international economy; (3) Africa's aid dependency and prospects for changed relations between Africa and other countries; and (4) relations between Sweden and Africa – current situation and future potential (Olukoshi and Wohlgemuth 1998).

Based on the conferences, as well as on substantial and comprehensive consultations among relevant and interested parties in Sweden, the working group published a report in August 1997 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 1997), which in turn was developed into a Government white paper, discussed and approved by Parliament in June 1998 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 1997/98). The result is summarised by the working group as being that the overall objective of Sweden's Africa policy should be 'to support processes of change under African control that involve sustainable improvements in welfare for the majority of citizens and consolidation of their democratic influence'. To that, they added two supplementary objectives closely linked to the main one: 'to strengthen the long-term contacts between Sweden and African nations and societies' and 'to promote a strong African role in the international community' ((Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 1997).

The objectives as described above contain both a qualitative aspect based on value judgements and a more practical side requiring a number of concrete actions. The first part was deliberated upon in some detail by the then State Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Mats Karlsson, responsible for Development Cooperation, in the following manner:

> If Africans are again to become the subjects of their destiny, and not the object of somebody else's design, and if we are ever to approach equality in the still unequal relations between Africa and the world, then it is the capacity of African societies, their governments and people, to analyse, choose and shape that must be strengthened. [...]

> Africa's partners have not yet provided a coherent response on the positive changes unfolding on the continent. […] This time around, the response cannot come from them alone. This time, the response must intrinsically build on the actions taken and answers given by African societies. More than ever, Africa's friends need to listen and reflect on what is actually said and done in Africa. […]

> Everybody speaks about *partnership*, but what does it mean? In my view there are both qualitative and methodological aspects to it (Kifle et al. 1997).

Karlsson then lists the aspects he sees as crucial and which later were introduced into the Government bill, as follows:

- A basic attitude relating to sustainability and long-termism. There is need for a real change of attitude. No partnership can thrive or survive without respect for the other.
- Openness and clarity concerning the values and interests that govern cooperation. You cannot engage in a partnership without sharing values.
- An increased element of management by objectives and result orientation of aid, instead of a multitude of predetermined conditions.
- A humble, listening attitude with respect for African assumption of responsibility and awareness of the local environment.
- Clarity of resource commitments, payments and reporting principles.
- Desire for coordination among the donors (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 1997/98).

In addition to these qualitative aspects of partnership, the Government Bill also added the following necessary changes to be made to partnership modalities (comments made by the author):

- African leadership and ownership, for example, holding consultative meetings to coordinate donors in the capitals of recipient partners.
- Improved local backing and participation. There must be respect for open political debate, the role of parliament, consultation with private enterprise and civil society.
- Improved coordination. Effective African ownership requires good donor coordination, preferably under the management of the recipient countries.
- Well-developed sectoral and budgetary support, making the number of interactions with donors as small as possible and thereby manageable for the recipient.
- Simplified procedures, minimising the numbers of reporting systems, procurement requirements, payments procedures, accounting routines, etc.

- Contractual clarity and transparency.
- Increased coherence between different areas of policy. Behind this term are hidden scores of issues with tremendous long-term implications. It is not just the well-known trade and debt issues, but much else that relates to everything from peace and to environment, migration and the many issues that enable economic integration globally.
- Rewards for progress.
- Extraordinary debt-relief inputs for certain countries (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden 1997/98).

But what does then the new partnership actually lead to in practice? The discussions centred on that question, as did the papers presented and also the final report. The most interesting inputs were made by the African scholars and practitioners participating in the process. They were very clear on their desire and demand for a 'substantial' change in the relationship between the countries in the North and Africa, which concerns major geopolitical questions as well as the behaviour in the day-to-day relationship when it comes to bilateral affairs. The discussion concentrated on the latter and some concrete proposals were made. The major point they made is so self-evident but so difficult to implement in practice, namely, that all agreements between the parties in the North and the South should always be proceeded by a *real negotiation* where both parties give and take and no one dictates for the other. This is a new but more concrete way of expressing ownership.

After all the discussions and confrontations during the period of the study, it is my very strong opinion that Africans will not expect to be treated in the future as they presently are in their bilateral relationships. Adebayo Olukoshi expresses this succinctly in his syntheses of the presentation made on partnership at the Abidjan conference as follows:

> As the 20th century draws to a close, there is a new generation which is emerging out of the ashes of crisis and decline in Africa. It is a self-assured generation that is prepared to engage the world on equal terms. Its faith in the continent is deep-rooted and its determination to make Africa a home of which Africans can be proud is clear. That generation consists of people who are confident of themselves and are driven by a zeal to transform Africa both internally and in terms of its relationship with the rest of the world. It is a generation that is acutely aware of the potentials of Africa and the obstacles within and outside the continent that must be surmounted in order for those potentials to be fully realized. Its goal can be roughly described as entailing a quest for enthronement of developmental democracies in Africa. Under the leadership of this new generation, I envisage a situation where support from

the international community will be welcome in the task of rebuilding Africa, but not on any terms or at any cost, least of all on conditions drawn up and imposed from outside in a one-sided manner. If need be, this generation is prepared to do it alone and the world should be willing to let it be – if the international community is not prepared to listen to and respect the self-articulated hopes and aspirations of these Africans, then it should, at least, not obstruct them. In a sense, that was a central message that flowed out of the formal and informal discussions that took place in Abidjan; donors will do well to heed it (Kifle et al., 1997).

After ten years of implementation of this Swedish partnership policy and a continuous discussion worldwide on the issue of ownership and partnership, culminating in the Paris Declaration of 2005, has the situation of domination rather than dialogue really changed? I will here make the point that a possibility for change today really exists; but to make it come true, considerale efforts have to be made on both sides, and in particular that the African governments must take the new opportunity for claiming ownership very seriously and make use of any opportunity to take control of the aid process as it relates to their own country.

The Paris Declaration and Agenda

During the second High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that was held in Paris in March 2005, following a number of years of discussion and negotia-tions, development officials and ministers from 91 countries, 26 donors or-ganizations and partner countries, as well as representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector, came together. The problems identified and to be tackled were:

- Lack of local ownership
- Increasing fragmentation, high transaction costs as well as parallel systems, and
- External solutions to problems not adapted to local needs and conditions.

The resulting Paris Declaration has five key features:

- *Ownership*: This reflects the efforts made by partner countries to exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies, and to coordinate development activities. The Declaration commits partner countries to develop and implement their strategies through broad consultative processes, to operationalize these strategies and to take the lead in coordinating development aid in a dialogue with donors, while at the same time encouraging the participation of non-

state actors. The Declaration calls upon donors to respect this leadership and strengthen the partner countries' capacity to exercise it.

- *Harmonization*: Efforts by donors that aim at bringing the policies and procedures that govern their support as much into accord as possible, so as to avoid imposing varying and conflicting requirements on partner countries which reduce the effectiveness of the development cooperation efforts. The Declaration emphasizes the need for harmonizing, increasing transparency and improving collective effectiveness (through division of labour) of the donors' actions.
- *Alignment*: Donors seek to 'align' their support with priorities and strategies set by partner countries, rather than imposing their own priorities. This also means building up and relying on the partner countries' own mechanisms for implementing projects, rather than putting parallel systems in place. For their own part, partner countries undertake to make a greater effort to adopt sound strategies and set sensible priorities, and to strengthen and improve their institutions.
- *Managing for Results*: Donors and partner countries jointly undertake to try and manage and implement aid in a way that focuses on the desired results, and to improve evidence-based decision-making. Both parties undertake to work together on a participatory basis to strengthen the capacity of developing countries and to sharpen the focus on result-based management.
- *Mutual Accountability*: Finally, both donors and partner countries agree to prioritize mutual accountability and transparency in the use of development resources. The Declaration states that this will '(…) also help to strengthen public support for national policies and development assistance'. Mutual progress towards meeting the commitments on aid effectiveness made in the Declaration will be jointly assessed with the aid of country-level mechanisms (Paris High Level Forum 2005).

For the first time ever, the DAC had invited representatives from the recipient community to serious talks on how to make the use of aid more efficient from the viewpoint of the recipients. Some of the countries involved had sent high-level participants to the discussions, thereby taking home the message and seriously trying to implement the new aid architecture and taking charge of the process. Perhaps the most outstanding case is that of Tanzania, where then President Mkapa took a personal interest in the matter and participated in the Paris negotiations. He also took the matters seriously and pressed for an early implementation of the new architecture in Tanzania. It came at a very good time when the relationship between Tanzania and the

donors was already under scrutiny and reorientation. (The process has been documented in a number of articles and is summarized in Wohlgemuth (2006) and published on the Web [www.africastudies.gu.se]).

The Tanzanian Case

The development assistance partnership thus came to be placed high on the Tanzanian policy agenda. The government's desire to take control of development assistance became a high priority and some of its best people were appointed to represent Tanzania in the negotiations with the donor community. These efforts were based on the Tanzanian poverty reduction strategy of 2001, which was refined in the second-generation PRS known as MKUKUTA, in 2005. The MKUKUTA strategy was much more home-grown than the first PRS, with donor input being restricted to comments on the draft version.

Based on the MKUKUTA strategy a joint assistance strategy for Tanzania has been developed in 2006, again by the government in consultation with non-state actors, parliamentarians and the donor community. The purpose is to document the progress made thus far in implementing a new aid relationship in Tanzania. It is designed to take the former strategy to a higher degree of national ownership and leadership, and to reduce transaction costs by enhancing harmonization and alignment with national priorities and national systems. Most importantly, the JAST seeks to align each donor's country assistance strategy with the government's long-term outlook and the MKUKUTA, making individual strategies superfluous.

The process has also led to a major shift from project aid to various forms of programme support and budget support. Project aid is thus down from about 1400 projects in the early 1990s to 304 in 2005, which accounted for 45 per cent of total aid in that year; this basket funding also included sector support at 18 per cent and general budget support at 35 per cent (Ministry of Finance Tanzania 2006). The latter, which is the preferred modality by the government, has increased considerably through the present JAST process and drawn an increasing number of donors, including many that have never engaged in this kind of assistance previously. Today eleven bilateral and three multilateral donors are providing general budget support. While the common view has been that recipient countries lose out if the donors gang together, it seems that the opposite is true in Tanzania. An example comes from the cooperation with regard to the general budget support.

This cooperation is based on the presence of a special joint working group, which agrees on a common framework, albeit not without long and complex negotiations. In order to gain the support of so many donors, it was necessary to suggest more than 70 indicators, all of which are reflected in

the MKUKUTA strategy. This was not acceptable to the government, however, which argued that such a system was far too complex and too difficult to manage. After negotiations, the group finally agreed on 21 indicators.

Another important outcome of the JAST and in the process that led up to its finalization is that donors are requested by the government to cut down on the number of sectors in which they are engaged. This is with the view of minimizing the number of actors in each sector and to make the cooperation more efficient. This is still a work in progress, but as an example the Swedish position is presently that the number of sectors in which to engage is planned to go down from 14 in 2004 to four or five in 2008.

This is just a very short summary of the implementation of the Paris Agenda in Tanzania. It points to some major achievements but also suggests many challenges ahead, both facing the Tanzania Government and citizens of Tanzania as well as the donors. The problems and the international setting are well known, and it is not my intention to minimize the influence that in particular the Bretton Woods institutions still exert on Tanzania as well as on any other country. This is, however, not the topic of this paper.

I will now concentrate on the challenges facing the recipient governments in making use of the opportunities created by the Paris Agenda. Drawing from experiences from other new policies, nothing guarantees that this policy will be high on the agenda in the donor community for long, in particular if progress is not good enough.

Challenges Facing the Public Sector in the Implementation of the Paris Agenda

Increased ownership, harmonization and alignment plus the emergence of new aid modalities, budget support in particular, will boost the importance of effective institutions and regulations in the recipient country. It is clear that the staff responsible for implementing and coordinating the budget, including external resources, accounting and reporting, must be sufficiently competent to comply with all the new obligations and live up to all expectations. This is an issue that has to be clearly expressed and must exercise all the parties involved in the process. As aid is becoming aligned to the internal system of the host country these rules and regulation concern the citizen of that country as much as, or even more than, the external actors.

Again, taking the Tanzanian Government as an example, it has enacted a number of important new laws and regulations, and a special commission on corruption has presented an agenda for eradicating corruption. One of the most successful developments has been the introduction of a new integrated financial management system for recording and managing spending. This

system is now being used by all central government spending agencies, as well as by local organizations, and is claimed to be one of the best in operation in Africa today. Other new laws have been passed on public procurement and the budget process. A computerized strategic budget allocation system in line with the MKUKUTA strategy was put in place in 2004–2005. The aid coordination section at the Ministry of Finance is operating well: it has been strengthened and upgraded, and improved aid statistics are being introduced. Statistics regarding aid flows has always been a difficult issue, and Tanzania is presently working on this. Finally, a medium-term pay policy was approved in 2003–2004, paving the way for four ministries to receive selected accelerated salary enhancements (Wohlgemuth 2006).

The donors are also trying to find ways of improving capacity in Tanzania. A number of basket fund programmes to support capacity development in the government sector are currently being implemented. These include a civil service reform programme, a legal sector reform programme and a private sector reform programme. A major problem that still needs to be solved is how technical assistance should be arranged in the new aid architecture. So far, neither the Tanzanian Government nor the donors have come up with a proposal that matches the reforms in other areas. The problem is under discussion, however, and is high on the government's agenda.

Thus, in order to capture the possibilities that follow from the introduction of the Paris Agenda, priority must be given to ongoing capacity development in order to improve accountability and transparency and so as to restrict the opportunities for corruption. However, in order that these developments really will benefit the citizens in the country and not only please the donor community, the underlying policies must be well established in a democratically and participatory climate in the country. The political will to stick firmly to national objectives and priorities presented and approved in democratic elections is thus very essential. The government should furthermore seek to enhance civil society participation in the process in different ways, in particular through the mass media. Parliament also has a crucial role to pay in the implementation of the strategy. Furthermore, considerable thought needs to be given to the way development cooperation is managed (Wangwe, forthcoming).

Conclusions

International trends and fads come and go. This is particularly true with regard to policies regarding development cooperation. A cynic would stress this fact and see the Paris Declaration as another of these fads, which soon will have left for the next new brilliant idea. It is true in my own experience that the issue of ownership comes back cyclically again and again. But a development optimist would recommend taking advantage of the present fad

and making the most of it. And many countries, particularly in Asia, have in the past benefited from such a more optimistic, or let us rather say, pro-active policy. The world is not going to be a better place than you make it. Imperialistic tendencies will stay on, only the actors might change. It is true, as Adebayo Olukushi states in his assessment of the Blair African Commission, that there is need to make a fundamental reform of the aid system itself. But, as he also states, the time has come for the world to learn to live with an African development train in which Africans are in the driver's seat, fully in charge of the controls (Olukoshi 2006).

It is my sincere contention that the new aid architecture is an opportunity to start the process that he so eloquently asks for. However, further reform of the aid system is no doubt necessary, and the international community must not stop with the Paris Declaration, which after all only relates to the modalities of aid, but go further. I again quote the former Swedish Secretary of Development Cooperation, Mats Karlsson, who concluded the meeting in Abidjan in the following way:

> Donor governments may well be serious in accepting much of the above reasoning around partnership, but the real proof of their intent is whether they can handle coherence in their own policies. That is why the issues of global governance, and in particular global economic governance, are crucial. Stronger political dialogue and leadership, better coherence of policies, the adequate and sustained financing of the emerging global public sector's institutions and operations are intrinsically linked to workable partnerships. If these new partnership ideas fail to catch on and fuel virtuous circles, it may well be not just because the Africans are not up to it, as will be presumed by so many in the North, but because the political courage in that very North is lacking.

Ideas of this kind have been advocated by many Africans. They inspired Sweden to reassess its overall Africa policy. That policy was to be based, not on another set of consultancy reports, but on an intense listening exercise with African policy makers, academics and civil society (Kifle et al. 1997).

Note:
The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness may be consulted online at:http://www1.worldbank.org/harmonization/Paris/FINALPARISDECLARATION.pdf

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Experiences in New Public Management in Africa: The Case of Performance Management Systems in Botswana

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Abstract

In his 18-page paper entitled 'The Challenges of Governance, Public Sector Reform and Public Administration in Africa: Some Research Issues', Guy Mhone made central to public sector reforms the need to promote procedural rationality in the operation of the public sector and instrumental rationality in terms of economic, social and political outcomes. The present paper contributes to the debate on procedural rationality by focusing attention on performance management systems (PMS), which has emerged with the advent of New Public Management (NPM). It starts by providing the context of the changing role of the state since the 1980s as a background to public sector reforms in Africa. The paper further clarifies NPM and PMS as applied to the public sector before going on to discuss the experience of Botswana in public sector reforms, with particular emphasis on its performance management system. How PMS emerged, its implementation, its monitoring and evaluation are examined in this paper, along with an analysis of challenges and lessons learnt.

Résumé

Dans son article de 18 pages intitulée « Les défis de la gouvernance, de la réforme du secteur public et de l'administration publique en Afrique: Quelques thèmes de recherche», Guy Mhone a insisté sur la nécessité de promouvoir la rationalité procédurale dans le fonctionnement du secteur public et la rationalité instrumentale en termes de résultats économiques, sociaux et politiques. Cet article contribue au débat sur la rationalité procédurale, en mettant l'accent sur le système de gestion de la performance (SGP) qui a émergé avec l'avènement de la Nouvelle Gestion Publique (NGP). Il commence par indiquer le contexte de l'évolution du rôle de l'État depuis les années 1980 comme toile de fond des réformes du secteur public en Afrique. L'article clarifie en outre la NGP et le SGP

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tels qu'ils sont appliqués au secteur public, avant d'examiner l'expérience du Botswana dans les réformes du secteur public, en mettant particulièrement l'accent sur son système de gestion des performances. Cet examen porte sur la manière dont le SGP a émergé, sa mise en œuvre, son suivi et son évaluation, et sur une analyse des défis et des leçons apprises.

Background to Public Sector Reforms in Africa

A meaningful understanding of public sector reforms in Africa can only be achieved if one captures the role of the public sector in both the developing and developed countries and how the negative consequences of its expansion led to dissatisfaction about its size and role effectiveness in the 1980s. This, in turn, calls for a revisiting of the role and structure of the public sector. As Mhone (2003) rightly noted, the public sector represented by the executive and its bureaucracy at the federal, provincial, national and local levels together with various statutory and parastatal bodies constitutes the key apparatus for the execution of the functions of the state. Up to the 1970s, Western capitalist nations of Europe and the USA and in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, expanded their activities in the quest to eradicate poverty and to develop their economies. In others, the state became a direct investor and provider, either because the private sector was not developed or was not willing to invest in activities that were considered critical by the state. Yet in other countries, the state expanded its activities in emulation of the socialist ideology pursued by the Soviet Union during the communist period. Private profit was considered immoral and private enterprise was seen as an instrument of exploitation and creation of disparities between the rich and the poor. Greater reliance on the public sector was also needed to check the concentration of wealth in private hands, end exploitation and ensure fairer allocation and distribution of scarce resources for development purposes (CAPAM 1996; Commonwealth Secretariat 2002).

Large-scale nationalization of indigenous and foreign private enterprises was undertaken as it was considered essential for effective development planning and the building of socialist society. The state and the public sector continued to expand, not only to develop infrastructure and provide public utilities such as water, electricity, housing and telecommunications, but also in the operation of industries, agriculture, banking, marketing and various commercial activities. Growth of private enterprise remained limited (Balogun 2003; ECA 2004). Increases in governmental activities led to a bloated public sector, and it became clear that the state was taking on far too many activities.

However, the continued poverty and economic crises in developing countries led to a realization that such a dismal state of affairs was largely

related to poor public policies, which produced a large public sector, widespread nationalization and excessive controls over the economy. The state and its public sector undertakings had expanded beyond their capacity. Mismanagement, nepotism, political patronage, large and rigid bureaucracy, and widespread corruption became the features of public administration machinery (Turner and Hulme 1997).

Consequently, from the 1980s onwards, the state started rolling back in both developed and developing countries for various reasons, and the emphasis shifted from the state and the public sector to the private sector. Donor countries and agencies recommended reforms to developing countries in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs, which included a wide range of economic, political and administrative reforms. Economic reforms emphasized the need for liberalization of the economy by reducing controls, denationalization, privatization, private sector orientation and reliance on market forces. Political reforms, which included democratization, decentralization, increased people's participation and public accountability, had to accompany the economic reforms. In addition, administrative reforms were advocated. These included de-bureaucratization, downsizing of the public service, introduction of strong measures for combating corruption and enhancing productivity (Turner and Hulme 1997; Hughes 2003; ECA 2004). One of the main thrusts of the reforms was to reduce the direct involvement of state in economic activities, enhance the role of the private sector, create an enabling environment for the growth of the private sector and develope public–private sector partnership (Sharma 2006).

According to Mhone (2003), the stabilization and structural adjustment programs consisted of the need to promote procedural rationality in the operation of the public sector and the need to realize instrumental rationality in terms of economic, social and political outcomes. Instrumental rationality was based on views that demonstrated the superiority of market forces in the efficient allocation of resources, in order to justify the need to roll back and deregulate a number of controlled activities. Procedural rationality, on the other hand, relates to attempts to apply principles applicable to the private sector as a basis for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions (Mhone 2003).

Public sector reform initiatives in Commonwealth countries to 2002 included decentralization, commercialization, privatization, benchmarking, organizational methods, the fight against corruption, good governance, accountability, public financial management reform programmes, public sector incomes policy and administration, functional reviews, job evaluation and salary review, training, information technology, one-stop-shops, codes of ethics for public officers, strengthening management capacity, service

delivery improvement, ICT, computerization of human resources information, performance management systems, and restructuring ministries and provinces (Ayeni 2002).

New Public Management and its Characteristics

Following the changed role of the state and growing demands for good governance globally, the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm emerged to implant a new approach into traditional public administration. It was geared toward enhancing efficiency, productivity, improved service delivery and accountability (Hughes 2003), and emphasizes a result-orientation as opposed to the process-orientation of traditional public administration. It calls for a reduction in the exclusive reliance on public bureaucracy for service delivery and advocates instead the increased use of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as alternative mechanisms of service delivery.

NPM advocates de-bureaucratization, offloading, downsizing or rightsizing the public bureaucracy, greater reliance on the private sector, service delivery through contracting out and outsourcing, public–private partnership, competition and reliance on market forces, and creation of an enabling environment for the growth of private enterprise. It advocates empowering rather than serving, decentralization, public participation, citizen empowerment, innovation and use of modern information and communication technology (ICT) and e-Government. It is characterized by cutting red tape, shifting from systems in which people are accountable for following rules to systems in which they are accountable for achieving results; putting customers first; empowering employees to get results, and producing better government for less (Hughes 2003; Kaul 2000).

The Concept of the Performance Management System (PMS)

As organizations are human groupings constructed to achieve specific goals, their performance is a sum total of individual employees in the organization. Traditional public administration models did not pay significant attention to the measurement of performance. Individual employees were appraised confidentially, without targets, and the approach was historical, with no opportunity to improve. Performance appraisal, as appraisal in the traditional public administration model is called, laid much emphasis on behavioural or personality characteristics such as loyalty, dependability, punctuality, honesty and so on as central attributes for evaluation of an individual employee. Individual performance was never linked to departmental, divisional and organizational strategic goals and objectives.

The urge to evaluate, measure and monitor performance of public institutions and employees has been the concern of politicians, public sector

managers and users of public services. Consequently, interest in performance management and the need to develop appropriate performance management processes and measures has been increasing in the past two decades. As noted earlier, in an effort to improve performance, efficiency, accountability and effectiveness of public sector organizations, governments have adopted a variety of public sector reforms, and one of these is the performance management system.

Performance management can be defined as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors (Armstrong and Barron 2002).

PMS is concerned with managing the organization, everyone in the business, performance improvement, employee development, stakeholders' satisfaction and finally communication and involvement (Armstrong 2003). It is based on the principle of management by agreement or contract rather than management by command. It emphasizes development and the initiation of self-managed learning process plans as well as the integration of individual and corporate objectives. It is a continuous and flexible process that involves managers and their subordinates within a framework that sets out how they can best work to achieve the required results. Its focus is on future performance planning and improvement rather than on retrospective performance appraisal. It provides the basis for regular and frequent dialogues between managers and subordinates/teams on performance and development needs.

PMS relies on performance reviews to make decisions on performance-related pay, as well as individual/team development plans. It is also a process for measuring outputs in the form of delivered performance compared to expectations expressed as objectives, targets, standards and performances indicators. PMS links organizational vision, missions, values and strategic goals to divisional, departmental and individual goals, objectives and tasks/targets (Henekom et al. 1987; Armstrong 2003; Hughes 2003).

Public Sector Reforms and PMS in Botswana

Since Botswana attained independence on 30 September 1966, National Development Plans (NDPs), which cover periods of five years, have functioned as instruments of guidance in the delivery of service to the nation. Ministries and departments indicate their priorities for the planning period according to NDPs, and funding is sought to carry out these plans. Though the Government of Botswana and its public service have achieved a lot since independence, problems in the functioning of the public service machinery have been noted. The public sector was viewed as inefficient, underperforming and lacking in job accountability and ownership. It was felt that it was

insensitive to the public in terms of service provision. Wastage of resources in ministries and departments and lack of proper planning and management of funds resulted in the need for extra funding. Inefficient management of human resources led to the creation of unnecessary posts in ministries and departments.

To improve the quality of service delivered and satisfy customers and stakeholders, the government mandated the Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM) to develop initiatives that could improve public service delivery. From 1994 to 1997 DPSM conducted investigations to see what steps could be taken to reform the public service. Changes such as Work Improvement Teams (WIT), a Performance Based Reward System (PBRS), Decentralization and O&M Review were introduced, but the problem of poor service delivery remained. Government came up with the initiative of improving internal processes by introducing Business Process Reengineering whose recommendations included the introduction of PMS to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and the improvement and sustainability of high productivity at all levels (Ministry of Finance 2003). The sections below describe the formulation, piloting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of PMS.

Formulation of PMS

The Botswana National Productivity Centre (BNPC) was commissioned to introduce PMS in the public service with the help of the American Consultancy Group known as the Performance Centre. Ministries and independent departments formulated strategic plans with vision and mission statements, key result areas, goals, objectives and values. These strategic plans were meant to direct ministries and departments to deliver services in a focused manner. Performance Improvement Coordinators (PICs) were appointed at each ministry to coordinate PMS.

BNPC was intended to guide the PMS process in the first year and then leave the responsibility to ministries to sustain the process in subsequent years. It was supposed to transfer the necessary skills to ministry coordinators and other staff members. The PIC force was to remain the reference group for the implementation of PMS and its role was to monitor progress, make policy decisions and provide direction on the way forward.

There was also a communication strategy in place to ensure that the process reached all parties concerned. Communication started at Office of the President level, then Cabinet and Parliament who passed information to councils. At ministerial level, ministries were expected to develop their own communication strategy to sell and sustain the PMS process (Ministry of Finance 2003).

Piloting PMS: Structure and Activities

Before the full implementation of PMS, a pilot project was made in two ministries. The structure set up to implement the pilot project included a PIC force to oversee the process, a task force in each ministry chaired by the Permanent Secretary established to coordinate and communicate goals, objectives and standards. Members of the task force were heads of departments. For each ministry, workshops were held for the leadership. The project was to concentrate on the development of strategic plans, annual performance plans and measurement systems. Objectives of the pilot project were to promote continuous performance improvement by defining goals and objectives, creating awareness among top officials of the pilot ministries in regard to the importance of performance management. It was also aimed at upgrading the knowledge and skills of a team of senior officials in the pilot ministries. Finally, it was entrusted with the process of assisting in the roll-out plan to introduce PMS to other ministries.

By the end of the pilot project, the ministries concerned believed that PMS was a tool with potential to improve productivity in the public service. The overall success of the pilot project resulted in government adopting PMS as a policy for improving the performance of the public service. Permanent Secretaries discussed and approved the recommendations of the World Bank Report on the holistic approach to performance management in 1997. This led to a cabinet decision in 1999 to implement PMS as a strategy for facilitating productivity improvement in Botswana. A document called the PMS Philosophy document was formulated by the Directorate of Public Service Management to guide the implementation of PMS (Ministry of Finance 2003).

Implementation Framework for PMS

The policy used a top-down approach because major decisions were taken by public service management and then spread down to lower management, that is, from the Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP) through Permanent Secretaries, and down the hierarchy of the public service machinery. There were four phases in the implementation processes. Phase one comprised of customization of PMS to suit individual ministries. Through the facilitation of the BNPC, ministries were able to define the best approach to introduce the system, identify resources and the implementation approach that suited them. Phase two involved the formulation of departmental Annual Performance Plans (APPs). Phase three defined the performance measurement process in terms of agreed strategic goals and objectives. Finally, phase four ensured the creation of an evaluation and review structure for PMS in a ministry or departments.

The role of PSP, principal secretaries DPSM, PICs and ministers in the PMS implementation process were clarified. The PSP as the chief sponsor of the PMS had the overall responsibility for the successful implementation of PMS throughout the Botswana public service. Among many other responsibilities, he oversaw internal and external communication to all relevant stakeholders and key players, providing necessary infrastructure, ensuring return on investments and full accountability of the reforms by public officers. In practice, PSP delegated the implementation of PMS to the DPSM.

A number of internal committees were established to assist in the implementation of PMS. The most senior committee was the PIC Force, which consisted of Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Independent Departments and was chaired by the PSP. The Reference Committee and Technical Committee were established to manage the implementation of PMS in the public service. The responsibility of the Reference Committee was for support policy formulation and guidance, development and supervision of the implementation strategies as well as overall project management. The Reference Committee also acted as advisors to the PSP and PIC Force on issues of strategy and resource requirements. The main task of the Technical Committee was designing, developing, planning and implementation of PMS policies and strategies, along with responsibility for the utilization of resources, monitoring progress, supervision and analysis of the implementation process. The Technical Committee provided counsel to the Reference Committee.

DPSM were regarded as project managers, and their responsibility was to ensure quality assurance and value for money. Their role was to choose high-quality and experienced PMS implementers, and ensure the consistency of approach and development of all those involved in the overall implementation of PMS. It was also to provide consistent information to all key players and monitor the project to ensure that all ministries implemented PMS on time. Finally, DPSM was to provide administrative facilitation and co-management of the PMS project.

BNPC's role was to train all ministries to draw up their APPs and review mechanism and assist in the implementation of PMS and training of all PICs. BNPC was also to ensure that their consultants submitted monthly reports to the programme manager outlining progress with the ministries to which they were assigned. BNPC consultants were trained by overseas consultants to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure facilitation of the project until its completion.

Permanent Secretaries in each ministry were sponsors for PMS and were tasked to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the PMS and oversee ministerial action plans. They were leaders of any change that occurred in their ministries. It is their responsibility to define the direction of

the ministry by setting targets and standards of performance and ensuring accountability. They were charged with the execution of the PMS implementation plan and creating a culture of recognition and reward for performance improvement by individuals, sections, units, divisions and departments. They also were to continuously evaluate the implementation process and overall management of the project.

Ministers are required to win public and customer satisfaction within the ministry by ensuring that strategic plans are implemented. They are also accountable for reforms in the ministries as well as ensuring connection and alignment of PMS to other public reforms at national level (Ministry of Finance 2003).

Monitoring of PMS

Monitoring provides policy-relevant knowledge about the consequences of adopted policies/programmes, thus assisting policy-makers in the implementation phase. It helps to assess the degree of compliance, discover unintended consequences, identify implementation obstacles and constraints and locate sources of responsibility (Dunn 1994). Monitoring of PMS in the public service is done mainly by PICs in each ministry. Apart from ensuring capacity-building for management performance at all levels within ministries, PICs are responsible for process performance information to appraise the PSP, the minister and the Permanent Secretary on the overall performance of the ministry. The PICs also produce quarterly reports and briefings and advice on the way forward to ensure smooth implementation of the PMS (Ministry of Finance 2003).

Evaluation of PMS

Evaluation yields policy-relevant knowledge about discrepancies between expected and actual policy performance, thus assisting policy-makers in the policy assessment phase (Dunn 1994). Evaluation is the final step in policy-making and implies that the policy-makers seek to learn whether or not policies are achieving their goals, at what cost and with what effects, intended and unintended, on society (Dye 2005). The idea here is to report outputs of PMS and evaluate its impact on targets and non-target groups and also to propose changes for reforms.

The government hired Ernst & Young Consultants to evaluate the PMS initiative in Botswana. E&Y spoke to over 1400 officers through individual and focus group interviews in all ministries.

The three sections below draw on the E&Y evaluation report of 2004 (GoB 2004).

PMS Outputs

Key output is in the form of documents produced and workshops conducted.

Production of Documents

The development of strategic plans, which were not available prior to the implementation of PMS, is one of the outputs of PMS. Ministries now have working document that guide the implementation of their mandate. Again there is a Performance Management Manual in place, which provides guidance in the development of PMS. The manual supported the PMS Philosophy document (1999), which outlined the broad framework for application. There was also a document on customer care standards and service-level agreements that had been developed as a result of PMS.

Another outcome of PMS is a project called 'talking heads' where members of the public are able to talk about performance of ministries on the radio.

Workshops

Over recent years, many workshops have been conducted for officials in the public service to ensure their understanding of the operation of the PMS. It is common knowledge that most officers in the public service have an adequate understanding of the PMS philosophy and how to operationalize it. If PMS was to be evaluated in terms of knowledge of the process, then one could conclude that it has been very successful, at least judging by the number of workshops conducted.

Outcomes

The following can mentioned in terms of outcomes:

- Service delivery has improved to a noticeable level ever since the introduction of PMS
- Celebrating Productivity Convention Week has become an annual event since the advent of PMS
- Officers who were promoted to D1 level to coordinate PMS were highly motivated and their morale increased
- PMS has equipped ministries and management with more disciplined tools to manage and enhance performance and service delivery in their ministries and departments
- PMS has enhanced focus and direction in ministries and departments and made them realize their priority role in the delivery of the national development plan obligations. Through the strategic management process, ministries are able to develop clear goals and objectives, and justify their budget and funding requirements. The system has promoted a new focus on emphasizing performance and results.

Challenges

On the other hand, there are several challenges bedevilling the implementation of PMS in Botswana. Our focus in this paper is on knowledge/information gaps, system-wide commitment, PICs problems, funding, institutional roles, authority positioning and reform fatigue, which will be addressed in turn.

Knowledge/Information Gaps

One of the key challenges experienced was the varying degrees of knowledge gaps among public servants, consultants and those who were to coordinate PMS activities in ministries and independent departments. Employees at the lower level had little or no knowledge about PMS. This might have been precipitated by the challenge of training more staff because of the geographical location and size of ministries, which resulted in staff below management level having limited knowledge about PMS, especially those outside head office. Many of the personnel charged with managing PMS had no formal project management training, and this acted as a hindrance to attaining set goals and objectives. Even the BNPC consultants seemed to have not understood all elements of PMS because the design of the project had little information available. They were all in a learning curve and swimming in a pool of confusion, just like the rest of the public service. Again, the Performance Manual, which worked together with the PMS Philosophy, did not include any specifics for practical application. This lack of specific guidelines increased the problem in ministries in terms of preparing objectives for individuals, appraisals, performance-based awards, contracts, counselling and coaching.

System-wide Commitment

It was difficult to obtain a system-wide commitment both at the level of top management and at lower echelons of the public service. For example, the consultants observed that not all Permanent Secretaries were fully committed to the philosophies of PMS. By design, top management are seen to be removed from PMS process as many of the PMS principles of planning, measurement and appraisal are not applied to the top echelons of the public service. Individuals across the hierarchy of the public service see PMS as additional work rather than as part of their jobs and this leads to non-commitment. This is exacerbated by the fact that PMS has no linkage to individual pay or reward. Little has been done to translate PMS to individual goal setting, appraisals and reward because of resistance from both managers and low-level officers in the public service. Since they were used to doing things in the same manner for a long time, officers could not easily adapt to the idea of being told to change, especially those at senior levels. This has led to PMS moving at different paces across the various ministries.

PICs Problems

The other challenge focuses on the role and effectiveness of Performance Improvement Coordinators**.** There was lack of support for PICs within ministries, especially larger ones, and the geographical distribution of some offices had a big impact on their efficiency and performance. They needed additional support with regard to implementation as they did not have the required knowledge, experience and confidence to effectively implement PMS without the additional assistance or detailed framework, which was in most cases absent. PICs have other duties and tasks within their ministries and therefore have problems in trying to dedicate their attention to PMS. These additional duties put strain on PIC's and quality of their work. Finally, since there are no promotional opportunities within their structures, PICs have been demotivated in shouldering additional burden.

Funding

For any change to be institutionalized and sustained, a continuous supply of financial, human and material resources is crucial. One of the challenges faced was the level of funding allocated to DPSM. It was considered to be insufficient to complete the design of PMS. It was enough to pay for the BNPC only. Additional funding was required for external consultants to assist with the completion of the design. Ministries also required additional funding for implementation support, which was not available from BNPC.

Institutional Role and Authority Positioning

Another challenge relates to the institutional role of DPSM in the PMS divisional of labour in terms of authority over other ministries and the delegation of the PSP role to the same. The reforms unit under DPSM has a very small team to implement PMS and this means a large work commitment. DPSM experiences a dilemma in making decisions that affect the implementation of PMS because it does not have sufficient authority to influence Permanent Secretaries in other ministries regarding decisions in those ministries. Again the PSP's role in the management of the implementation of PMS, providing leadership and guidance to Permanent Secretaries and stakeholders and chairing Technical and Reference committees, was, in practice, delegated to DPSM, as noted earlier. This in effect weakened the management role of DPSM as the Director of DPSM does not have the required authority to take corrective action and influence the public service.

This is related to the consultants' observation about the spirit of competition and the territorial boundaries institutions create. PMS involved linking together initiatives such as Vision 2016 and National Development Plans. This has not been easy because those who are co-coordinating them

have built themselves territorial boundaries to the point that they refuse to meet to agree common objectives and targets. Ministries and departments that depend on each other for delivery of mandates do not want to share objectives. The example given is that of the Criminal Justice System comprising the DCEC, Police, Attorney General and Administration of Justice, which refused to confirm one common objective on the timely disposal of cases.

Reform Fatigue
Another challenge PMS has been facing in Botswana, as in many developing countries, is the multiplicity of reforms taking place simultaneously or at times in quick succession. Public servants, facing a plethora of reforms that come one after the other within a short space of time, feel confused and end up not being committed to their implementation. For example, there are work improvement teams (WITS), total quality management (TQM), organization & methods (O&M), performance-based reward system (PBRS), business process re-engineering (BPR), decentralization, privatization, contracting-out, performance management system (PMS) and now the balance score-card (BSC). All these are still being implemented in the public service.

Lessons Learnt
From both the successes and challenges so far experienced in the PMS in Botswana, we can isolate the following lessons for countries that have not introduced PMS in the public service: top-level commitment and the location of the power centre, strategic plans, detailed PMS guidelines, training/effective communication, phasing out of reforms, rewards and continuous funding. These are considered in turn.

Top Political and Administrative Commitment and Location of the Power Centre
Commitment at the level of the top political leadership, such as the President, Prime Minister and cabinet ministers, is crucial for sustainability of the reforms. This has to go side by side with commitment from the highest administrative authority, like the Principal Secretary in the President's Office, the Head of the Public Service, Principal Secretaries and their immediate deputies down the administrative and professional cadre of the public service. This is also related to the need to ensure a strategic location of the reform 'power centre' in government. Reforms need to be coordinated from the Office of the President and cabinet as this office is the hub of both the political and administrative functions of the state. Delegation to other ministries needs to be avoided. The significance of culture change, starting with top management and cutting across all levels of the organizational hierarchy, is also crucial for the successful implementation of reform initiatives.

Strategic Plans

The Botswana experience has demonstrated the importance of strategic plans to ensure an integrated approach to performance planning, implementation and evaluation. There is great value in creating a shared vision, mission, strategic goals, individual performance objectives, targets, indicators and performance reviews. Without strategic plans, there is no common focus and actions are performed at the expense of service delivery and productivity in the public service.

Detailed Guidelines

Without detailed guidelines like the PMS Philosophy document and Performance Manual to act as a reference point at every stage of the PMS, the process of formulating and implementing PMS initiative will fail.

Training/Effective Communication

It is noted from the experiences of Botswana that lack of adequate information or knowledge of the PMS both at lower and higher levels of the public service hierarchy was a major challenge to the implementation of PMS. Effective training at all levels of the public service from top to bottom as well as an effective communication strategy vertically and horizontally to ensure clarity, understanding and common focus, are all crucial.

Phasing Out of Reforms

A gradualist approach to reforms allows for implementation, evaluation and institutionalization of each reform before another is introduced. There is a far greater danger in introducing a new reform initiative before the previous reform has been understood and its value appreciated. Otherwise, there is loss of interest in reforms and even with the best intentions people will take new reforms as 'another management fad'.

Funding

An appropriate and sustained level of funding is important to ensure sustained momentum for the proper implementation of PMS initiatives.

Rewards

To succeed in PMS, there is the need to ensure that good performance is rewarded and poor performance is punished. When people realize that their performance and efforts have no bearing on their rewards, their enthusiasm to do more is curtailed.

Conclusion

This paper has built on Guy Mhone's procedural rationality, which is aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions, notably in Africa. Different countries throughout the world have experimented with various public sector reforms, such as improved service delivery, participation, human resource development, decentralization, process re-engineering, performance-based reward systems, accounting and budgetary systems, job evaluation and salary reviews, and the performance management system among others. As the paper has demonstrated, using the experience of Botswana's public sector, PMS encourages visioning and strategic management of ministries and independent departments. It facilitates and encourages open communication in the organization, which is one of the most important factors in facilitating superior performance in an organization. Through the development of strategic goals and plans, which are part and parcel of PMS, ministries are able to justify their budgets and funding requirements. There is integration in the organization, characterized by a shared vision and common values because of strategic planning. PMS has the potential to improve the performance of the public service and enhance its capacity to provide efficient service delivery to the nation. However, there remain many challenges, which relate to knowledge/information gaps, system-wide commitment, PICs problems, funding, institutional role and authority positioning, and reform fatigue.

This is not to pass a verdict about the inappropriateness of PMS in the public service. Rather, it is an attempt to draw useful lessons from the experience of Botswana in order to improve the performance of individuals, groups and organizations in the public sector.

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Pitfalls of Decentralization Reforms in Transitional Societies: The Case of Uganda

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Abstract

Decentralization reforms are in essence necessary if they have genuine democratic objectives of empowering the people to make local-level governance efficient and effective. As the experience of Uganda reveals, donor-driven decentralization reforms have not performed according to expectations because of the converging external and domestic interests. This paper argues that for these reforms to succeed, the specific conditions pertaining to each country must be considered hand in hand with the honesty and political will of national leaders to genuinely transform power relations.

Résumé

Les réformes de la décentralisation sont essentiellement nécessaires si elles ont des objectifs réellement démocratiques de responsabilisation du peuple pour rendre la gouvernance locale efficace et efficiente. Comme le révèle l'expérience de l'Ouganda, les réformes de la décentralisation dictées par les bailleurs n'ont pas répondu aux attentes en raison des intérêts externes et internes convergents. Cet article défend l'idée que, pour que ces réformes puissent réussir, les conditions spécifiques propres à chaque pays doivent être prises en considération de pair avec l'honnêteté et la volonté politique des dirigeants nationaux de véritablement transformer les relations de pouvoir.

Introduction

Since the 1980s, decentralization has attracted worldwide support because of the assumed benefits that are associated with it. While decentralization reforms are heralded for promoting good governance and development, the real motives underlying its wide support have been given less attention.

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The support given to decentralization reforms by donors is largely driven by ideological interests, such as the need to spread liberal values. On the other hand, African rulers embraced decentralization reforms not because they genuinely wanted to transform state–society relations but due to the need for political self-preservation. The economic and legitimacy crises that confronted the African state forced African rulers to accept public sector reforms as a precondition for the desperately needed aid. Therefore, the convergence of interests of Western donors and African rulers amply explain the support for decentralization reforms in Africa.

The practice of decentralizing power to sub-national levels of government is premised on the principle of subsidiarity whereby the power to tax, spend and regulate are exercised by lower levels of government (Beabout 1998). Thus, it is about giving autonomy in decision-making and accountability to the lowest possible level(s) of government. Decentralization is not a new practice. The global enthusiasm about decentralization experiments has simply intensified in the last two decades. Decentralization has been massively embraced in Africa owing to its troubled post-independence politics and economic woes. Although most African nationalist leaders campaigned for and attained independence on the basis of pluralist systems, these democratic experiments were short-lived. They were subsequently replaced with costly dirigiste approaches (Olowu 1989:204) that affected Africa's economic and political development prospects negatively.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Africa's economic and political ratings had nose-dived. Put differently, experimentation with centralization contributed to state collapse in Africa. The African state, which increasingly became characterized by predatory and neo-patrimonial governance (Sandbrook and Oelbaum 1997), became not only internally dysfunctional but also externally indebted. It is therefore in the wake of the failure of the centralized state in Africa that attempts were made by both the international community and local leaders to undertake reforms within the African state (Lancaster 1988:30). These comprised economic adjustment programmes and good governance reforms that aimed at bringing about a lean, democratic, efficient and effective state that could enhance development. Many African states that were previously afflicted by predatory and authoritarian tendencies have steadily embraced neo-liberal economic and political reforms. Decentralization is part of this reform process.

The delicate transition to economic and political change in Africa has attracted much debate. Uganda, being part of this transition, has been hailed internationally as a star performer, especially regarding the meticulous implementation of market-driven economic reforms (IMF 1995). While economic reform is considered successful, political reforms have been taken

cautiously (Hauser 1999). Whereas much attention has been focused on Uganda's failure to consolidate multiparty political reforms, little or no attention has been paid to its decentralization reforms. This paper focuses on the effectiveness of decentralization reforms by examining the extent to which decentralization reforms have measured up to the proclaimed objectives of giving political, administrative and fiscal autonomy in decision-making to local authorities and consequently transforming the conditions of the people.

Theoretical Context

Donor-induced public sector reforms were premised on the neo-liberal per-spective that attributes poor state performance in Africa to what Hyden (1980) termed the 'overdeveloped African State'. The notion of overdeveloped state implies that institutions such as government bureaucracy, the military, other specialized agencies and semi-autonomous marketing boards and parastatals became over-expanded. The overdeveloped state led to a waste of public resources, suffocated the private sector and reversed Africa's development prospects (Sandbrook 1985).

Public sector reforms included *inter alia* the restructuring of government through decentralizing power and functions to the lower levels of government. Decentralization, which is anchored to the philosophy of the neo-liberal perspective, has frequently been dubbed managerialism. According to Ingraham (1997:326), 'managerialism is based on private sector techniques and practices, which are amply leavened by public choice and market theories' (see Hughes 1994). Advocates of these reforms strongly believe that government should be managed like a business, with particular emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness. The overriding motive of the market-driven reforms is to create an efficient and effective public administration to support neo-liberal development policies (Russel and Nicholson 1981). More particularly, the market view of decentralization perceives local governments as producers of services while people are seen as consumers.

Therefore, the ongoing decentralization reforms must be conceptualized in this theoretical context. They are driven by the prime objective to have an efficient and effective government whose absence is considered to be an obstacle to the effective implementation and consolidation of market reforms. The implication of the market view is that the key objectives of decentralization can be achieved without necessarily pursuing wider and deeper democratic changes. This perception does not lead to genuine decentralization but to a pseudo form, which happens to be the mode that has been adopted by Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) government. Garcia-Guadilla and Perez 2002:90), however, contend that true decentralization should entail the extension of democracy by transforming power relations.

It transcends the strictly procedural democracy. Therefore, decentralization is about the transfer of real power vertically and horizontally, and enabling people to actively participate in decision-making in order to achieve social justice.

The advocates of decentralization associate it with various benefits. The most prevalent ones include the enhancement of democracy and development as well as strengthening accountability and legitimacy of government (Mawhood 1983). However, it ought to be noted that while these are strong theoretical justifications of decentralization and are indeed, very important, the real motives that underpin the acceptance to decentralize power in Africa are largely not well articulated and understood.

Support for decentralization by both the donor community and Africa's rulers has in most cases been driven by self-serving political interests as opposed to the genuine desire to empower the African people. Contrary to the usual rhetoric that decentralization is aimed at bringing people aboard, the reality on the ground is usually different. Decentralization is frequently used as a pretext to pursue centrally determined objectives. Likewise, donor support for decentralization reforms has been usually driven by ideological interests (Ingraham 1997:326; Hauser 1999:621–3). Since the nineteenth century, Western powers have been preoccupied with globalizing their values. These have historically ranged from the spread of cultural values to economic and political systems. Whereas the earlier period was characterized by the spread of cultural influence, the period during and after the Cold War has been marked by an attempt to globalize Western forms of democracy and economic systems. The focus has been on the adoption of classical neo-liberalism, which mainly emphasizes multiparty political systems and market-driven economic systems.

In Africa, these donor interests have been successfully pursued because of the inherent weaknesses of the African state. The lack of a clear ideological vision, mismanagement of the state and lack of strategic thinking by African rulers have increasingly exposed Africa to donor influence and dominance. Moreover, the fact that donor nations wield strong influence over the powerful international institutions such as the UN, World Bank and IMF, among others, allows them undue influence in shaping the global policy environment. Indeed, decentralization reforms constitute the 'new policy agenda', which puts special emphasis on markets, good governance and civil society. This agenda has been aggressively pursued by the World Bank and the donor community. Therefore, the decentralization reforms of the 1980s are aimed at providing institutional support to neo-liberal objectives of a lean and democratic state that is more accountable, efficient and effective (World Bank 1992; Young 1994).

The underlying motive to embrace decentralization reforms by African rulers has been influenced by selfish political motives rather than the desire to promote local self-governance *per se*. African rulers accepted public sector reforms in general and decentralization in particular, not because they were convinced about the need for fundamental change, but for purposes of economic and political survival (Lancaster 1988:33). The economic collapse of most African nations climaxed in the late 1970s. The consequence of the state's failure to deliver social programmes made it irrelevant. Hence, the people became increasingly disengaged from the dysfunctional state and organized parallel institutions. This explains the growth of the informal sector in Africa, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. Given this sad situation, political desperation led African rulers to seek donor assistance, which came with the precondition to undertake certain reforms. Decentralization, being one of the reforms, was viewed by African rulers as a means to renew political legitimacy, especially in the countryside (Haruna 2001:47). Therefore, decentralization reforms should be viewed as a tactical weapon used by both external and internal actors to serve their selfish strategic interests. Thus, the African people became pawns in the chess game of good governance reforms that have remained a phantom. This game was nowhere more expertly played than in Museveni's Uganda.

Uganda and Decentralization Reforms

The quest for decentralization in Uganda has in the last two decades attracted considerable attention and publicity. This phenomenon can be explained by changes in the international policy environment that strongly agitate for public sector reforms as a precondition for international assistance (Burki, Guillermo and Dillinger 19990. This should not, however, create an impression that decentralization is a recent occurrence in Uganda. Not only did some pre-colonial states of Uganda practise decentralization but also British colonialism decentralized power to local authorities (districts) immediately after the Second World War (Hicks 1961:104; Burke 1964). The famous Creech Jones dispatch of 1947 paved the way for the policy to decentralize power to Uganda's districts with effect from 1949. The period from 1949 onwards witnessed a number of democratic reforms in Uganda's local authorities up to the time of independence in 1962.

The independence government continued with the decentralized model of governance that had been inherited from its colonial predecessor. This was not because it cherished it, but because it was part of the formula that was agreed upon at the London constitutional conference between the British colonial government, political parties, kingdom ruling groups and district delegates before independence was granted (Mudoola 1993:23). The nationalist

leaders agreed to this constitutional arrangement as a temporary measure. It was eventually abrogated in 1966; and with it, decentralization was also scrapped. The prospects of decentralization registered a complete decline in the 1970s and early 1980s as a result of the ensuing dictatorship and state collapse in the country.

It is not until the coming to power of the NRM government that efforts to decentralize power were revived. Decentralization constituted one of the policy reforms that were pursued by Yoweri Museveni's government immediately after ascending power. The NRM argued that decentralization was a component of the agenda to establish popular democracy in accordance with Point No. 1 of the *Ten-Point Programme*, a policy document prepared while still waging the protracted guerrilla war (1981–1985) (LGFC 1997:4). It was meant to guide the NRM government while in power. Indeed, the NRM's 'home-grown' policy to decentralize power seems to have come at a time when the international policy environment emphasized, among other things, decentralization reforms. Notwithstanding the NRM's rhetoric that the main motive for decentralizing power was to empower the grassroots democratically, available evidence does not corroborate this claim. The motive for NRM's policy to decentralize power was to acquire political legitimacy, since it had come to power through violent rather than democratic means (ICHRP 2002:6). Besides, decentralization was particularly attractive because it provided a suitable infrastructure to galvanize political support and reward loyalists. In short, the decentralization structure was a perfect tool for patronage politics. Accordingly, it has been effectively harnessed to serve the patronage objectives of the NRM government. It has been used to reward loyal cadres and, until recently, it has also served as a grassroots political structure for the NRM political organization (ROU 1997).

The official policy objective of decentralization indicates that it was to empower people, promote popular participation, equitable distribution of resources, accountability and responsibility while at the same time enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery (Wanyama 2002:2). In order to achieve these objectives, the NRM government embarked on an ambitious programme to implement decentralization. The initial process began in 1986 with the countrywide introduction of the Resistance Councils and Committees (RCs) system. This was a hierarchical five-tier structure of popularly elected councils and committees right from the village to the district level (Villadsen and Lubanga 1996:41–2). This was followed by the refinement of decentralization policy that was officially launched by President Museveni on 2 October 1992. Decentralization was progressively implemented through the enactment of supportive legislation from 1987 to 1997. Not only was

decentralization entrenched in the new Constitution of 1995, but also, the various legislations were subsequently harmonized under the Local Government Act of 1997.

The NRM government adopted the devolution form of decentralization, which gave local authorities substantial political, fiscal and administrative powers and responsibilities. Therefore, considerable autonomy was at least symbolically bestowed on local authorities while the line ministries retained the responsibilities for inspection, monitoring and coordination of local governments (ROU 1997:67–8). In addition to these central government responsibilities, there is the annual transfer of funds in the form of conditional, unconditional and equalization grants to local authorities. This is necessitated by the fact that local governments lack sufficient resources to execute their devolved responsibilities. Decentralization reforms have been implemented since 1993 and it is now well over a decade, a sufficient period to assess the extent to which change has been effected.

A Critical Review of Decentralization Outcomes

Advocates of decentralization widely believe that it is associated with socio-economic and political benefits (WB 1998). More particularly, decentralization is assumed to enhance good governance, improve people's welfare and consequently bring about positive social change. Notwithstanding this idealistic romanticization of decentralization, critics highly doubt its ability to cause positive change. Indeed, available evidence suggests that despite various experiments with decentralization in Africa, limited progress has been achieved (Olowu 1990). It is within the context of these debates that this paper attempts to critically review the extent to which Uganda's decentralization reforms have performed.

One of the contentious areas has been the exaggerated multi-tier structure of local government. As earlier indicated, Uganda's local council (LC) system entails a five-tier hierarchical structure. Each tier has a council and committee. In addition to the elected committee members, the district, sub-county, city, municipality and town councils have elaborate administrative systems that are manned by appointed civil servants. Currently, Uganda has 80 rural districts, about 139 urban local governments and 958 sub-counties, which implies that many people are involved in decision-making at the local level. This situation paints such a rosy democratic picture. Indeed, Uganda has been lauded internationally for having successfully implemented decentralization that emphasizes bottom-up and gender-sensitive participation.[1] Regarding the view that Uganda's multi-tier decentralized system enhances bottom-up participation that is gender-sensitive, the actual fact is that it is symbolically appealing but shallow in real terms. It is certain that the

implementation of decentralization reforms expanded participation compared to the past when it used to be a privilege of certain elites in the national assembly. It is also true that Uganda's decentralization reforms expanded participation to sections of the population that were previously marginalized. For example, quotas for women, the youth and people with disabilities were entrenched in the law. It is a legal requirement that one-third of the local councils be constituted by women (ROU 1995:29–30; ROU 1997:15). While local government reforms have symbolically increased participation in terms of geographical space and numbers, the status quo has not changed much. Local governments have remained the preserve of local notables who have the education, financial resources and influence to contest for power. For example, the law stipulates that a candidate for a leadership position at the district level must have education qualifications of/or equivalent to an advanced level certificate while the leadership qualification for the sub-county level is the ordinary level certificate. Even at the village level, which is presumed to accommodate all grassroots people, leadership positions require literacy skills in reading and writing. This means that participation at this lowest rung is not necessarily all-inclusive as assumed. It is a preserve of the literate members of the community.

The implication of this to a country such as Uganda, where 76 per cent and 63 per cent of men and women are literate respectively (UBOS 2006:14), would be that many people participate and yet some people do not because of the widespread apathy concerning local councils. There are increasing reports that people shun council meetings, mobilization meetings and local elections, and avoid paying taxes. Few people attend council meetings at the village level because they are viewed as time-wasting since participation has not translated into improved government responsiveness and service delivery (Muhumuza 2006). Neither has popular participation influenced programme outcomes of local governments since local priorities are decided by the centre. As earlier pointed out, local government funding is in form of grants that are tied to priority areas that are centrally predetermined. The growing citizen apathy in local governments can be explained by the failure to link participation in council activities and payment of taxes to improved service delivery. Therefore, it is evident that participation ushered in by decentralization reforms is symbolic and not genuine.

It is also argued that instituting a quota for women to participate in local councils has not qualitatively changed their plight. This gives credence to the argument by Arnstein that there is a difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power to affect the outcome of the process (Arnstein 1971:176). Women councillors have neither advocated

that women-specific issues be put on the agenda of local councils, nor have they mobilized, conscientized and organized the grassroots women so as to confront the forces that have historically oppressed them. This phenomenon corroborates the argument by Hart (1972:606) that democracy is not about how many times one participates but the importance of the decisions made. The reality is that this opportunity has benefited elite women who have pursued individual and selfish interests rather than those of grassroots women (Muhumuza 2004:25–40). Therefore, the argument that decentralization reforms have increased participation in Uganda needs to be treated with caution. Participation in Uganda's local governments has taken a ritualistic outlook and has not necessarily empowered the grassroots people to take full charge of their destiny.

While it is true that grassroots participation has been increased in symbolic terms, the main concern remains the cost. It is a well-known view that participation improves decision-making (Isham, Narayan and Pritchett 1995:175–200). However, the question is, should it involve everybody? Moreover, the proliferation of local government authorities has ended up consuming enormous financial resources that would otherwise be committed to development. Most of these local governments are small and unviable entities. Many of the new districts are not viable economically. They are created for patronage reasons as well as selfish political calculations to gain support, especially towards the period of presidential elections. For instance, in 2001, the year of a presidential election, the number of districts increased from 45 to 56 (Steffensen 2006:101) while in 2006, another election year, 13 more districts were created (ROU 2004:73; ROU 2007:20). What is more interesting is that these unite what used to be counties. Their creation has therefore overstretched already scarce financial and other resources. Although the fragmentation of local authorities is believed to be positively correlated with participation, it is costly for poor countries that need to commit their meagre resources to development. Besides, fragmentation leads to serious coordination problems. In the case of Uganda, fragmentation, which has increased the number of districts from 39 in 1993 to 80 in 2006, has not necessarily enhanced popular participation but has instead entrenched the power of elites.

Until recently, a big percentage of resources generated locally and contributions from the central government were used to meet recurrent costs of local governments. Large sums of money have been used to pay allowances and salaries for political leaders and technical staff in addition to other recurrent expenditure, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Uganda: Recurrent Expenditure 2001/02– 2005/06 (million shs)

Financial year (FY)	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Public administration expenditure	301,080	176,822	279,514	287,810	368,443
Public administration expenditure as percentage of total government recurrent expenditure	25.23%	18.07%	10.29%	17.45%	17.80%

Source: *Republic of Uganda, Background to the Budget 2006/2007*, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Kampala, June 2006.

Table 1 provides ample evidence that the cost of public administration consumes resources that would otherwise be used more productively for development. The cost of Uganda's public administration when compared to other sectors has been abnormally high. Whereas in the financial year 2001/2002 it was the highest (constituting 301080 million shillings or 25.23 per cent of the total recurrent expenditure), it consistently remained the third highest from financial year 2002/2003 to 2005/2006. The burden of a bloated local government structure has had to be shouldered by the central government since local authorities do not have sufficient resources to match the cost of devolved responsibilities. As a result of increasing costs of public administration, donors have repeatedly castigated the Uganda government (Wanyama 2002:13). It is therefore evident that Uganda's decentralization reforms have wasted scarce resources on public administration activities of local authorities (e.g. organizing periodic elections) instead of development.

It was earlier indicated that Uganda's decentralization reforms adopted a devolution form whereby political, administrative and fiscal autonomy was given to local authorities. The giving of fiscal autonomy to local authorities was indeed a step in the right direction. The major pitfall of decentralization experiments in Africa has been either the lack of power to generate revenue independently or because of a small resource envelope nationally. Whereas Uganda's local authorities are constitutionally empowered to raise revenue through local taxes, little progress has been made. First of all, revenue sources that were earmarked for local governments are unreliable, generate meagre resources and are administratively expensive to collect. The sources of revenue earmarked for local governments include fees, fines, cess, market dues, licences, ground rates and graduated personal tax (GPT), among others. These sources do not generate adequate revenue compared to the more lucrative and buoyant revenue sources that are exclusively retained by the central government such as VAT, PAYE, withholding tax, vehicle registration fees and excise duty, among many others. Correspondingly, the percentage

of locally raised revenue has persistently declined to as low as 5 per cent of local government budgets. This has been partly attributed to political interference by the centre for purposes of gaining cheap political capital. For instance, GPT, which used to generate 70–80 per cent of all local revenue on average (Kiwanuka-Musisi 1999:14; ROU 2004:XVII), was politically de-campaigned by Uganda's opposition candidate (Dr Kiiza Besigye) during the presidential elections of 2001 with promises to abolish it once elected. To avoid losing votes, President Museveni also promised to revisit it when elected. He later directed that low-income people pay a flat GPT of Ushs 3000 per annum. In order to avoid the risk of losing the 2006 elections, President Museveni had no choice but to completely abolish it with effect from 1 July 2005 (ROU 2007), only eight months from the general elections. The implication of this is that local governments have increasingly become dependent on the central government to fund their budgets. Rather than enhance the fiscal autonomy of local governments, the NRM government opted to retain the most lucrative taxable sources and instead transfer resources to local governments through grants.

Whereas it is usually argued that the central government's objective of using grants is to ensure income redistribution, it is strongly believed that the major driving factor is the quest for political control. Uganda's local governments are based on districts that historically have had strong ethnic allegiances. This phenomenon explains, to some extent, why the NRM government is slowly withdrawing some of the power initially given to local governments. The implementation of decentralization in Uganda once again aroused ethnic politics because elites manipulate them for purposes of political bargaining. As observed by Udogu (1999:791) political ethnicity remains one of the daunting obstacles to democratization in Africa. Hence, it may sometimes be necessary, as Uganda's case demonstrates, to limit the degree of decentralization for purposes of preserving national cohesion. Besides, where ethnic forces are strong and the state is still fragile, political leaders may find it irresistible to maintain some degree of political control when decentralizing to avoid state collapse. Therefore, for the sake of safeguarding national cohesion and exerting effective political control through patronage politics, the NRM government may have opted for more emphasis on grants. As a result of this financial control, local authorities have had to toe the central government's line.

Though Uganda's local governments appear to be autonomous with powers to make lawful decisions, plan, tax, budget and even enact by-laws, the reality is that in the absence of fiscal autonomy, these other powers cannot be adequately exercised. Since Uganda's local governments are

dependent on central government grants for over 80 per cent of their total funding, their power of decision-making, planning and budgeting is highly curtailed. It is a fact that Uganda's local governments are actually implementers of central government priorities. This confirms the observation by Ali (1987:799), when referring to decentralization in Bangladesh, that in resource-poor countries local governments may act as bureaucratic instruments of the centre rather than as generators of alternative values, performance and aspirations. This precarious situation has been exacerbated by the internationally driven poverty-reduction strategies whereby poor countries' policies and resources are redirected to specifically approved priority areas. In the case of Uganda, fiscal transfers from the centre have been increasing since 1993, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Uganda: Fiscal Transfers to Local Governments, 1993/94–2002/03

Financial year (FY)	Amount in billions of Uganda shillings	As a percentage of the national recurrent	As a percentage of the recurrent budget and development budget
1993/94	31.5	-	-
1994/95	70.2	8	17
1995/96	116.6	12	25
1996/97	176.5	14	30
1997/98	196.4	14	30
1998/99	282.3	17	34
1999/2000	333.1	16	36
2000/01	501.9	22	50
2001/02	618.2	23	53
2002/03	669.9	27	52

Source: Speech by the Minister of Local Government, 2003.

Table 2 confirms that total transfers to local governments from 1993/1994 (when the local government system was given a statutory basis) to 2002/2003, increased considerably from 31 billion Uganda shillings to 670 billion. Conditional grants constituted about 87.8 per cent of the total transfers. The increase in central government transfers can be explained by the fact that Uganda, as a beneficiary of debt relief, was required to target its expenditure on priority areas that would benefit the majority people and subsequently reduce poverty. Thus, the government policy to reduce poverty, namely, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 1997, identified five priority areas.

These include universal primary education, primary health, water and sanitation, rural feeder roads, and agricultural modernization. The same national policy strategy guides the transfer of central government grants to local governments. For example, in FY 2006/2007, conditional grants accounted for 80 per cent of total transfers to local authorities (ROU 2007:28).

These priority areas are within the mandate of local governments, and therefore the central government had to increase fiscal transfers to ensure that these obligations are sufficiently funded. The Local Governments Act of 1997 gave local governments the responsibility for all field services that were previously managed by line ministries. Hence, local governments have a mandatory role in the delivery of the major public services identified as central to Uganda's poverty reduction strategy (Livingstone and Charlton 2001:79). However, the main problem with the various central government grants is that each specific grant has detailed conditions attached that must be fulfilled by the accounting officers of local authorities. This inevitably increases their workload. Moreover, the numerous conditions attached to grants overtax the energy of central government officials in the line ministries who have to ensure that all the districts comply with the conditions. The implication of this is that local governments just sit in their councils to rubberstamp the centrally derived policies. More importantly, anti-poverty transfers have promoted upward accountability, which is reminiscent of centralized government. This is a sad development that threatens the essence of devolution whose objective was to make government accountable to the people through a bottom-up process and not vice-versa (Craig and Porter 2003:62; Francis & James 2003:330–3). Thence, local governments lack the autonomy to decide on their main priorities since they lack the financial means to implement them.

The inadequacy of local revenue sources has seriously frustrated the execution of locally identified priority programmes and the administrative activities of local governments. Local governments are supposed to use their internally generated revenues on wages, allowances, pensions, administrative costs and the implementation of development projects. However, central government interference such as the abolishing of GPT and roadside taxes on produce has seriously constrained the operations of local authorities. Not only have they failed to finance local development programmes that have been popularly decided through the participatory bottom-up planning process,[2] but have also failed to pay salaries and wages to full-time district leaders, sitting and transport allowances to councillors as well as pay pensions to their retired employees. There are reports that councillors are increasingly shunning council meetings because of lack of funds to pay their allowances (ROU 2005:47). This has adversely affected the activities of councils. Besides,

local government officials do not carry out their mobilization, consultation and supervisory activities regularly because of insufficient funds. Moreover, the plight of retired employees has become a big embarrassment to local authorities. This sorry state of affairs has prompted the central government's intervention to rescue local governments by promising to settle the pension arrears that had accumulated over four years to 17.5 billion shillings (ROU 2006:33).

As a result of inadequate funds, the central government had to take over the payment of salaries of full-time political leaders in local governments. These include the district local government chairpersons, vice chairpersons, speakers of council, executive secretaries, mayors and sub-county/division chairpersons.[3] The move to take over the payment of salaries of top local government political leaders has attracted intense criticism since it undermines the essence of decentralization. These leaders are now viewed by the population as 'civil servants' and their power to make independent decisions is highly questionable. Put differently, they are perceived as compromised by the government.

More interesting is that the central government's takeover of the payment of salaries of full-time local government leaders originated from a presidential pledge during a meeting with them shortly before the first nationally organized multiparty election of 2006. The president had organized a meeting with the local government chiefs purportedly to listen to and discuss the problems and challenges that their local authorities were facing. The move was, however, interpreted as a disguised approach to solicit their political support in the 2006 multiparty elections. The local government leaders also opportunistically complained about poor remuneration, among many other issues discussed. Regardless of the centrality of other pressing issues raised in that meeting, the president placed special interest on their remuneration and immediately promised them a salary rise. The rise in their salaries was an irresistible move not only to win their political support during the upcoming elections but also to enable the central government to control them. Their salaries are now being paid from the consolidated fund (central government pool). However, there are central government plans to transfer back the payment of these salaries via unconditional grants.

The point to be emphasized here is that the failure of the central government to cede profitable and buoyant revenue sources to local governments has tremendously incapacitated local governments in executing their mandatory obligations. In short, inadequate revenues sources have made decentralization in Uganda a sham. Whereas the system design of Uganda's decentralization is impressive and if allowed to function properly would perhaps be quite effective, the reality on the ground is that Uganda's local governments have

been greatly starved of independent resources and made dependent on the centre. Therefore, irrespective of the symbolic structures, officials and the bee-hive activities of local governments, the hidden face is that what glitters is not gold but disguised centralization at play.

The current status of decentralization reforms in Uganda is not accidental but is a product of well-calculated NRM strategy to manipulate donor conditions by creating an impression that power is decentralized when in actual fact it is not. The outcome of the political maneuvre has been successful because the NRM's agreement to 'decentralize' power improved its image abroad and allowed the smooth flow of donor aid. The act of decentralizing power to local authorities was carefully manipulated to the extent that it has been effectively used both as an instrument of patronage and political control at the grassroots (Smith 1985:194–7). It has therefore not served as an instrument for empowering the people to make popular and independent decisions, to plan, to make government responsive and to enforce accountability on a sustainable basis.

The euphoria about decentralization in Africa in particular was partly based on the expectation that popular participation would make local governments transparent and accountable compared to the remote and corrupt central government. This high expectation appears to have become an illusion in Uganda. Notwithstanding the massive but cosmetic participation in Uganda's local governments as exemplified by periodic elections, annual budget conferences organized with much fanfare, and a semblance of oversight institutions, poor accountability constitutes a big challenge. A number of official reports and stories in the mass media have repeatedly revealed the financial rot in local governments (e.g. ROU 2003:3; *The New Vision*, 31 January 2004:5; *Sunday Monitor*, 1 and 14–15 February 2004). Financial scandals that have either involved outright misappropriation of public resources or conniving to defraud or both by local officials have become rampant to the extent that in 2006 local governments were ranked the third most corrupt government institutions in Uganda (*The New Vision*, 4 January 2007:17). Likewise, the misuse of local government resources by officials has become common. More particularly, procurement of goods and services is characterized by corrupt tendencies where political leaders are reportedly involved in tender scandals that lead to conflicts of interest. Besides, rather than playing the role of supervising civil servants and also ensuring that taxpayers' money is put to good use, elected leaders instead connive with them and embezzle public resources. This confirms the argument by Treisman (2001:399–457; see also Bardhan & Mookhejee 2000:135–9) that decentralization is likely to lead to capture by local interest groups and increased corruption.

Other forms of corruption have been cited in the recruitment process. District officials have been reported to engage in acts that flout the standardized rules such as recruitment based on merit. They have been accused of promoting nepotism in recruitment. There has been a tendency to recruit people whose birth origins are from particular local governments while rejecting those from outside the district regardless of their suitability by qualification. There are also reports of influence-peddling in local government recruitment. Friends, relatives and political supporters of influential local government officials have been recruited fraudulently. A good example was in Rakai district where the government ombudsman (Inspector General of Government) had to intervene because of such irregularities that involved, among others, the district chairperson who influenced the recruitment of his son and daughter to the posts of Sub-county Chief and Environment Officer respectively (*New Vision*, 20 May 2007:3).

The growing corruption has negatively affected service delivery, which reaffirms the scepticism by Burki et al. (1999) that decentralization may also lower the quality of public services, as was the case in Latin America and Russia. Services have either been of poor quality or not available at all. This has increased people's disillusionment with local governments. Corruption has also intensified competition for leadership positions at the local government level compared to the past when individuals were reluctant to take on such leadership responsibilities because it was viewed as a sacrifice. This perception has greatly changed given the associated benefits. The competition for leadership positions in local governments has become so stiff that aspiring candidates are willing to spend considerable sums to bribe voters and buy out their opponents. In other circumstances, the contest for power has become violent and lives have been lost. A case in point was in Mayuge district where one of the contesting candidates for district chairperson was alleged to have been murdered by his competitor. All this is attributed to the material benefits that are closely associated with the positions of leadership in local governments.

In response to the growing corrupt tendencies, the NRM government has used it as a pretext to further weaken the autonomy of local governments. Not only has it recentralized the power to recruit and control key civil servants in local governments (with effect from 30 September 2005), but has also removed the political control over district procurement of goods and services from the elected leaders and transferred it to centrally controlled civil servants (ROU 2007:2–3). The tender boards, which used to be responsible for procurement, were scrapped and replaced by contract committees that are now composed of technical officers appointed by Chief Administrative

Officers (CAOs) and Town Clerks. The recruitment of the CAOs and Town Clerks, who are accounting officers in the rural districts and urban local governments respectively, has also been recentralized. This means that Uganda's local governments have further lost the key personnel function to recruit and discipline their staff. This role serves an important function of ensuring that civil servants are loyal to people's representatives, who should ideally have effective political control over them. In the absence of this important personnel function, the autonomy of local governments is seriously eroded. The implication of the transfer of the CAOs and Town Clerks back to the centre would, according to Steffensen (2006:98), cut a crucial link of accountability between elected local councils and local government staff. Instead, central control has been reinforced and decentralization remains a mere shell.

Decentralization reforms are underpinned by the objective of freeing the central government from the unnecessary details of managing local level affairs. It was anticipated to free local authorities from central government interference so as to allow them flexibility and independence in decision-making to ensure innovation and sustainability. These intentions have been sacrificed for cheap and selfish political interests by the NRM leaders. Uganda's decentralization policy adopted RC popular structures that had initially been used by the NRM in the liberated parts of the country during the guerrilla war. The RC structure later functioned as a political organ of the NRM during the no-party period (1986–2005). It was eventually adopted as a local council structure, which was supposed to be separate from those organs of the NRM political organization. However, the NRM political organization has continued to treat the local council (LC) structure as one of its political organs to help it solicit political support at the grassroots especially during elections (ROU 1997). The president periodically invites local government delegations composed of locally elected leaders for meetings at his countryside home. As a consequence, many of them have ended up being co-opted and used to influence, mobilize support and campaign for the president.

The effect of this has not only compromised the autonomy of local governments but has also tarnished their image, given the fact that they are supposed to serve the interests of citizens regardless of their political inclinations. This situation has been worsened by the introduction of multiparty politics in 2005. The NRM which transformed into a political party, National Resistance Movement Organization (NRM-O), has continued to use the LC structure as its grassroots organ to galvanize political support for itself. There are allegations that the NRM party gave campaign funds for the 2006

presidential elections to local council members to carry out the mobilization activities of the party.

The danger posed by the failure by the NRM party to distance itself from the LC structure came up more vividly during the re-election of district chairpersons for Kamuli and Pallisa districts in May 2007. In the case of Kamuli district, the opposition candidate for the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) appeared likely to defeat the NRM candidate. However, the majority of elected councillors belonged to the NRM-O party. Subsequently, the Secretary General of the NRM-O party (Hon. Amama Mbabazi) and the president, who went there to promote the campaign of their candidate, discouraged voters from supporting the opposition candidate. They maintained that it would be a waste as the majority of councillors were NRM-O party members and would therefore make it difficult for a winning opposition candidate to form a government. Hence, the opposition chairperson would be unable to function. This argument is believed to have indirectly influenced the winning campaign of the NRM candidate. A similar situation transpired in the case of Pallisa where eventually the independent candidate won the election. However, the Secretary General of the NRM-O party wrote a letter to all NRM councillors of Pallisa district council who dominated it numerically (25 out of 37) not to accept nomination for positions in the district government headed by the new chairman unless he agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding to support the position of the NRM government (Amama-Mbabazi 2007).

The patronizing approach that tends to characterize the multiparty political dispensation has equally contributed to the undermining of the principal objectives of decentralization reforms that stress autonomy in decision-making. Such practices may risk undermining local government legitimacy, especially among the people that subscribe to the opposition. Besides, there is a risk that future leaders who do not subscribe to the NRM party could dismantle the LC structure and replace it with a different system. This would negatively affect the process of building strong and enduring national institutions that are supposed to serve all the citizens irrespective of their diverging political affiliations.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that decentralization reforms are necessary, especially in African countries that tend to be associated with predatory and patrimonial politics. As earlier argued, the African state has passed through a series of economic and political crises that seriously eroded its competence and weakened its legitimacy. To address this crisis, the African state has had to be reorganized. Decentralization constitutes a component of public sector reforms

that were pursued by African states. Restructuring power relations between the national and sub-national governments both vertically and horizontally is believed to promote good governance and sustainable development. It is because of these assumed advantages that decentralization reforms have attracted international support.

However, the experience with decentralization experiments in Africa is disappointing. The dismal performance of decentralization reforms on the continent needs to be understood within the context of the converging but self-serving interests of Western donors and African rulers. Whereas the motive of donors in advocating decentralization reforms is underpinned by ideological interests to spread their liberal values, African rulers accepted decentralization reforms for purposes of political preservation. In other words, decentralization reforms served two important purposes of accessing Western donor aid and creating political legitimacy. Therefore, Uganda's experience with decentralization reforms needs to be understood in the context of the converging selfish interests of Western donors and African rulers. The adoption of decentralization reforms by Museveni's NRM government was largely driven by the need to access Western aid and build grassroots patronage networks for his own political survival.

Therefore, the much-hyped decentralization reforms in Uganda have limitations because they were embraced as a matter of ritual rather than conviction *per se*. The consequence of this is that local governments' financial autonomy has been seriously weakened. Similarly, local council structures have been used to function as grassroots organs for the NRM-O party. Besides, decentralization reforms have not necessarily empowered the people in decision-making because of their capture by elites. They have also intensified corruption tendencies and consequently affected service delivery. Moreover, these reforms have ignited ethnic nationalism, as evidenced by nepotism in the recruitment of district employees. It is, however, important to recognize that the contradictions in question tend to take advantage of the weak capacity of the state. In normal circumstances, a strong state would find no problem reconciling such interests. Therefore, the main argument here is that rather than address the contradictions that arise from decentralization reforms, the NRM government has instead used them to justify its ulterior motives of recentralizing power.

It is evident that decentralization reforms are in essence good. However, they confront many challenges that are linked to state-building, especially in Africa. Ethnicity problems, insufficient financial resources and multiparty politics pose a big challenge to decentralization reforms in Africa, and therefore tend to discourage the centre from ceding more power. The interface of

such challenges with the selfish political interests of major players tends to frustrate decentralization experiments. Therefore, decentralization reforms may not succeed unless the national state is itself reformed to allow internal democracy. This ought to be accompanied by honesty and political will on the side both of the Western advocates and African rulers. There must be a genuine need to transform power relations vertically and horizontally. Such reforms must be tailored to each country's specific realities. This implies that decentralization models should not be designed to 'fit all' irrespective of the diverse environmental circumstances. Hence, each nation must be allowed to adopt a model of reform that is compatible with its history, cultural values and political realities.

Notes
1. In order to reverse the age-old discrimination of women, the law stipulates that women must constitute a third of all local councils in Uganda.
2. The participatory bottom-up planning process is the mandatory mode of planning in all local governments of Uganda.
3. The law that governs Uganda's local governments (Local Governments Act, 1997) stipulates that the number of secretaries/ministers must not exceed a maximum of five.

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Decentralisation in Uganda: Prospects for Improved Service Delivery

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, many Sub-Saharan African countries have been undergoing structural reforms with a view to promoting efficient service delivery. Decentralisation, defined as the transfer of authority from central to local governments to perform certain duties, is seen as one of the public sector reform strategies to increase service delivery. Decentralisation in Uganda began in 1986 with the coming into power of the National Resistance Movement, which aimed at promoting democracy and enhancing local participation. In Uganda, political decentralisation developed along with financial decentralisation. The goal of political decentralisation was to promote people's participation in the democratic process of Uganda. This took the form of Administrative Units – Resistance Councils (RC)[1] running from the village to district levels. Financial decentralisation, on the other hand, attempted to assign responsibilities and taxes between the centre and local governments, to enable the transfer of grants and other resources to different parts of the country, and to improve service delivery. This paper will review different government, public and academic documents as well as findings of other researches such as UN reports about decentralisation and service delivery in Uganda. Based on these sources the paper will answer the following questions: to what extent does decentralisation increase service delivery? To what extent does decentralisation increase efficiency, participation, accountability and effectiveness? What are the challenges of implementing decentralisation in Uganda?

Key words: Decentralisation, accountability, efficiency, economy, effectiveness and performance.

Résumé

Depuis les années 1980, de nombreux pays d'Afrique subsaharienne ont connu des réformes structurelles visant à promouvoir une fourniture de services

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efficiente. La décentralisation, définie comme le transfert d'autorité du gouvernement central aux administrations locales pour l'accomplissent de certaines fonctions, est considérée comme l'une des stratégies de réforme du secteur public pour améliorer la fourniture de services. La décentralisation, en Ouganda, a commencé en 1986 avec l'arrivée au pouvoir du Mouvement National de Resistance, qui visait à promouvoir la démocratie et à renforcer la participation locale. En Ouganda, la politique de décentralisation s'est développée en même temps que la décentralisation financière. L'objectif de la décentralisation politique était de promouvoir la participation populaire dans le processus démocratique de l'Ouganda. Cela a pris la forme d'unités administratives – les Conseils de la Résistance (CR)[1] qui assuraient la direction locale depuis le village jusqu'au niveau du district. La décentralisation financière, d'autre part, a tenté d'attribuer des responsabilités et des impôts entre le niveau central et les gouvernements locaux, pour permettre le transfert des subventions et d'autres ressources aux différentes régions du pays et améliorer la fourniture des services. Ce document passera en revue différents documents gouvernementaux et publics, des documents académiques et les conclusions d'autres recherches tels les rapports de l'ONU sur la décentralisation et la fourniture de services en Ouganda. Sur la base de ces sources, cet article répondra aux questions suivantes: dans quelle mesure la décentralisation améliore-t-elle la fourniture de services? Dans quelle mesure la décentralisation améliore-t-elle l'efficience, la participation, la responsabilisation et l'efficacité? Quels sont les défis de la mise en œuvre de la décentralisation en Ouganda?

Mots clés: décentralisation, responsabilisation, efficience, économie, efficacité et performance.

Introduction

Decentralisation is the transfer of administrative and political powers from central to regional or sub-national governments. Decentralisation is a long-time practice in Africa. However, it became more pronounced in the 1980s and 1990s when it featured as one of the World Bank's structural criteria. Decentralisation programmes in Africa followed the recommendations of the World Bank for developing countries to devolve political and administrative powers to local and autonomous levels. The reason for this focus is that most of the social services such as health, education, water and sanitation that are a responsibility of government are systematically failing (World Bank, 2003). The adjustment programme, therefore, had improved and more efficient distribution of goods and services as its prime target. In addition, the recommendation was made on the basis that decentralisation would quicken decision-making processes and increase participation by the local people. This would result in decisions better tailored to people's needs and reduced corruption and clientelism, which went along with centralised government.

Proponents of decentralisation argue that the ills of centralised government include corruption, clientelism and political alienation and that these can be cured by decentralisation of power from central government to sub-national governments (Faguet 2000).

The motivation for decentralisation varies from country to country and from region to region. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it was part of political transformation from centralised government where few participated in decision-making to a decentralised system where many could participate in the decision-making process. In Sri Lanka and South Africa it was a response to ethnic and regional conflicts. It is argued that decentralisation provides an institutional mechanism for bringing divided groups into a formal, rule-bound bargaining process (Treismann, 1998). Decentralisation thus serves as a path to national unity. In Uganda, Chile and Cote D'Ivoire, it was carried out for improving service delivery (Shah and Theresa 2004). In Uganda, the Local Government Act (1997), a central part of the decentralisation policy, stipulates that most central government powers and responsibilities for public services planning and delivery should be devolved to local governments.

The aim of this paper is to discuss decentralisation as a policy for delivering services in Uganda. The arguments for decentralisation are reviewed against its success in improving service delivery in Uganda. The paper examines the different decentralisation frameworks and their implication for service delivery. It goes on to examine the challenges of decentralisation and proposes mechanisms that can make decentralisation an effective tool for delivering services to local communities. Government and public documents, academic analysis and findings of other research about decentralisation and service delivery in Uganda are considered. Based on these sources the paper will answer the following question: To what extent has decentralisation increased service delivery in Uganda? In this respect, the extent to which decentralisation has increased efficiency, participation, accountability and effectiveness in the service sector in Uganda will be analysed. Finally, the paper will discuss the challenges of implementing decentralisation in Uganda.

What is Decentralisation?

Definitions of decentralisation are many but four types predominate: (1) *deconcentration* – the transfer of administrative responsibilities from the central government to local governments within a central government ministry or agency; (2) *delegation* – the transfer of managerial and administrative responsibilities of central ministries for specifically defined functions to organisations that are external to the regular bureaucratic structure; (3) *devolution* – the substantial transfer of powers and authority and functions from

higher or central government to local units, upon which the local units or governments subsequently acquire significant and autonomous financial and legal powers to function without reference to central government; (4) *privatisation* – the transfer of responsibilities to private or individual companies in a process by which service delivery is made by private companies who win tenders through a competitive tendering process administered by the government agency.

The Ugandan Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) argues that devolution features prominently in Uganda (MFPED, 1998). One of the main features of devolution is the ability of local governments to exercise both financial and political autonomy. This paper will illustrate that decisions at local government are frequently influenced and/or affected by the financial and political dependence of local governments on the central government. This feature eliminates devolution as a decentralisation practice in Uganda. A close look at the implementation of the decentralisation policy indicates that the decentralisation system in Uganda can well be described as a mixture of delegation, deconcentration and privatisation. Most of the public services are currently being offered by private firms who through competitive bidding are awarded tenders to provide services.

Aims of Decentralisation

Decentralisation in most developing countries arose in the 1970s out of the dissatisfaction with the centralised systems of national planning and administration that were the by-products of former colonial systems. These systems had been emphasised in the 1950s and the 1960s during the struggle for independence. The 1970s saw a need to involve more people in the planning and decision-making process, and to direct planning to people's needs. In the 1990s the World Bank regarded decentralisation as a necessary part of structural reform to promote efficient use of resources and to address local needs of developing countries. Thus, Golola (2003:256) argues that 'the process of decentralisation in sub-Saharan Africa has coincided, and perhaps even dictated by, efforts by the donor community to reorient aid policies'. Apart from these internal and external donor pressures for countries to decentralise, globalisation played a major role in the decentralisation movement. Decentralisation comes as a response to the global demand for equity, accountability and efficient service delivery. Decentralisation is opposed to centralised government systems, which had minimal responsiveness to local needs.

It is argued, therefore, that decentralisation makes possible speedier and more responsive public service attuned to local or individual needs. It enhances

efficiency, through reduced bureaucracy (Pollit, Birchall and Putnam 1998:1). Muriisa (2007), argues that decentralisation offers two main benefits to the people; freedom to access and freedom to decide. The former implies that decentralisation enables people to voice their needs and to access certain resources through their representatives. The later implies that within a decentralised framework, people take autonomous decisions without influence from the central government. According to Turner and Hulme (1997), through delegation within organisations and coordination between organisations, improved decision-making and greater efficiency and effectiveness are promoted. According to Braun and Grote (2000), participatory local governments are more responsive to local needs, elected officials are more accountable and responsive to the people than officials of central governments, and people are more involved in decision-making.

Golola (2003:259) presents four main objectives of decentralisation, and all have improved service delivery as their main component: (1) to transfer real power to the districts and therefore to reduce the workload of officials at the centre; (2) to bring administrative and political control to the point where services are delivered; (3) to improve financial accountability through establishment of clear links between tax payment and service provision; and (4) to improve the capacity of local councils to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituencies.

Hutchinson (1991) reviews a number of country experiences with decentralisation. In Mexico, decentralisation was seen as strengthening operational efficiency and management of health services at the level of state governments and to link planning of the health services more closely to overall national planning of the country. In Papua New Guinea, decentralisation was a method of creating regional autonomy with a view to increasing appropriate responses to local needs and quicker decision-making. In Tanzania, decentralisation aimed at increasing participation of the people in planning and improving coordination between the relevant agencies, reducing duplication of services and making more effective use of the available resources. In South Africa, decentralisation was employed as a means of redressing past inequities created by the apartheid regime.

Kayizzi-Mugerwa (1998:36) argues that the main objectives of decentralisation in Uganda are increased democracy, accountability and responsiveness, and the improved capacity of the local people to participate in the decision-making process, especially with regard to service delivery, and to promote local ownership of the programmes.

Faguet (2000) shows that in Papua New Guinea devolution increased popular participation in government and improved the planning, management

and coordination capacity of provincial administrators. In Senegal and New Zealand, it attempted to bring services nearer to people.

Measuring the Achievements of Decentralisation

In the discussion above, I have pointed out that decentralisation aims at addressing people's needs at the grassroots. It has to be added, however, that decentralisation is still ongoing in many countries, and therefore it is not easy to establish its successes or failures. Despite this limitation there are measures one can use to identify levels of achievement, namely, efficiency, economy, effectiveness, performance and accountability.

Efficiency: According to proponents of decentralisation, it promotes efficient allocation of resources. Efficiency measures the extent to which output is maximised using minimum resource inputs. Two types of efficiency may be considered: *allocative efficiency*, which considers a match between public service and local needs, and *productive efficiency*, which considers a match between provision of the public service and its costs, improved accountability and reduced levels of red tape.

Economy: This refers to the production using the cheapest means. In competitive tendering, it is assumed that resource inputs are obtained from the cheapest source while services are provided by the lowest bidder.

Effectiveness: This measures the extent to which the original objectives and policy goals are achieved.

It has to be emphasised that the above measures are not isolated from each other but rather affect and impinge on each other. For example, increased economy may be achieved with loss of effectiveness and efficiency. Thus an increase in school enrolment without a corresponding increase in recruitment of teachers may lead to loss of effectiveness because some children may lack sufficient attention.

Accountability: With regard to decentralisation, accountability concerns the one to whom the officials account. There are two forms of accountability: *political accountability* in which the elected representatives account to their electorates, and *administrative accountability*, or the extent to which managers and leaders achieve set targets. Usually, the focus is on the extent to which targets are achieved within the limits of the budget. Both accountability types are applicable.

Decentralisation and Service Delivery in Uganda

Decentralisation in Uganda is taking place alongside broad economic and political reforms and should be seen in the context of these fundamental reforms. Uganda's 1995 constitution and 1997 Local Government Act specify

five levels of local government – district, county, sub-county, parish and village, among which the 78 districts and more than 900 sub-counties[2] have political authority and financial autonomy. Each of the decentralisation efforts (political and financial) had specific goals of improving service delivery.

Financial decentralisation is expected to facilitate access to resources by the local governments. The financial decentralisation involves devolving budgetary and spending powers to the districts. Important expenditure responsibilities in the social sector were devolved to its sub-national governments (Nsibambi 1998). The goal of political decentralisation was to involve more people in the decision-making and planning processes to respond to local needs. The LCs are consultative forums for local decision-making (Saito 1999). Through elected representatives, policy proposals are channelled to the legislative bodies. Within the LC framework, all districts are expected to compile district development plans, which must reflect grassroots needs. The LCV is the council in which development plans of the district are made. The LCs are supposed to implement the development plans such as provision of public services. Within the LC framework, extension workers to implement the development plans are employed at the LC3 level. The public service officials (local administrators) report to local council officials, who in turn account to the people, not to the central government as was the case in the former centralised system. This accountability procedure is reflective of the democratic process in service provision in Uganda. Saito (1999) traces the planning process in the districts of Kampala, Rakai and Mukono, and argues that the planning process and accountability procedures reflect popular participation in initiating and implementing development programmes.

The goal of financial decentralisation was to transfer authority for collecting and allocating taxes and other financial grants to local governments. The provision, management and maintenance of primary healthcare, primary education, roads and basic urban services were decentralised to districts. In spite of decentralisation, however, some important decisions and responsibilities remained at the centre. For example, in health, staffing decisions are made at the district level but district funding comes largely from the central government in the form of conditional grants with explicitly identified uses. In education the curriculum and most funding for primary education flow from the centre but decisions about personnel, school construction and operational maintenance are made locally (World Bank 2001). In Uganda, the provision of primary education serves as a good example in which participation of the people in the delivery of services is exhibited. Parents and the local population provide labour for the construction of classrooms while government provides funding for corrugated iron sheets and other capital inputs.

In health, the immunisation programme shows a marked success through decentralisation. Nsibambi (1998) points out that in Bushenyi district, the *District Three Year Development Plan, 2001–2004* indicated that district service coverage of immunisation was 80 per cent. This programme succeeded largely because of the involvement and participation of local leaders in mobilising local people. The local council officials, especially the local council secretary for women and health, were instrumental in mobilising people to take children for immunisation.

Through competitive tendering road maintenance has improved. Many rural and feeder roads are maintained. However, there are complaints that many private bodies do not pay employees the going rate for their labour. The poor pay structure has not only led to low motivation for workers but also is reflected in the shoddy work provided by some private contractors. These contractors use poor materials in road-building, resulting in constructed roads deteriorating quickly.

Failures and Challenges of Decentralisation as Policy for Improving Service Delivery in Uganda

Despite the few identified examples of successful service delivery in Uganda resulting from decentralisation, there still remains a gap between service provision and local needs. This gap is created by lack of adequate funding at the local level, and is largely reflected in the education and health sectors. In the education sector, since the inception of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in 1997, there has been a growing number of enrolled children in schools. This increase, however, has not been met by corresponding increase in both infrastructure and staffing. As a result, overcrowding and low staffing remain major challenges that hinder proper implementation of the programme in some districts.

With the introduction of universal primary education in 1996, school enrolment rose from 3.6 million students to 6.9 million between 1996 and 2001 (UNDP 2004). Yet this near-doubling in school enrolment was not matched by staff recruitment owing to lack of adequate finance from central government and local sources. Most financial allocations to local governments are either put to non-education expenditures or do not reach their final destination:

> In 1996 a public expenditure tracking survey of local governments and primary schools revealed that only 13% of the per-student capitation grants made it to the schools in 1991–1995. In 1995 for every dollar spent on non-wage education items by the central government, only 20 cents reached the schools, with local governments capturing most of the funding (UNDP 2004:63).

In health, provision of medical care and services has fallen far short of local needs through lack of finances. A survey of health services conducted in 1996 found that the most common problem facing the health sector was that no drugs were being provided to patients. This was because most of the grants transferred to districts for health had been used for salaries (Nsibambi 1998:58). In addition, the lower tiers of government lacked the ability to manage public finances and maintain proper accounting procedures. Spending on primary healthcare halved, from 33 per cent to 16 per cent, during decentralisation (Akin, Hutchinson and Strumpf 2001).

It should be noted that for decentralisation to achieve its targets, there has to be high level of public accountability. A number of problems with regard to accountability have been registered. There was lack of transparency in the allocation of resources and weak budgetary procedures with regard to record-keeping and auditing. In education, for example, there was disproportionate distribution of finance to the schools, with the poor schools receiving less or nothing of the capitation grants. Parents and students had little or no information regarding the amount of the capitation grant entitled to them.

Kayizzi-Mugerwa (1999:42) argues that the success of decentralisation will depend on the capacity of districts and urban governments to raise their own revenue and use it efficiently in the provision of services. However, the generation of local revenues is limited, with local governments largely depending on central government financial transfers. In the 1990s, on average, only 13.2 per cent of revenue in Uganda could be generated locally (Saito 1999). A national graduated tax had been operational for many years until 2006. With the introduction of decentralisation, many districts started to charge education, environment and sanitation, and health taxes along with graduated tax. These additional charges specifically targeting certain service sectors substantially contributed to the service delivery in these sectors. Graduated tax, however, was removed in 2006, leaving these districts financially paralysed.

The abolition of the Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) meant that the local and urban governments had limited financial sources to finance public services, as is the case with education and health cited above. As a result there has been an increase in the reliance by local governments on central government. This lack of financial autonomy affects the implementation of development plans and consequently limited service delivery since most of funds are diverted before they reach their final destination.

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Developmentsurvey on health and agricultural service delivery in Uganda (1998) found that there was deficiency in the percolation of funds allocated to these sectors. Despite the bid for financial autonomy implied by decentralisation, the central

government still provided funding for major services at local government level. However, provision of funding suffered diversion in the process of allocation to local governments. MFPED and MAFAI (1998) thus reported a shortage of incentives and facilitation for districts. This resulted in the inability to deliver Agricultural Extension Services (AES) to grassroots farmers. Analysis of most district budget estimates for the 1997/1998 financial year showed that only 1 per cent of the total expenditure was allocated to AES.

It should be pointed out that the most daunting challenge facing decentralisation as a framework for service delivery is a lack of capacity and personnel at sub-national government level to exercise responsibility for service delivery. The lower-level governments lacked the ability to manage public finances and maintain proper accounting procedures. As a result, lower levels of funding reached the local level.

The lack of funding at the local level paralysed the personnel sector. In the first instance, decentralisation led to staff retrenchment through civil service reform. In the agricultural sector the Agricultural Extension officer–farmer ratio was 1:1000–3000 in 1998. The wider area covered by each extension officer meant that few farmers had access to these services. On average, the proportion of farmers contacting Agricultural Extension Officer was only 10 per cent. In Tororo district, AE staffs were deployed only up to sub-county level and had limited direct contact with farmers. In Bushenyi, Muriisa (2001) found that whereas extension workers had motorcycles to use to visit farmers, they only had a monthly allocation of 25 litres of fuel for extension work. Only 1 per cent of farmers were receiving extension services.

The same problems of shortfalls in funding and personnel were observed in health, with limited medical personnel and medicine, and in education with limited teaching staff. Spending on public health, as earlier mentioned, fell from 33 per cent to 16 per cent during decentralisation (Akin, Hutchinson, and Strumpf 2001), while, as also noted, increased enrolment of primary school children during UPE resulted in overcrowding and low staff capacity to handle large classes. The increase in school enrolment was not marched by increased recruitment of new staff (UNDP 2004).

Another challenge of decentralisation to improved service delivery is the perception gap between service receivers and providers about the benefits of the policy. According to Saito (1999), on the one hand, the public service officials perceive that decentralisation improves control and the mobilisation of resources, and on the other, the service receivers perceive that services have not improved in recent years.

Further, decentralisation as an approach to service delivery is limited by the failure of politicians to cede political power to the local governments. Golola (2003) maintains that politicians at the centre have little wish to cede power to the local governments. They propose reforms including decentralisation when they expect benefit for themselves. This failure to cede power by politicians at the centre limits democracy and autonomous decision-making at the local level.

One of the objectives of decentralisation is

> to transfer real power to the district and thus reduce the load on the 'remote' and under-resourced central government officials. These officers are often remote in terms of geographical distance and frequently unknown to the local people in terms of language, culture, interests and values (Murembe, Mokhawa and Sebudubudu 2005).

Further, implementation of the decentralisation programme is marred by the conflicts between the politicians and the civil servants. Largely, conflicts emerge from the demand for accountability by the civil servants from the politicians. In several districts, there have been conflicts between the Local Council Five (LCV) chairman and the Residence District Commissioner,[3] for example, Ntungamo and Kiruhura districts. In the *Daily Monitor* for 20 August 2007, it was reported that the Ntungamo RDC claimed to be under threat from the LCV chairman because he demanded accountability and had exposed the LCV chairman's corruption practices. In Kiruhura, the acting RDC reportedly resigned, citing corruption and intimidation from elected representatives.

Another limitation of the decentralisation policy comes from the response to externally determined programmes that differ from local needs. In one district, residents argued that funds to implement decentralisation were usually obtained from donors who fund specific projects even when these may not be priorities of the local area. In the district, members cited an example of a road recently constructed in the area, but pointed out that if they were given a choice, they would have preferred equipping the health centres with medicine.

In terms of accountability, the lack of financial autonomy and insufficient funds to facilitate local government officials means that many of the local government officials including councillors have remained voluntary, without compensation. Such people are difficult to hold accountable to the local communities (Golola 2003). There is increased corruption by these officials who try to compensate themselves by misappropriating funds and by extortion from the citizens. In the decentralised framework, I can rightly assert that there is decentralisation of corruption. This is a big challenge to service

delivery because much of the available financial resources end up enriching individuals employed in the public sector, particularly local governments.

Conclusions

This paper has discussed decentralisation as an approach to service delivery in Uganda. The paper argues that decentralisation was aimed at addressing local needs that were not being addressed by the centralised framework. The paper reviews different academic and empirical works done in Uganda since decentralisation policy was started. The paper premises that for proper evaluation of the extent to which decentralisation has led to the improvement of service delivery, one needs to look at accountability, efficiency and effectiveness as tools of evaluation. The paper argues that decentralisation has achieved only a limited success in service delivery in the education and health sectors where the participation of citizens was suggested as a main contribution of decentralisation.

The paper shows that, despite the good intentions of decentralisation, its implementation has faced challenges of financing, personnel capacity at the local level and effective monitoring of service delivery. The paper concludes that as a policy for improving service delivery, decentralisation falls short of realising that objective in Uganda, despite a few isolated examples of successful service delivery, as in the case of immunisation, education and participatory planning. Despite the challenges of decentralisation, which are discussed as hindering effective service delivery in Uganda, in consideration of the benefits of decentralisation, the paper concludes that if such challenges could be addressed, decentralisation has more potential of improving service delivery than centralised government.

The paper suggests that improving local funding sources and creating mechanisms through which public officials could be held more accountable would lead to improved service delivery. Attaining financial capacity would lead to effective implementation of decentralisation and efficient service delivery.

Notes

1. Representation to the council was by popular election by the citizens. After the 1995 constitution, the RCs were replaced by Local Councils (LCs) but the system remained the same.
2. The number of districts and sub-counties has increased substantially with some counties attaining district status and new ones being created.
3. The LCV chairman is an elected politician who heads the district while the RDC is the presidential appointee to the district and head of public service in the district.

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Privatization and 'Agentification' of Public Services Delivery in Africa: Extent and Managerial Leadership Implications in Tanzania[1]

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Abstract

The paper dwells on the very current and topical issue of changing patterns and practices of public service delivery in Africa. The author offers a critical analysis and discussion on the extent to which public service delivery is being undertaken by the private sector (privatization) and executive agencies ('agentification') in Tanzania and the related managerial leadership implications. The article evidences the fact that over the last decade, Tanzania has taken many and far-reaching bold steps to reform its public sector and improve the performance of civil servants. Among the notable reforms is the participation of the private sector and executive agencies in the delivery of non-core public services through the private sector participation (PSP) initiative. The paper also shows that the privatization and 'agentification' of the public service delivery in Tanzania has a number of managerial leadership implications on the part of the public sector, the private sector and the executive agencies involved. Finally, the paper demonstrates that good managerial leadership, in the institutions involved in service delivery, is crucial if the objectives of privatization and 'agentification' of public service delivery are to be achieved.

Key words: Privatization, agentification, public services delivery, implication, Tanzania.

Résumé

Cet article met l'accent sur la très actuelle question de l'évolution des modes et des pratiques de la fourniture de services publics en Afrique. L'auteur propose une analyse critique et un examen de l'ampleur avec laquelle la fourniture de services publics est en train d'être entreprise par le secteur privé (privatisation)

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et les agences exécutives (agentification) en Tanzanie, ainsi que les implications connexes pour le leadership en matière de gestion. Il a été découvert dans l'étude que durant la dernière décennie, la Tanzanie a pris de nombreuses mesures de grande envergure et audacieuses pour réformer son secteur public et améliorer la performance des fonctionnaires. Parmi les réformes notables, figure la participation du secteur privé et des agences exécutives dans la fourniture de services non essentiels à travers l'initiative de la participation du secteur privé (PSP). Il est également démontré, à travers cette étude que la privatisation et l'«agentification» de la fourniture de services publics en Tanzanie a un certain nombre d'implications pour le leadership en matière de gestion dans le secteur public, le secteur privé et les agences exécutives concernées.

Finalement, l'étude propose une bonne gestion des institutions impliquées dans la fourniture de services comme étant un élément essentiel pour l'atteinte des objectifs de la «privatisation» et de l'«agentification» de la fourniture de services. **Mots clés:** Privatisation, agentification, fourniture de services publics, implication, Tanzanie.

Introduction

Public services delivery has been one of the key functions of the public sector. Traditionally and until in the recent past – the mid-1980s and early 1990s in most parts of Africa – the sector has been directly involved in delivering both core and none-core public services. This has mainly been the case for the countries with a socialist political and economic orientation, like Tanzania. Services such as education, health, water, sanitation, revenue collection, and indeed all other public services, were mainly in the public sector domain until the mid-1980s and early 1990s. From the mid-1980s there has been a strong current of reforms from public to private sector and market-oriented management of most economies. Tanzania, like many other countries, has subscribed to the reforms in virtually all spheres, including in the public sector.

The country started undertaking major and far-reaching reforms in the management of its economy in the mid-1980s, and the process is ongoing. Among the reform candidates is the public sector in general and public sector services delivery in particular. Among the major reforms in public sector services delivery in Tanzania are private sector participation (privatization) and formation of executive agencies (agentification) to undertake none-core public services delivery. The author documents the extent of privatization and agentification in Tanzania. Based on relevant economic theories and practical reality on the ground, he further offers analysis and discussion of the possible implications of the observed privatization and agentification practices in the country.

Methodology

The paper is mainly based on a review of literature and the analysis of secondary data. The author's experiential knowledge on local context and situation on the ground in Tanzania is also used to inform the study.

Public and Private Sector Service Delivery

Pass et al. (2000:440) correctly argue that the public sector, also known as the government sector (as opposed to the private sector), is the part of the economy that is concerned with transactions of the government. It is through various forms of public finance, mainly via taxation, that the public sector finances government transactions. For most developing countries, however, public finance through taxation is inadequate. The deficit is normally bridged by public borrowing and aid from the donor community.

The sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of public sector services delivery is among current and topical subjects of debate and discussion. The current conventional wisdom and thinking favours private sector participation (PSP) in the delivery of public services. Perspectives in the literature include those of privatization of public services (Lerner and Miranda 1995); public sector contracting (Domberger and Jensen 1997); public choice versus radical approaches (Dunleavy 1986); change in public service delivery (Torres and Pinna, 2002); and privatization of public social services (Nightingale and Pindus 1997). The basic argument in the above-cited works is the recognition of the relative superiority of the private sector to the public sector in services delivery. These views are well captured and summarized in the paragraph below.

According to Ngowi (2005, 2006), private sector-led economic growth and development – as opposed to the public sector – is generally more efficient (both productive and allocative efficiencies) and effective. The sector is more dynamic, resilient, creative, innovative and vibrant than the public one. However, this sector is purely profit-oriented as it embraces the concept of free interplay of the market forces of supply and demand in the production and distribution of goods and services. There is likelihood, therefore, for some market failures to occur in the production and/or distribution of some goods and services. These services will not be available and/or accessible to the poor who cannot pay their market price.

To reduce the possibilities and intensities of market failure, there is a need to forge and promote strong, efficient, effective, sustainable, dynamic and vibrant Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs). PPP concerns collaboration between public and private sector organizations in public services delivery (for details, see Nkya 2000; Buse and Walt 2002; Commonwealth 2003; Sohail 2003). PPPs are likely to make it possible for the private sector to produce and deliver goods and services hitherto produced and delivered by

the public sector. The essence and objectives of PSP should be better services delivery. Following PSP, one would expect an increase in both the quantity and quality of services that are delivered.

Privatization of Public Services Delivery

Privatization is the denationalization of an industry, transferring it from public to private ownership. The extent of state ownership depends on political ideology. In centrally planned economies there would be more nationalization while in private enterprise economies there would be little or no nationalization at all. Under privatization free enterprise is privileged over state control. Firms are more likely to allocate resources more efficiently and effectively than in a bureaucratic monopoly (pass et al. 2000:220).

Privatization of Public Services Delivery in Tanzania

Privatization of public services delivery in Tanzania should be looked at in the context of government's Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP). According to URT (2003), the PSRP has been designed in pursuit of the vision, mission, core values and guiding principles that have been promulgated in the new Public Service Management and Employment Policy.

The overall purpose of the programme is to support the attainment of a high rate of economic growth and to ensure that delivery of high-quality services within priority sectors conforms to public expectations of value for money, satisfaction and relevance. The target date set is the end of 2011.

The transformation of the public service is a long-term process. It includes but is not limited to structural and process changes in the operations of public services organizations, and the cultural reorientation of public servants as well as the public. Public servants are expected to adopt a mind-set of serving with efficiency, effectiveness and the highest standard of courtesy and integrity. The public, on the other hand, is expected to demand due rights and services from the public servants.

Extent and Implications of Privatization of Public Services Delivery in Tanzania

In what follows, a documentation of the extent of privatization of public service delivery in Tanzania is made. It is to be noted that the purpose here is not to assess the performance of the privatization process. The purpose is to document the services, hitherto delivered by the public sector, that have been privatized.

The privatization of public services delivery should be seen in the context of Private Sector Participation (PSP). According to URT (2003), PSP is an initiative, under the PSRP, to involve private sector companies in the delivery of non-core public services in ministries, departments, agencies (MDAs)

and other government institutions. The service delivery is by way of service contracts of a long-term nature (duration of more than one year).

Table 1 presents the various public services available for privatization.

Table 1: Public services available for privatization in Tanzania

S/n	Service category	Specific services	Number of specific services
1	Estate and building services	Gardening & landscaping	4
		Building maintenance	
		Engineering services	
		Security, reception & cleaning	
2	Office services	Information technology	5
		Typing/word processing	
		Messenger & courier services	
		Travel & transport	
		Conferences	
3	Executive and clerical services	Fees/licences processing	4
		Counter operations	
		Payroll	
		Grants administration	
4	Professional services	Accounting & audit	4
		Training & research	
		Treasury & fund management	
Total	4		17

Source: Adapted by the author from URT (2003).

It is seen from the table that a total of four broad public sector services categories and 17 specific categories may be delivered by the private sector. In practice, the private sector has started delivering some of these services in public institutions. The institutions include MDAs and other public institutions. Empirical findings on PSP in delivering public services in randomly selected Tanzania local government authorities (LGAs) are presented in Table 2.

The extent of PSPs in delivering public services in LGAs is generally widespread in Tanzania. The cases provided above are for seven LGAs only, and constitute a small fraction (5.7 per cent) of the t 123 LGAs in Tanzania. The author's experiential knowledge suggests that almost all the LGAs in Tanzania and other public institutions are involving the private sector in delivering services in the same way as those documented for the randomly chosen LGAs above. The extent of privatization of public services delivery in Tanzania, therefore, is considerable.

**Table 2: Public Services Delivered by the Private Sector
in Selected LGAs in Tanzania, 2005/2006**

S/n	LGA	Type of Service	Areas Concerned
1	Arusha Municipal Council	Revenue collection at markets	Main market; Kilombero wholesale market;[a] Sanawari market; Soko Mjinga; Mapunda market; Kijenge market; Mbauda market
		Revenue collection at bus stands/stops	Stand for big buses; stand for small buses; taxi and pick-ups parking areas; other car parks
		Solid waste collection and disposal	Sombetini Ward; Sokini Ward; Daraja II Ward; Unga Ltd Ward; Kati Ward; Themi Ward; Kaloleni Ward; Engutoto Ward; Olorien Ward; Lemara Ward; Ngarenaro Ward
		Operation of public pay toilets	Main market; Jogoo House; main bus stand; Kaskazini toilet; Kusini toilet; Kilombero market; Kijenge rounda bout toilet
2	Bariadi Council	Procurement services	Construction equipment; office supplies; fixtures and furniture; spare parts; garage services; food for council hospital and health centres
3	Kigoma Council	Procurement services	Car spare parts; printing; construction materials; car repairs and services; food supply for Nguruka, Bitale, Buhingu and Mwangongo health colleges; food and charcoal/wood supply for hospital and health centres; repair and selling of com puters, faxes, printers and photocopiers; 64 different types of medicines and equip ment for hospital and health centres
		Revenue collection	In 66 council markets including Simbo, Nyamoli, Kasuku, Msimba, Mgaraganza, Kagango, Kigalye, Mkabogo, Kizenga, Nyamhoza, Nkungwe and Nguruka
4	Njombe Council	Revenue collection	Njombe town bus stand; Makambako bus stand; Uwemba gate; Idundilanga gate; Ramadhani gate; Kidegembye gate; Idofi

			gate; Mjimwema gate; Lyamkena gate; Njombe town market; Makambako market; Makambako tomato market; TAZARA[b] area logs and crop cess
		Leasing of council property	Njombe stand and market toilets operation; main Makambako market toilet; Hazina House renting/leasing; Njombe town local brew; Njombe town butcher; Chauginge butcher; stalls in the main market in town; council canteen building; tables in Njombe town market
		Procurement	Cleaning Njombe town; cleaning Makambako town; food supply to council offices; food supply to hospital and health centres; repair and maintenance of various machines and equipment; printing
		Operation of council investments	Radio and television stations in Njombe and Makambako towns
		Building and construction	Building and repair of bridges, roads and buildings
		Sales of council properties	Broker for council properties
5	Kisarawe Council	Revenue collection	Agricultural and forestry produce (other than cashew nuts) cess; bus stand fee
		Procurement services	Office supplies; printing; hospital supplies; construction and electrical equipment supply; secretarial services; fixtures and furniture supplies; office machines (computer, photocopier) repair
6	Dodoma Municipal Council	Procurement services	Office supplies; machine (computer, photocopier) repair; car repairs; construction materials; fixtures and furniture
		Revenue collection	Service levy; plying fee; open auctions; abattoir fees; parking fees; main Majengo market restaurant fee; Kizota auction fee; Sabasaba, Chang'ombe, Chamwino and Maili Mbili market fees; hotel levy; main bus stand toilet; Jamatini toilet; Old stand (SIDO) toilet; Bonanza toilet
		Waste collection	Waste collection in Dodoma town

		Property lease	Lease of Kizota butcher
7	Morogoro Municipal Council	Revenue collection	Abattoirs user fees; bus stand parking fees; quarries/mining fees; Sabasaba market stalls; Mji Mpya market stalls; main market stalls; livestock auction fees; public toilets user fees; hotel levy; service levy
		Investments in, and operation of municipal assets	Rock Garden recreational area, along the scenic Morogoro river falls
		Land survey	Municipal land
		Sanitation	Town cleaning

Source: Modified from Ngowi (2006).

Notes:
a. For the main market and Kilombero market, the service provider would collect tax revenue and user-charge fees but not shop rents.
b.   TAZARA = Tanzania Zambia Railway.

PSP delivery of services on behalf of the public sector has many and far-reaching managerial and leadership implications for the parties involved. The implications discussed here are based on the author's earlier work (Ngowi 2006).

Privatization of public services delivery has some positive implications for both the private and public sector. This is a potential opportunity for better core public services delivery for the public sector. PSP will potentially allow the public sector, its managers and staff, to focus their attention on delivering core public services in their competence and which only they can deal with. PSP can potentially make better and more efficient use of resources possible. This is likely to be achieved by, inter alia, reduction of support services costs, which in turn will make it possible for resources to be committed to priority areas.

Privatization implies also that there will be a business-minded approach within the public sector. Potentially, this will lead to more skilful management of budgets, and better and more cost-effective customer care.

For the private sector, privatization presents potential business opportunities. This is particularly the case for enterprises that are able to meet public sector requirements for PSP. Some of the requirements are service-specific while others are general. Among the general requirements include a certain threshold of capital, equipment, knowledge and experience. See Ngowi (2006) for a detailed outline and discussion of such requirements.

According to URT (2003:3),

> It is anticipated that over a five-year PSP programme, contracts with a total value in excess of Tanzanian Shillings (Tshs) 3 billion[2] may be let to private sector suppliers in Tanzania. These may be contracts for a single service, e.g. laundry or cleaning, or large multi-activity contracts embracing several service areas.

This implies potential business opportunities for private sector actors with the capacity to deliver the services, while those with no capacity might consider building the needed capacity. In the broader picture, PSP is an avenue for private sector-led growth and development in Tanzania.

Besides the potentially positive implications of the privatization of public service delivery, there are also potentially negative implications and areas of concern. These are mainly related to the real situation of both the private and public sector in Tanzania.

These implications and areas of concern include the ability of public sector officials to objectively identify, specify and justify the services to be privatized; their ability to objectively identify the long- and short-term direct and indirect implications of privatizing specific services; and the ability to professionally solicit and find private sector actors with the needed capacity (knowledge, experience, networks, financial and material resources, credibility and reputation) to deliver the services as per specifications. These are part of critical issues for management and leadership in the successful privatization of most of the specific services documented in Table 1 above.

The other area of implication is the ability and willingness of the parties to follow and honour their contractual terms. Both the public and private sector should be capable of and willing to draft, negotiate and honour contracts that will give privatization genuine win–win outcomes to all the involved parties. The managerial and leadership implication related to this, particularly on the part of the public sector officials, is the willingness to avoid contracts based on corrupt practices. Good governance practices, including transparency in transactions, at all contractual stages on part of both the private and public sector officials cannot be over-emphasized in this context.

The general situation of both the public and private sectors in Tanzania currently poses a number of managerial and leadership challenges and implications. Among the challenges and implications include the relative infancy and newness of the concept of PSP in public services delivery. Challenges include adequate and proper understanding and operationalization of the concept. This is likely to be the case with certain public and private sector officials whose mindset is yet to change. This may result in inadequate – if any – support, commitment and endorsement by those involved in PSP.

The relative infancy and high informality of the local private sector is an issue of concern in the context of this work. This is mainly related to the socialist past of the country, which dominated until the mid-1980s. A private sector mentality and philosophy in Tanzania is still in its early stages of development. Another aspect is the general inadequacy of the needed capital, knowledge, experience and equipment by the private sector to deliver public services under PSP arrangements. Given its history and nature, the majority in the local private sector in Tanzania are likely to lack the needed capacities to participate in PSP adequately

Ngowi (2006) documents the conditions that prospective private sector actors are supposed to fulfil before they can deliver public services in Tanzania. These include possession of an appropriate amount of capital, knowledge, equipment and experience. Some private firms may have these, but given the huge informality of the sector, there may be no supporting documentation and difficulty in proving and/or verifying that certain equipment (say, a vehicle or a tractor) belongs to a firm as these are normally registered in individual's name but used for business purposes.

The needed aggressiveness, dynamism, confidence and vibrancy in the private sector are still inadequate in Tanzania. The socialist, public sector-dominated economic philosophy seems to be lingering in some minds. This includes some of those in key policy – and decision-making and/or implementation positions on, among other things, PSP. The leadership and managerial implication of these facts include the need to strengthen the capacity of the private sector and engage in various mindset-changing initiatives, including various forms of awareness-raising both in the private and public sectors.

Without addressing the challenges identified above, it is likely that the public sector will not be able to get the desired quantity and quality of private sector service providers in various sectors and geographical regions. This is likely to be especially the case in areas with relatively low monetary return incentives for the private sector.

As is the case for the private sector, there are managerial and leadership implications that emanate from the nature of the public sector in Tanzania. The sector is typically characterized by bureaucracy, inefficiency and ineffectiveness. It also lacks adequate incentives, creativity, dynamism and vibrancy, and is generally slow in response and generally identified with rampant corruption. These are among the key challenges for the public sector to work harmoniously with a private sector whose characteristics are, generally, the opposite of those of the public sector.

Among the implications of the above is the need to adequately reform the public sector mentality and way of working in terms of its bureaucracy,

inefficiency and ineffectiveness; inadequate incentives, creativity, dynamism and vibrancy; slowness in response and rampant corruption. These shortcomings in the public sector necessarily increase transaction costs. This is a potential disincentive and setback for the private sector, which is, basically, profit maximization-oriented. Appropriate levels of leadership and management, both in the public and private sector, will need to interpret and be aware of the implications for them and entities they are leading and administering.

As outlined earlier in this paper, the reforms in public services delivery have also taken the form of, among others, use of executive agencies. The agencies are used to deliver public services hitherto delivered by the public sector. In the section that follows, an assessment of the 'agentification.of public services delivery and its implication in Tanzanian context is made.

'Agentification' of Public Services Delivery

'If you want something done right, do it yourself' (source unknown, cited in Sappington, 1991:45). As the quotation suggests, the use of agents to perform functions for principals poses a number of challenges and has far-reaching implications, some of which will be discussed in this section. The term 'agentification' of public service delivery is used here to mean delivery of public services by executive agencies.

'Agentification' is discussed here in the context of principal–agent theory. The theory has received considerable attention in the scholarly literature. The author's search for 'Principal–agent theory' in Google Scholar on 26 May 2007 gave a total of 27,300 hits. Some of the relevant literature is used to partly inform the discussion in this section.

Most of the academic literature on the principal–agent relationship focuses on the agency relations between firms (licensing, franchising) and arrangements between the owner of a brand (principal) and licensee (agent) who wishes to make and sell the principal's products. It also focuses on the relationship that may exist within firms between shareholders (principals) and salaried professional managers (agents) who run the companies. It is the author's view that the academic literature on 'agentification' of public services delivery is scanty, but what is available, is used in the context of this paper.

Pass et al. (2000:8) describe an agent as a person or company employed by another person or company (called the principal) for the purpose of arranging contracts between the principal and third parties. An agent thus acts as an intermediary in bringing together buyers and sellers of a good or service, receiving a flat or sliding-scale commission, brokerage or fee related to the nature and comprehensiveness of the work undertaken and/or value of the transaction involved.

Implied in the description above is the need, ability and willingness to identify, quantify and qualify the work to be performed by the agent. It is the identification, quantification and qualification that will essentially form the basis for principals' compensation for agents' efforts. In some cases, this may not be a straightforward thing that is accepted by the principal, agent and possible third parties that may be involved in transactions. Even if it were, the principal may not be able to perfectly monitor the agent. See Sappington (1991) for problems associated with incentives in principal–agent relationships.

Pass et al. (2000) correctly argue that the principal cannot monitor the activities of the agent adequately. There is a possibility therefore that the agent may not act in the interests of the principal unless the principal is able to design an appropriate reward structure and mechanism for the agent that aligns his (agent's) interests with those of the principal. This view is partly discussed by Garen (1994) in the context of executive compensation and principal–agent theory and by Grossman and Hart (1983) under the principal–agent problem framework.

The main problem in the principal–agent relationship seems to be asymmetrical information. This is a situation where one party in a transaction has information that the other party does not have. Asymmetrical information tends to favour agents. They become insiders, with more information, while principals become outsiders, with less information. Given the asymmetrical information therefore, the principal may not be able to monitor agents' intention and behaviour. This makes it necessary for the principal to formulate incentive schemes that will motivate the agent to work for the best advantage of the agent.

Without adequate incentives for agents, 'agentification' may lead to moral hazard. This is a situation where agents indulge in shirking and working at less than optimal efficiency. The formulation and utilization of various incentive payment schemes is among the ways of avoiding moral hazard. Such schemes are likely to align agents' interests more closely with those of principals and encourage dedicated attention to optimum performance. The incentives differ depending on circumstance and may include executive share options schemes; long-term incentive plans; employee share ownership plans; and payment by piecework and commission.

The above schemes seem to be more applicable and relevant in private enterprises. The applicability and relevance of these schemes in the context of 'agentification' of public services delivery is questionable. This is because the executive agencies fundamentally differ in the nature of their ownership from private enterprises.

'Agentification' in Tanzania

'Agentification' in Tanzania has its background in the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP). According to URT (2003), 'CSRP was an extensive overhaul of public sector structures, systems and practices based upon a fundamental reappraisal of the role and functions of the Government'. As part of that reform programme the government transformed some organizations that were carrying out executive functions into Executive Agencies. According to URT (2005:17), Executive Agencies are formed for reasons of freedom, finance and performance. They typically adopt many management practices from the private sector. The Ministerial Advisory Board establishes performance criteria for the agencies and monitors them.

'Agentification' in Tanzania is part of a response to the need for more efficient and effective government. It is a strategy to deal with the generally weak traditional large and monolithic civil service. 'Agentification' makes it possible for large public sector departments to be broken down into smaller, more efficient, specialized and manageable units. The roles and objectives of each agency are much clearer than is the case of large departmentalization.

Executive Agencies, according to URT (2003), '… are government organizations established to perform essential public functions that do not have to be carried out by the centres of the Government Ministries'. They are normally tailor-made and designed according to the services that are to be delivered. Executive Agencies operate at arm's-length from their parent ministries. This implies significant delegation of management freedoms to Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) who are leading and managing the agencies. In the context of the principal–agent relationship theory, the government becomes the principal while the CEOs and staff under them become agents. The theoretical implications of principal–agent relationship that is discussed in the reviewed literature potentially apply in this context too.

According to URT (2003), the key features of an Executive Agency in Tanzania are determined by a Framework Document. This document sets out clearly the roles, aim, strategic objectives and responsibilities of the agency and its relationships with the parent ministry and others.

In a typical Executive Agency, there are clear lines of accountability, responsibility and authority for the key players; the agency is managed by a CEO who is recruited by open competition and is personally and publicly accountable for the delivery of results; with delegation to the maximum extent possible, and the freedoms and authorities necessary, a CEO manages an agency and delivers the required results; agencies use modern business planning methods, financial management and accounting systems and are allowed to compete with the private sector; agencies face pressure for

improvement through development of challenging targets, arrangement for reporting on performance and appropriate rewards and sanctions.

In terms of status, Executive Agencies are government organizations that are semi-autonomous and not independent; they are business-like in operation; customer-focused; and managerially self-sufficient, with flexibility, freedoms and authority over resources under their control.

The Extent of 'Agentification' in Tanzania

By 2004, according to URT (2005: 17), there were about twenty Executive Agencies in Tanzania. distributed in fourteen different ministries. The formation of the agencies included extensive training, competitive recruitment of key managers and creation of a commercial system of accounts. The Executive Agencies that were in place by 2004 are presented in Table 3.

The table shows that most Executive Agencies (35 per cent) were launched in 1999, with 15 per cent in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The remaining agencies were launched in 2002 (20 per cent) and 2003 (20 per cent). Tanzania stared reforming the management of its economy in the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Executive Agencies therefore have been formed relatively late. This can be explained by the fact that reform is a step-by-step and gradual process that takes time. A country cannot embark on all kinds of reforms overnight.

The 20 Executive Agencies listed are distributed in 14 ministries. A total of six ministries have more than one agency. These are the Ministry of Communication and Transport, with four agencies and the Ministries of Trade and Industry; President's Office – Planning and Privatization; Works; Communication and Transport; Health and Natural Resources, which have two agencies each.

The ministries are at different stages in strengthening the existing agencies. The strengthening is done ujsing 10 different variables, namely, Asset Valuation; Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS); Client Service Charter; Strategic Plans; Business Plans; Service Delivery Surveys; Recruitment of Senior Managers; Training of Senior Managers; Commercial Accounts and Open Performance Reviews and Appraisals (OPRAS). To see the status of various ministries according to these variables, see URT (2005:18).

There are a total of 10 ministries with no Executive Agencies. These are the Ministries of Defence and National Service; Community Development, Women and Children; Agriculture and Food Security; Cooperatives and Marketing; Energy and Minerals; Science, Technology and Higher Education; Home Affairs; Regional Administration and Local Government; Justice and Constitutional Affairs; and Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. It was beyond the scope of this study to identify reasons for non-existence of Executive Agencies in these ministries.

Table 3: Executive Agencies in Tanzania by 2004

S/n	Ministry	Executive Agency	Details
1	Education and Culture	Agency for Development of Educational Management (ADEM)	Was launched in May 2001 to strengthen management capacity through training, research and consultancy
2	Trade and Industries	Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA)	Was launched in October 1999 to facilitate orderly conduct of business and provision of regulatory services
3	Water and Livestock Development	Drilling and Dam Construction Agency (DDCA)	Was launched in March 1999 to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Government in the delivery of water supply
4	President's Office – Planning and Privatization	Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC)	Was launched in 2002 to promote evidence-based decision-making for policy-makers and managers through statistical information
5	Health	Government Chemistry Laboratory (GCL)	Was launched in 1999 to analyze food and drugs and to provide Chemicals Management and Forensic Science
6	President's Office – Planning and Privatization	National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)	Was launched in March 1999 to provide official statistics and services
7	Natural Resources and Tourism	National College of Tourism (NCT)	Was launched in 2003 to provide training in the hotels and tourism industry
8	Lands and Human Settlements	National Housing and Building Research Agency (NHBRA)	Was launched in September 2001 to promote utilization of local resources in order to reduce construction costs
9	Labour and Youth Development	Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA)	Was launched in August 2001 to promote occupational health and safety to eliminate accidents and occupational diseases
10	Communication and Transport	Tanzania Airport Authority (TAA)	Was launched in November 1999 to provide airport services
11	Works	Tanzania Building Agency (TBA)	Was launched in 2002 to provide and improve accommodation to public servants through property management and consultancies

12	Communication and Transport	Tanzania Civil Aviation Authority (TCAA)	Was launched in March 1999. It is responsible for safety, security and oversight of the aviation industry and the provision of air navigation services
13	Health	Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA)	Was launched in 2003 to protect consumers against the health hazards associated with food, drugs, cosmetics etc.
14	Communication and Transport	Tanzania Government Flight (TGF)	Was launched in 2002 to provide air services to Head of State and leaders and commercial air services in case of spare capacity
15	Finance	Tanzania Institute of Accountancy (TIA)	Was launched in 2003 to provide education, research and consultancy services in accountancy, materials management, etc.
16	Communication and Transport	Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA)	Was launched in December 1999 to provide meteorological services
17	Works	Tanzania National Roads Agency (TANROADS)	Was launched in July 2000 to manage trunk and regional road networks of about 35,000 kilometres in Mainland Tanzania
18	President's Office – Public Service Management	Tanzania Public Service College (TPSC)	Was launched in August 2000 to train public servants and others in public administration and secretarial skills
19	Natural Resources and Tourism	Tanzania Tree Seed Agency (TTSA)	Was launched in 2003 to provide forest products and tree seeds
20	Trade and Industries	Weights and Measures Agency (WMA)	Was launched in 2002 to protect consumers through measuring systems that result in fair and just trade transactions

Source: URT (2005:18).

It can be generally said that, as for privatization, 'agentification' is also relatively widespread in Tanzanian ministries. In Table 3 it is seen that a total of 14 out of 24 ministries (70 per cent) were practicing 'agentification' by the year 2004.

Contrary to pure PSP, executive agencies that deliver public services are by and large under the government. They are both part of the government

and government agents at the same time. This is an innovative kind of a hybrid organization compared to a pure agent in the private sector setting. This form of organization, like any other agency, is likely to have many and far-reaching implications alike to its principal (the government), those leading and managing the agencies and other possible third parties involved.

The extent of 'agentification' in Tanzania has a number of potential managerial and leadership implications. These may be short term or long term in nature; direct and indirect; or positive and negative. Among the positive implications include devolution or delegation of more powers and responsibilities. Centres or headquarters of ministries will have to give more power to the public servants actually carrying out service delivery. This will potentially enhance the jobs of those managing such functions and release the headquarters staff from day-to-day operational matters. As a result, ministries will be able to concentrate on strategic issues affecting their portfolios.

Among the negative implications is the fact that 'agentification' leads to principal–agent problems, as partly identified in the reviewed literature. These have to be dealt with properly so as to achieve the expected 'agentification' goals. Establishing and using executive agents may imply recruiting agents that were former public sector employees. This will be equivalent to having 'old wine in a new glass'. These employees may still retain a typical public sector and socialist-oriented mindset. Their perspectives, viewpoints and ways of doing things may still be influenced by their past. This may make their needed departure from previous inefficient, ineffective and non-business-minded ways of doing things difficult. To avoid this situation, the agents may be recruited from the private sector. Alternatively, they may be recruited from the public sector and receive thorough induction for their new duties.

Agents should be able and willing to change their mindset and be real private-sector, market and business-oriented actors in the agencies. The principal (the government) has to design adequate incentive mechanisms for those working in the agencies. While this is a necessity, it potentially sends negative signals to other civil servants working outside the Executive Agencies who are generally poorly paid compared to those in the agencies. According to URT (2005:17), for example, remuneration of staff in Executive Agencies exceeds that of civil servants by 57 per cent on average. The motivation and work morale of these civil servants may be negatively impacted leading to, among other things, job turnover, corrupt practices and 'pretending' to be working because the government 'pretends' to pay them. 'Agentification', therefore, may lead to better public services delivery in some areas but be a cause for bad services delivery in other parts of the public sector. This

implies further that there is a need to review the incentive packages of not only those in the Executive Agencies, but also of those in other public sector services.

Conclusions

The author has aimed at identifying and discussing the extent and implications of privatization and 'agentification' of public services delivery in Tanzania. It is concluded in the paper that Tanzania has gone a long way in using the private sector and Executive Agencies to deliver public services. Privatization and 'agentification; is practised in virtually all MDAs and other government institutions. This is a result of broader and far-reaching reforms that the Tanzanian government embarked on in the mid-1980s and is still pursuing. Privatization and 'agentification' are likely to result in better, more efficient and effective delivery of public services. The reforms have many implications for those managing and leading both the private and public sector entities involved. The main implication is the need to increase the pace of change of the mindset in the public sector.

Policy Implications

Privatization and 'agentification' of public services delivery have a number of implications for policy- and decision-makers. Among the key implications include proper management and leadership in the privatization and 'agentification' process of public services delivery. The need to create, improve and/or maintain a conducive environment for privatization and 'agentification' to achieve their objectives cannot be over-emphasized. Given the relatively infant private sector in Tanzania, there is a need to build its capacity so as to increase its competitiveness in delivering public services. For the Executive Agencies, there is a need to ensure that the principal–agent problems discussed in this paper are kept to the minimum.

Recommendations for Further Studies

There are a number of knowledge gaps to be bridged in future studies based on the present paper. The main issues that are still not adequately known in the context of this work are the managerial and leadership implications of privatization and 'agentification' of specific services in specific ministries, departments and other government institutions. There is therefore a need for in-depth and broad studies on these issues. In respect of the dynamisms in privatization, 'agentification' and their implications, there is a need for regular updating of this work. It is also desirable that similar studies are conducted in other countries for the sake of comparison and experience-sharing.

Notes

1. The author acknowledges inputs from the participants of the Guy Mhone Memorial Conference in Zomba, Malawi, 22–24 August 2007 that have improved the earlier version of this paper substantially.
2. 1 US$ in May 2007 was equivalent to about 1275 Tshs.

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Privatization of Water and Sanitation Services in Kenya: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Public sector utilities in developing countries have often not been efficient in providing access to reliable water and sanitation services. Worldwide, over 1 billion people lack access to improved water sources and 2.6 billion lack access to appropriate sanitation.[1] Countries across the world are increasingly looking to the private sector for help in providing needed water services. Towards this end, privatization of water and sanitation services is viewed to be a cost effective method of service delivery that also enhances quality and performance. This paper seeks to highlight general knowledge, attitudes and practices of privatization of the service providers in the water and sanitation sector. It also underlines current challenges in the management of privatization of water and sanitation services in Kenya on the part of service providers, but also consumers. The most common challenges include inequity in the quality of service based on the ability to pay, service cut-offs, weak regulatory oversight and lack of accountability to local consumer needs. This paper shows that there is, however, consensus among water and sanitation service providers that privatization is likely to improve efficiency in water and sanitation services only if a collaborative effort is embraced in tackling public sector reform in Kenya. The paper also provides recommendations towards achieving privatization of water and sanitation services.

Résumé

Les services du secteur public dans les pays en voie de développement n'ont souvent pas été efficaces dans la fourniture de services fiables en matière d'eau et d'assainissement. À l'échelle mondiale, plus d'un milliard de personnes n'ont pas accès à des sources d'eau améliorées et 2,6 milliards d'individus n'ont pas accès à l'assainissement dans le monde entier. Chaque pays à travers le monde fait de plus en plus appel au secteur privé pour un appui à l'offre de services nécessaire

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en eau. À cette fin, la privatisation des services d'eau et d'assainissement est considérée comme un moyen rentable de fourniture de services qui améliore aussi la qualité et la performance. Cet article vise à mettre en exergue les connaissances, les attitudes et les pratiques générales en matière de privatisation pour les fournisseurs de services du secteur de l'eau et de l'assainissement, mais aussi les défis actuels dans la gestion de la privatisation des services d'eau et d'assainissement au Kenya et les difficultés confrontées par les consommateurs. Les défis les plus courants sont, entre autres, l'inégalité dans la qualité du service basée sur la capacité paiement, les interruptions de services, la faiblesse du régime réglementaire de surveillance, et l'absence de responsabilisation par rapport aux besoins des consommateurs locaux. Toutefois, les fournisseurs de services d'eau et d'assainissement conviennent que la privatisation ne peut améliorer l'efficacité des services d'eau et d'assainissement que si un effort de collaboration est adopté dans la gestion de la réforme du secteur public au Kenya. L'étude donne aussi des recommandations en vue de la réalisation de la privatisation des services d'eau et d'assainissement.

Background Information

In Kenya, privatization first became a major policy tool in the 1980s. The privatization endeavour began with the IMF/World Bank imposition of structural adjustment programs (SAPS) in the 1980s, which forced governments to free markets and pull of out of loss-making state enterprises whose lifeline was government subventions.

Scholars and development experts have defined privatization as a generic term used to describe a range of policy initiatives meant to alter ownership or management away from the government in favour of the private sector. Often, privatization has been confused with liberalization. In the latter, the government can retain ownership of public enterprises but commercialize them in pursuit of efficiency through improved management and pricing-based criteria.

This appears to be Kenya's chosen path in the provision of water services. After independence in 1963, the government formed the Ministry of Water Development to develop and oversee the country's water resources. The government embarked on improving access to safe and clean water with emphasis on a policy of implementing water projects on a self-help basis in which local communities took control. By the 1990s, however, it had become clear that this strategy was inadequate and the government lacked sufficient resources to match communities' water needs (ROK 2002).

It was against this background that the need arose to revise the national water policy. This culminated in the National Policy on Water Resources Management and Development, Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1999, which was first drafted in 1992. Other policy blueprints included the Water Act 2002,

the Country Strategy on Water and Sanitation Services and Country Strategy on Integrated Water Resources Management. The Water Act 2000 broadly sets out the legal implementation framework for implementing the privatization policy. The Act recognizes the role of independent water service providers and identifies the Water Services Regulatory Board (WSRB) as the statutory organ established to regulate their functions, principally through developing guidelines on applicable tariffs for the provision of water services (ROK 2002).

At the level of local authorities, the paradigm shift appears to be more towards commercialization under which it is presumed that efficiency in service delivery can be attained. Towards this end, most local authorities have formed or are in the process of forming municipal companies run on strict commercial lines under 'agency contracts' from the parent local authority. The emphasis by local authorities is towards ensuring that under the framework of commercialization, companies formed to provide water plough back the bulk of their earnings into improving service delivery while allowing local authorities to retain part of the earnings to cover costs such as personnel expenses. The experiences of local authorities that have embarked on commercialization, such as Nyeri, Eldoret and Kisumu, are often cited as examples of how efficiency can be infused without ceding control to private enterprises. For sanitation services, private companies seek licences from local authorities to collect and dispose of waste on behalf of municipalities.

Literature Review

Water is fundamental to all forms of life and must be protected as a common resource, public good and human right. Water has been recognized as a human right[2] in numerous international treaties and declarations, as well as by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in November 2002. The human right to water is essential for achieving other human rights and international development commitments in critical areas such as sustainable development and poverty eradication. At the 2000 UN Millenium Summit, 191 heads of state recommended their governments adopt a global development agenda. The resulting eight Millennium Development Goals agenda (MDGS) provide numerical, time-bound targets to improve living conditions and remedy global imbalances by 2015. One specific target under goal 7 calls for halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

Many studies indicate that the majority of people worldwide are moving to towns/cities. According to Mwanza and Kariuki (2003), it is expected that over 50 per cent of the population in African countries will reside in urban areas by 2020 and that 20 to 50 per cent of urban residents will not have

reliable access to water and sanitation services. Studies also estimate that at present about half the urban population in Sub-Saharan Africa does not have adequate access to water and an even higher percentage lacks adequate access to sanitation. The bottom-line argument is that water and sanitation systems that are properly designed, implemented and managed can offer services over a wide coverage area and at reasonable cost.

Further, several recent reports indicate that most developed countries emphasize privatization of public utilities and that this trend will continue to grow in the future. At the same time, studies carried out worldwide indicate that efficient management of water resources is critical for the survival of mankind.

European Initiatives

The European Water Legislation initiated in 1975, in a 'first wave', with standards for rivers and lakes used for drinking water abstraction, culminated in 1980 in the setting of binding quality targets for drinking water.

The Community Water Policy Ministerial Seminar in Frankfurt in 1988 reviewed existing legislation and identified gaps and proposed a number of improvements. On 10 November 1995, the European Union (EU) environmental agency presented an updated state of the Environment report Environment in the European Union – 1995, confirming the need for action to protect community waters in qualitative as well as quantitative terms.[3] On 18 December 1995, the EU Council adopted conclusions requiring the drawing up of a new water framework directive establishing the basic principles of sustainable water policy in the EU.

The EU Council on 25 June 1996, the Committee of the Regions on 19 September 1996, the Economic and Social Committee on 26 September 1996 and the European Parliament on 23 October 1996, requested the Commission to come forward with a proposal for a water framework directive and to tackle urban wastewater problems in a coherent way. This is why the European Water Policy was developed in an open consultation process involving all parties who agreed on the need for a single legislatory framework to resolve these problems.

In due course the Commission presented a proposal for a water framework directive with the following key aims, among others (EU 2000):

- Expanding the scope of water protection to all waters, surface water and ground water
- Getting the citizen involved more closely
- Streamlining legislation.

On 23 October 2000, the directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a Framework for Community Action in the Field of Water Policy, or in short the EU Water Framework Directive (EU WFD), was finally adopted. The directive was published in the official journal of the European Community (OJL 327) on 2 December 2000 and came into force the same day.

Subsequent international conferences related to freshwater management then focused on public–private participation as one of the most important issues. The Bonn recommendation in 2001, for example, stated strongly that decentralization was key because the local level was where national policy met community needs. Bonn's recommendation for action also called for making water attractive to private investment (ICFW 2001b)

The Bonn recommendation for action in particular focuses on public–private partnerships, noting that privately managed service delivery does not imply private ownership of water resources. It also recommends the use of the self-help potential of local communities to reduce the financial requirement of rural and urban projects for poverty alleviation by supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others to develop micro finance capabilities. In the Second World Water Forum, public–private partnership was widely propagated.

The Bonn recommendation for action equally emphasized the need for special attention in the participation of all stakeholders, particularly the poor, who are often excluded from decision-making. The Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Water Forum urged wise government of water, so that the public and all stakeholders are included in the services but also participate actively in water resource management. The Bonn recommendation for action finally urged that decision-making, implementation of projects and operation of services be decentralized and that private service providers be responsible for management and operation of water service (ICFW 2001b).

Kenya's Water Policy Framework

Kenya is not regarded as a water-rich country. This reality underscores the government's move towards privatization of the water and sanitation sector. Even though the government indicates that privatization does not constitute a policy component for the sector, it is a discernible feature in its thinking about the water sector. According to Mutiso (1989), four-fifths of the country is arid and semi-arid and prone to drought. This justifies the need for the sustainable management of the country's limited water resources. The Water Act of 2002 is intended to provide for the conservation, control and apportionment of and use of its water resources.

The Water Act 2002

This Act, which, has been in application since 17 October 2002 when it received presidential assent, sets out the key elements of Kenya's legislation on the water sector. Its preamble states that it is an Act of Parliament that sets out:

> To provide for the management, conservation, use and control of water resources and for the acquisition and regulation of rights to use water; to provide for the regulation and management of water supply and sewerage services; to repeal the Water Act (cap. 237) and certain provisions of the Local Government Act; and for related purposes. (ROK 2002)

The Act seeks to address the shortcomings that resulted in wastage, manipulation and abuse of water sources and sanitation services. It creates the Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA) to oversee the use of water resources, which are all vested in the state.

According to the Act, WRMA is a body corporate which his charged with, among other duties:

- Developing principles, guidelines and procedures for the allocation of water resources
- Receiving and determining applications for permits for water use
- Regulating and protecting water resources quality from adverse impacts
- Determining charges to be imposed for the use of water from any water resource in accordance with guidelines in the National Water Resources Management Strategy
- Gathering and maintaining information on water resources and publishing forecasts, projections and information on water resources
- Liaising with other bodies for the better regulation and management of water resources
- Advising the Minister concerning any matter in connection with resources.

Inclusiveness of the Water Act

The Act emphasizes the role and participation of local communities. For instance, the minister responsible for water is required to formulate and publish in the *Kenya Gazette* a national water management strategy based on the outcome of public consultations. The policy of inclusiveness and grass-roots participation in water conservation is further highlighted by the fact that the Act provides for the existence of a Catchments Area Advisory Committee of not more than 15 members in respect of each catchment area. Such committees, which have been constituted since the Act became opera-

tional, are expected to oversee the use, development, conversation, protection and control of water resources within each catchment area (Wambua 2004).

Regulation Under the Water Act

The Water Act establishes the Water Services Regulatory Board (WSRB) whose core responsibilities include licensing providers of water services and determining standards for the provision of water services to consumers (Wambua 2004). Other statutory duties of the WSRB include:

- Monitoring compliance with established standards for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of facilities for water services
- Monitoring and regulating licences and to enforce licence conditions
- Advising licensees on procedures for dealing with complaints from consumers
- Developing guidelines for the fixing of tariffs for the provision of water services
- Developing model performance agreements for use between water service boards and water service providers
- Monitoring the operation of agreements between water service boards and water service providers, taking appropriate action to improve effectiveness.

In addition, the WSRB has statutory obligation for: dissemination of information about water services; promoting conservation and demand management measures in accordance with the National water services strategy. Other functions of the regulatory board are determining fees, taxes, premiums and charges to be imposed for water services.

Statement of the Problem

The essence of water privatization policy is to ensure a better and more efficient management of water and sanitation services. However, the implementation process challenges relate to proper design and management principles. These challenges have led the central government and the local authorities to invest substantially in improving the infrastructure to satisfy the water needs of the consumers. Secondly, the knowledge, attitudes and practices of service providers in the water sector seem to be clinging to the premise that they know what development beneficiaries want as opposed to involving them in planning and implementation of projects. Lastly, there are governance issues in the management of the water and sanitation sector, and especially in defining a sound regulatory mechanism, which does not compromise service delivery, ecology and national sovereignty.

Justification of Privatization of Water and Sanitation Services

Privatization of water and sanitation services is likely to produce important benefits beyond cost savings and improved performance if the water policy is well designed and managed by all stakeholders. Equally, the central government and local authorities can deliver economically viable services given a clear institutional and operational framework. This can be achieved if the attitudes, knowledge and practices of water service providers towards consumers change to incorporate them into decision-making. This paper therefore calls for the articulation of a framework of efficient water management in Kenya.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the experiences in privatization of water and sanitation services in Kenya.
2. To establish knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of the service providers in relation to management of water resources and sanitation services.
3. To determine the constraints to effective management of water and sanitation services in Kenya.

Methodology

The design of the study comprised of two mutually reinforcing data collection methods with the aim of collecting mainly qualitative data. Selected literature on privatization of water and sanitation services was reviewed to derive generalized experiences of water privatization. The study also used purposive sampling to interview four key service providers, namely, the district water engineer, municipal water engineer and two officers working with Nakuru Water Services Company, all based in Nakuru district. A structured questionnaire with both open-ended and closed questions was used to interview the officers. The purpose of the interviews was to determine the challenges faced in the privatization of water and sanitation services and also establish the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the service providers on privatization.

Challenges in Privatization of Water and Sanitation Services in Kenya

The privatization of water is a radical new social experiment. Most major water privatizations are less than a decade old, but already it appears clear that they follow the pattern of privatization in other service sectors. Some of the challenges include: lack of commitment to expanded access to low-income consumers; inequity in the quality of service based on the ability to

pay; service cut-offs' weak regulatory oversight' and lack of accountability to local consumer needs.

For a long time, the absence of a law on privatization establishing legal parameters and a framework on water rights was a major area of weakness and concern, often creating uncertainty and a policy vacuum. This partly explains the problems encountered in water privatization. In spite of the steps it has taken, it must be recognized that Kenya is yet to develop an effective policy on water privatization and management of water resources. All the service providers interviewed felt that some service providers and a majority of water consumers were not aware that there exists a Water Act meant to give guidelines on privatization of water and sanitation services. In particular, the role and relationship among various government departments is still not well defined, often resulting in conflict and competition over control and autonomy. As already noted, the absence of a well-constructed statute on privatization has left the legislative framework spread across a multiplicity of often competing and contradictory statutes.

While applauding the government's determination to supply adequate water in both urban and rural areas, privatization efforts have been hampered by lack of resources, administrative incompetence, bad governance and dwindling funds against an ever-increasing demand for water to meet consumption, industrial and agricultural needs *(Nation*, December 2004; PANA/UN Habitat, November 2004). The district water engineer in particular singled out lack of adequate funds and staff incompetence in implementing privatization of water and sanitation services. As regards bad governance, he stated that political interference by both councillors and members of Parliament in the appointment of the staff working in water companies and committees had adversely affected the competencies in implementing such crucial reforms. Study results also observed that politicians seek to appoint their close political associates irrespective of their education, status and competence to serve in the crucial water committees. Such officers are bound to pledge their loyalty more to their sponsoring politicians than their employers.

Secondly, some of the water committees are comprised of civil servants such as Provincial Commissioners (PC), District Commissioners (DC), District Officers (DO), Chiefs and assistant chiefs. The inclusion of such officers raises questions related to accountability, transparency and the competencies of the committee members, especially service providers who are either ignorant of or unlikely to be familiar with policy guidelines.

In past years, the central government showed little enthusiasm in forging close links with civil society organizations to improve water provision. On this note, HABITAT underscores the importance of inclusive practices on

good governance in prioritizing the delivery of services to the poor. For example, efforts to fence off the Entarara Springs in Loitokitok, Kajiado, whose water emanates from Mt Kilimanjaro, were frustrated. The Netherlands Development Organization invested millions of Kenya shillings to protect the springs but the Provincial Administration was reluctant to assign personnel to guard this ecologically sensitive area. On the contrary, fencing material was routinely stolen, thus frustrating the project (RTI International).

A number of studies identify stakeholder participation as one of the most important issues in the management of water. Water can empower people, and particularly the process of water management. The Dublin Principle 2, for example, calls for development and management of water through a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels. IWRM requires decisions at the lowest appropriate level, with full consultation and involvement of the users in the planning and implementation of projects. In view of such neglect over the years, it is now estimated that Kenya needs to invest Kshs 300 billion (US$4 billion) to ensure access to clean and safe water by all Kenyans. This is almost the equivalent of the country's total annual national budget. Nairobi alone requires a staggering $150 million (Ksh. 11 billion).

Over and above the limited government spending, inefficiency and corruption have been further blamed for the current situation. Even in cases where commercialization has taken off on a sound basis, there are still governance issues that remain to be addressed. For instance, the Nyeri Water and Sewerage Company, a private company fully owned by the Nyeri Municipal Council to manage water supplies in the town, continues to lose an estimated 40 per cent of its water through leakages and diversion. According to a joint report prepared by the World Bank and Ministry of Water, 'only about 42 per cent of households have actual connections serviced by Nairobi City Council Water and Sewerage Department. Unaccounted water is in excess of 50 per cent.' In Nakuru, the water officers working with the Nakuru Water and Sanitation Company (NWC) allege that illegal water connections by unscrupulous people has led to the loss of millions of shillings by the company because the water is unaccounted for.

Whereas the government has a social contract with its citizens, certain autonomous companies formed under the Water Act 2002 are pursuing profit as opposed to social goals. This has caused concern that the Water Act does not adequately safeguard the interests of the poor (mostly women), especially from price increases.[4] In cases where residents trek long distances to access water or sanitation places women especially are in danger of becoming victims of physical violence.

In some cities, water and sanitation services are mainly provided by independent vendors/providers who operate without any regulatory mechanisms and charge inflated prices for substandard services.[5] Hygiene is also compromised during periods of water shortage. These water-related challenges are intrinsically linked to sanitation services. Most slum households, for example, do not have toilet facilities; thus, residents are obliged to go to commercial toilets or to adopt unorthodox toileting means and strategies, such as using plastic bags that are disposed of haphazardly.

It has also been argued that the decision-making power of local governments in most African countries is limited in face of a highly centralized political, tax-revenue-raising and administrative authority. Despite indications of support for decentralization, local governments and cities in general are inhibited in making major investment decisions, adopting long-term plans, signing concession contracts or introducing structural and institutional reform without the approval of the central government authority (Brockemhurst and Janssen 2004).

Further, in most cases, the local authorities often do not have the expertise to negotiate with private companies on issues such as design, bidding processes or concession contracts. Additionally, the professionals working with the government water department charged with the responsibility of providing water services are rarely given the managerial and financial autonomy they need to carry out their functions properly. The centralized system of managing water utilities, particularly those under the Ministry of Water Resources Management and Development (MWRMD) and the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation, makes efficient operations difficult.

Prospects

Current trends in Kenyan society indicate that water-related development prospects are threatened. Significant shortcomings in the prevailing management of water and sanitation services must therefore be remedied. The expectation is that change will lead to a better life with more opportunities and improvements in quality of life.

Subsequently, since the articulation of the policy framework on economic reforms (1996–8), the National Development Policy (1997–2001) and the National Water Policy (1998), the Kenya government's emphasis has favoured increased community and private sector participation. Since 2003, there has been increased emphasis on evolving an enabling institutional framework that vests greater autonomy on local authorities in the management of water resources.

Understandably, the focus in local authorities involved in privatization has been on emphasizing commercialization based on an application of business

principles of sustainability in managing water resources. Most local authorities are convinced that commercialization would ensure efficient provision of water at affordable prices, supporting water demand management at the level of the local authority to secure maximum benefits for local communities.

The Gurria Taskforce, reporting in 2006, for example, stressed the importance of the municipal level and the need to give more focus to demand. Over the past few years, financing water for all has clearly become a key global issue for many and varied agencies, including the World Bank, Global Water Partnership, World Water Council and European Union Water Initiative, among others. Awareness on this issue in Kenya has been raised significantly, although it takes time to convert ideas into action.

In conclusion, the process of privatization of water resources in some cities is being taken seriously. To achieve this there is need for utmost vigilance for all stakeholders, including resource managers, policy-makers, scientists, and consumers. Agreement is needed on the kind of governance system that is required to respond to the challenges associated with the objectives of water-related development. Every stakeholder can and should play a constructive role in striving towards sustainability in a changing world. The Draft Bill on privatization also explains the government's determination to legislate on management of the privatization framework

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

- The Bonn recommendation for action states that participation of all stakeholders who use or protect water resources and their ecosystem is required, and special attention is needed to improve the participation of those people, particularly the poor, who are often excluded from decision-making. The Ministerial Declaration of the Second World Water Forum urges the wise government of water, to secure the involvement of public and accommodate the interests of all stakeholders in the services but also their active participation in water resource management. In order to achieve efficient, equitable and sustainable water management within the IWRM approach, the principle of the subsidiary, which drives down action to the lowest appropriate level, will need to be observed.
- There is need to strike a balance between achieving market efficiency vis-à-vis promoting social equity on access to this vital resource, especially by the most vulnerable sections of the population.
- The Kenya government needs to develop and mobilize human resources to meet new challenges and also to seize opportunities for

advancements in knowledge, more effective technologies etc. Capacity for poor communities must be entrenched in order to instigate a combination of self-confidence and capacity-building to overcome poor water and sanitation services.

- Equally, the government needs to develop a better storage system of water, especially dams. The National Water Services strategy indicates that the sector has low-wage skilled personnel that need retraining to work with the evolving technology of water delivery systems.
- Inevitably, the involvement of various stakeholders including donors, civil society and local communities is critical in defining the way forward on Kenya's water sector, paying due regard to the interests of the poor. Moreover, there is an urgent need for regulatory mechanisms to protect slum residents from exploitation (e.g. the pricing and quality of water, requirements for landlords to provide proper toilets).
- There is no doubt that Kenyans require a strong and sustained political will to implement challenges in the framework within which water utilities function. Equally important is the need to inform the public and build popular support for water sector reforms. The focus must then be on providing strong incentives for utilities to improve performance and especially for reaching unserved poor people.

Notes

1. Throughout the developing countries there is evident demand for water, sanitation and hygiene services.
2. Water is a limited natural resource and a public good fundamental for life and health. The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.
3. The Dublin Principles, generated at the 1992 Dublin conference on water and the environment, recognize that fresh water is a finite and valuable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment. But they also declare that water has an economic value in all its competing uses, and should therefore be recognized as an economic good.
4. Private property regimes tend to perpetuate and can even intensify gender inequalities. Women are always marginalized in the monetary economy, and thus suffer when a price is put on water. Willingness to pay is not the same as the ability to pay; such assessments do not take into account the choices that poor women must make. Women have been the most adversely affected by these increases [in water prices] because in most cases power at the household level is concentrated in the hands of men. Men care little about water bills and how and where the water is obtained.

5. For those with running water, cut-offs occur regularly and local councils and officers in water companies attribute this to non-payment of bills by some consumers. However, there was agreement among interviewees that some water companies charge higher user fees that mean people are unable to pay.

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Archie Mafeje and the Pursuit of Endogeny: Against Alterity and Extroversion

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Abstract

Professor Archibald Monwabisi Mafeje passed away on 28 March 2007. The meaning of Archie Mafeje, for three generations of African scholars and social scientists, is profound and about diverse encounters. For some it was personal; for others it was through his works, and for most in the community the encounter via scholarly works became personal and intimate. The meaning of Mafeje for generations of African scholars is found in his uncompromising aversion to the 'epistemology of alterity' – the 'othering' of Africa and Africans – and the advancement of scholarship grounded in the centring of African ontological experiences. It is in this aversion to alterity and pursuit of endogeneity that we locate Mafeje's lasting legacy for new generations of African intellectuals. This paper, which is personal and intellectual, involves a close and critical engagement with these aspects of Mafeje's scholarships.

Résumé

Le professeur Archibald Monwabisi Mafeje est décédé le 28 mars 2007. Le sens d'Archie Mafeje pour trois générations d'universitaires africains et de spécialistes en sciences sociales est profond et porte sur trois différentes sortes de contacts. Pour certains, c'était personnel, pour d'autres, c'était à travers ses œuvres, et pour la plupart de la communauté la rencontre à travers les œuvres universitaires, c'était devenu personnel et intime. Le sens de Mafeje pour des générations d'universitaires africains se trouve dans son aversion intransigeante à l'encontre de l'«épistémologie de l'altérité», l'«altérité» de l'Afrique et des Africains, et le développement de la recherche fondée sur le centrage des expériences ontologiques africaines. C'est dans cette aversion pour l'altérité et la poursuite de l'endogénéité que nous situons la contribution durable de Mafeje pour les nouvelles générations d'intellectuels africains. Cet article, qui est personnel et intellectuel, inclut un engagement étroit et critique avec ces aspects des recherches de Mafeje.

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Introduction

Professor Archibald Monwabisi Mafeje passed away on 28 March 2007. It was a great shock to so many within the African social science community and beyond. The loss of someone like Archie Mafeje pushes us to search for meaning that is deeply personal and intellectual.[1] The meaning of Archie Mafeje for three generations of African scholars and social scientists is about encounters. For some, it would have been personal; for others it was through his works; and for most in the community, the encounter via scholarly works became personal and intimate. And Archie reciprocated more than most. Within the wider African social science community, many will highlight Mafeje's "The Ideology of 'Tribalism'" (Mafeje 1971) as the moment of such encounter. On a personal note, it was his "The problem of Anthropology in historical perspective" (Mafeje 1976), as a first year undergraduate student at the University of Ibadan. My encounter, in person, was not until the 1992 CODESRIA General Assembly in Dakar, Senegal. The attraction is not simply the elegance of his erudition and expansive knowledge of his fields of study. Much more is the sense that one was encountering an 'authentic interlocutor' for African experiences and ontological locations. It was in the affirmation of these experiences and locations that Mafeje became an 'iconic' scholar of the African social science community.

This paper presents a critical engagement with aspects of such interlocution in Mafeje's scholarship. This is at two levels. Against the prevailing (mis)representations of Africa and the Africans, an important aspect of Mafeje scholarship was devoted to a vigorous combating of what he referred to as the "epistemology of alterity." No discipline came up for harsher rebuke from Mafeje than Anthropology, the field of study in which he received much of his graduate education. Beyond 'protest scholarship', however, Mafeje's works equally involve a resolute affirmation of endogeneity — a scholarship grounded in and driven by the affirmation of African experiences and ontological accounting for the self. Although it is difficult to separate Mafeje's works into the blocks of those exclusively engaged with endogeneity and others concerned with contending with discourse of alterity — indeed engaging in one is immediately a defining premise for the other — I focus on the two in distinct sections of the remaining parts of this paper. We conclude by drawing out lessons from Mafeje's scholarship for a new generation of African scholars.

A celebration of Mafeje's scholarship cannot be about supine adulation — he would find that condescending. This paper involves a critical engagement with Mafeje's works used to highlight this twinned project of relentless combating of alterity and extroversion and affirmation of endogeny;

it is a continuation of the dialogue that we were having up to the time of his death. More importantly, it is in such critical engagement that we can add value to Mafeje's work and extend the frontiers of his works, hence honour his memory with our own works as a community of scholars.

Enduring Ties: Contesting Alterity and Affirming Endogeneity

If there is a common thread tying all of Archie Mafeje's professional writings, as distinct from his more political writings, it will be the relentless contestation of the epistemology of alterity and the pursuit of endogeneity. Endogeneity, in this specific case, refers to an intellectual standpoint derived from a rootedness in the African conditions; a centring of African ontological discourses and experiences as the basis of one's intellectual work. I use 'endogeny' here as a short-hand for intellectual works driven by endogeneity. "To evolve lasting meanings" Mafeje (2000:66) noted "we must be 'rooted' in something." Central to endogeneity is averting what Hountondji (1990) referred to as 'extroversion'. In spite of the claims of being nomothetic in aspiration, social analysis is deeply idiographic. Those who exercise undue anxiety about being 'cosmopolitan' or universalist fail to grasp this about much of what is considered nomothetic in the dominant strands of Western 'theories'. All knowledge is first local; "'universal knowledge' can only exist in contradiction" (Mafeje 2000:67). It is precisely because Max Weber spoke distinctly to the European context of his time, as Michel Foucault did for his that guaranteed the efficacy of their discourses. "If what we say and do has relevance for our humanity, its international relevance is guaranteed" (Mafeje 2000:67).[2]

Against Alterity

While 'The Ideology of "Tribalism"' is often cited as the launching of Mafeje's attack on alterity, the drive for the centring of the African 'self-knowing' is evident in *Langa: a study of social groups in an African township* (Wilson and Mafeje 1963) co-published with Monica Wilson, his supervisor at the University of Cape Town. The preference for the research subjects' own self-definition — e.g., 'homeboys' rather than 'tribesmen' — in the book presaged his 1971 paper. A similar mode of writing, which proceeds from the subject's perspective, is evident in two of his other works published in the 1960s: "The Chief visits town" (Mafeje 1963) and "The Role of the Bard in a Contemporary African Community" (Mafeje 1967). However, in contrast to the muted negation of alterity in these earlier works, 'The Ideology of "Tribalism"' was a more self-conscious critique of the continued use of 'tribe' and 'tribalism'.

Mafeje's paper was not new or alone in contesting the concept of 'tribe' and 'tribalism — cf. Vilakazi (1965), Magubane's 1968 paper (republished in 2000:1-26) and Onoge's 1971 paper (published 1977); that much Mafeje (1971:12, 1996:260-1) himself specifically mentioned.[3] Nonetheless, Mafeje's intervention was a focused 'deconstruction' (Mafeje 1996, 2001) of the categories on conceptual and empirical grounds. Empirically, Mafeje argued, the word 'tribe' did not exist in any of the indigenous South African languages — or to the best of my knowledge, any that I know. Conceptually, those deploying the concept are unable to sustain it on the basis of their own definitions of tribe(s), (hence tribalism). It is a method of critique that defines Mafeje's scholarship, anchored on conceptual rigour or its absence.

'Classical anthropology' Mafeje noted (quoting Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's 1940 *African Political Systems*) defined tribes as "self-contained, autonomous communities practicing subsistence economy with no or limited external trade" (Mafeje 1971:257). Others (citing Schipera's 1956 *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies*) would define tribes as a group of people who claim "exclusive rights to a given territory" and manage "its affairs independently of external control" (Mafeje 1971:257). In this sense, tribes are defined by subsistence economy, territoriality, and ruled by chiefs and/or elders. Anthropologists and others who persisted in using 'tribe' and 'tribalism' as their framework for analysing Africa were violating their own rules. Territorial boundedness, political and economic isolation, and subsistence economy no longer apply under the conditions of colonialism. To argue, as Gulliver did (in the 1969 edited volume *Tradition and Transition in East Africa*) that they continue to use 'tribe' not out of 'defiance' but because Africans themselves use it when speaking in English (Mafeje 1971:253-4) would be woolly-headed. Mafeje did not "deny the existence of tribal ideology and sentiment in Africa... The fact that it works... is no proof that 'tribes' or 'tribalism' exists in any objective sense" (1971:258-9). The persistence of 'tribalism' in such context is "a mark of *false consciousness.*" (Mafeje 1971:259, emphasis in original). More importantly, that cultural affinity (what he called "cultural links") is deployed in securing "a more comfortable place" is no evidence of 'tribalism.' More forces may be at work than 'tribal' identity, including occupational and class identities. Mafeje cited Mitchell's monograph, *The Kalela Dance* (Mitchell 1956) and Epstein's *Politics in an Urban African Community* (Epstein 1958)*,* which both point to such alternative explanations.

At the heart of Mafeje's argument is Anthropology's conceptual conundrum. The categories might have been valid once, Mafeje argued, but not anymore because the colonial encounter ended the territorial and political isolation of the 'tribes' and their subsistence economies. Further, the

'territoriality' that was supposed to be the conceptual basis of 'tribes' did not exist in Mafeje's reference group, the AmaXhosa; they were never organised under a single political unit even when found in the same region. This is a theme Mafeje returned to in his 1991 book in the case of the Great Lake Region of East Africa. In spite of these, anthropologists who studied sociational dynamics outside the 'tribal homelands' persisted in deploying the categories. It is this invariant commitment to the categories that Mafeje called 'tribal ideology' or the 'ideology of tribalism.' It was no longer scholarship but ideology — not that Mafeje thought scholarship could be non-ideological.

The new army of political scientists trooping into Africa in the periods immediately before and after 'independence' would go on to deploy the same mode of writing and thinking. If the anthropologist could be excused because the study of 'tribes' is his/her raison d'être, the Africanist political scientist had no such excuse (Mafeje 1971:257). The result is that similar phenomena in other parts of the world are 'explained' differently — with 'tribe' or primitivity being Africa's explanatory category. The tribal categories are used simultaneously to explain 'pattern maintenance and persistence' and the failure of 'modernity'!

Much in the same way that Magubane's vigorous critique of the Manchester School (Magubane 1971) was liberating for many African students studying Anthropology or Sociology in the United States at the time, Mafeje's paper, of the same year, had similar edifying effects on the same cohort of African students studying in the UK or Anglophone Africa, as Zack-Williams noted.[4]

The problem is that Mafeje pursued his line of thought at the expense of conceding that the category might have been valid at an earlier time (Mafeje 1971:258). Not only does Anthropology deal with its objects of enquiry outside of history, it is ill-equipped to address the issues of history. The 'isolation' (political and economic) and territoriality that were supposed to define the African communities before colonial encounter hardly stands up to scrutiny when approached from the perspectives of History and Archaeology. Neither about Africa, Asia or the Americas, is it possible to sustain the claims of territoriality and isolation. None of the groups in West Africa that are still routinely referred to as 'tribes' would fit the definition hundreds of years before the first intrepid anthropologist arrived on their door steps. Further, the very act of naming and labelling requires encounter. 'Germanic tribes,' as a label, is only feasible in the encounter with the Greek or Roman 'Superior Other' who does the naming and the labelling. Isolation is thus unimaginable. *Alterity rather than any conceptual validity is foundational to labelling one community of people a 'tribe'; another nation.* The Germanic tribal Other is immediately the 'Barbarian'; an inferior Other. The appropriation of such

alterity by the labelled is one of the legacies of colonisation, such that it is still possible for Africans themselves to speak of their local potentates as 'tribal authority'! What is required at the level of scholarship and everyday discourse is the complete extirpation of the category of tribe; evident in Mafeje's works, from 1963 to 2004, but insufficiently extirpated, conceptually, in 1971.

The same extirpation cannot be said for the category of 'Bantu-speakers' (Mafeje 1967, 1991), which he used as a shorthand for speakers of "Bantu languages" (2000:67). Even if it is possible to categorise the 681 languages referred to by linguists as belonging to the 'Bantoid' sub-set of the 961 languages in the Benue-Congo group — itself a 'sub-family of the Niger-Congo phylum'[5] — labelling the languages as 'Bantu' is the ultimate in extroversion and alterity. While the languages may share linguistic characteristics and *Bantu* generally means 'people' (*Abantu* in IsiXhosa), none of the groups is self-referentially 'Bantu.' The labelling is rooted in European alterity, which found its apogee in the Apartheid racist group classification, with all Africans designated 'Bantu' — hence Bantu education, etc. A geographic classification, similar to 'Niger-Congo' rather than Bantu, might be less eviscerating. Even if one were to accept the singularity of classification involved: '961 languages' as so linguistically close as to be given a name, it does not explain why Africans have to absorb the alterity. What more, other linguists consider Malcolm Guthrie's method, which is the source of the classification, as deeply flawed. The role of missionaries in inventing the fragmentation of African languages and then scripting exclusive ethnic identities on the back of such fragmentation is widely known (Chimhundu 1992). Undoing this fragmentation has been the essence of Kwesi Prah's Centre for the Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) in Cape Town. The idea of 'Bantu-speakers' is an aspect of the inadequate 'negation of negation' (Mafeje 2000:66) that I had hoped to explore with him in the audio-visual interview planned for May 2007. It is a task that we must take upon ourselves as surviving African scholars.

Negation of Negation: Mafeje on Anthropology

Mafeje's (2000) *Africanity: a combative ontology* is perhaps his most eloquent and elegant enunciation of the twinned agenda of the "determined negation of negation" (ibid, p.66) and the pursuit of endogeneity. The former requires an uncompromising refutation of the epistemology of alterity which has shaped modes of gazing and writing about Africa and Africans. Such negation of alterity is the beginning of the journey to affirmation; a method of scholarship rooted in the collective Self and speaks to it without the anxiety regarding what the western Other thinks or has to say. In its specific sense, the two write-ups (Mafeje 2000, 2001) were in reaction to the 'cos-

mopolitan' anxieties of the post-modern monologue that dominated the pages of the CODESRIA Bulletin in the preceding three years. Mafeje's pieces were an ode to a recovered patrimony. However, Mafeje's 'determined negation of negation' goes back much further, and its object was the discipline of Anthropology as the epitome of alterity.

'The problem of Anthropology...' (Mafeje 1976) was an intervention in the debates between different factions of anthropologists.[6] On the one hand, the new generation of anthropologists with radical orientation; on the other hand, an older generation of 'mainstream' anthropologists. Kathleen Gough represented the former and Raymond Firth, the latter.[7] Mafeje acknowledged Magubane (1968) as one of the new generation of African scholars mounting a vigorous repudiation of mainstream anthropology.[8] 'The problem of Anthropology...' was elegantly written — in the best tradition of Mafeje's scholarship. Elegant erudition aside, Mafeje's contention was that Anthropology had passed its 'sell by' date, and it was time to move on to something different. "Among the social sciences" Mafeje argued, "anthropology is the only discipline which is specifically associated with colonialism and dissociated with metropolitan societies" (1976:317). The alterity associated with anthropology is not accidental or temporal; it is immanent. If as Raymond Firth (1972) claimed, anthropology is "the legitimate child of Enlightenment", the leading intellectuals of the Enlightenment, unlike latter day anthropologists, were preoccupied with accounting for "the moral, genetic and historical unity of mankind" and "had little regard for exotic customs" (Mafeje 1976:310). However, in so far as the scholarship of the Enlightenment "sought to make its own anthropological viewpoint universal" (ibid.) it inspired a 'civilising mission' in relation to non-European peoples — a pseudonym for pillage and imperialism. Anthropology, as a discipline, is rooted in this venture; it is in this sense that contrary to Firth's claim, Anthropology is a child of imperialism, and a foster-child (if not grandchild) of Enlightenment. English socialists like Beatrice Webb, for instance, did not think it strange to talk of East Asians as savages (Chang 2008); Christian missionaries took such labelling for granted: a pervasive conception of Africa and Africans that has received a renewed impetus. Anthropology is one discipline founded on such inferior othering of its 'objects' of study. Unlike Gough and others who sought to reform Anthropology, Mafeje's contention is that epistemic 'othering' is so *immanent* to Anthropology as to be its raison d'être. The point is not to reform it but to extirpate it.

Mafeje uses 'anthropology' in at least two senses: anthropology as a conceptual concern with ontological discourses (Mafeje 1997a:7), and Anthropology as "a historically defined field of study". The former has to do with origin of something — as in his discussion of the "anthropology of

African literature". The latter has to do with a discipline rooted in the 'epistemology of alterity.' While Mafeje associate the latter with the discipline, it is equally as much a mode of thinking and writing that considers the 'object' as the inferior or the exotic Other. It is the latter that one would classify as the 'anthropologized' reasoning about Africa; a discursive mode that persists, which constitutes for me the *curse of anthropology* in the study of Africa. As a discipline, however, Mafeje was careful to distinguish between the works of Colonial Anthropology (most emblematic of British Anthropology) and works of practitioners such as Maurice Godelier and Claude Meillassoux. The former is more foundationally associated with anthropology "as a study of 'primitive' societies" (Mafeje 1997a:6); the latter, Mafeje insisted, must be taken seriously: "their deep idiographic knowledge, far from diminishing their capacity to produce nomothetic propositions, has helped them to generate new concepts" (Mafeje 1991:10). They approached the African societies on their own terms — without alterity.

Anthropologists may claim that they are no longer concerned with 'tribes' but alterity remains their raison d'être. The study of the 'exotic Other' is only a dimension of alterity; often the 'less-than-equal Other.' As an undergraduate, I had the good fortune of studying in a university which insisted, from the early 1960s, to eliminate Anthropology. Even so, my first year teachers included social anthropologists who came with Anthropology's mode of native gazing, it struck me then as the 'Sociology of the primitive Other." It was probably the reason why Mafeje's 'The problem of anthropology...' resonated so much with me when I first read it. The claims by contemporary anthropologists that they are committed to the wellbeing of their research subjects or that field method defines their discipline are rather lame. Even the most racist colonial anthropologists made similar claims of adhesion to 'their tribes.' We will address this further later in this paper.

Further, ethnography is no more unique to Anthropology than quantitative method is to Economics. The methodological opaqueness of the anthropologist's 'field method' quite easily gives way to methodological licence. Since the function of anthropologists is to 'explain' exotic, foreign cultures and strange customs to their compatriots, methodological licence and the erroneous coding of the 'objects' of Anthropology are taking on the same instrumentalism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries new age of Empire as applied Anthropology did under colonialism. Closely associated with the epistemology of alterity is erasure, which becomes distinctly imperial at inter-personal levels; and those attempting erasure tend to employ derision and intellectual bullying.

In response to Mafeje's (Mafeje 1996, 1997b) critical review of Sally Moore's book (Moore 1996:22), she sought to deride his claim that he "might have prevailed on Monica Wilson not to [use the tribal categories] in *Langa*" (Mafeje 1997b:12). Moore's response was that while Mafeje might have been responsible for the fieldwork, Wilson produced the manuscript; an assertion that hardly reflects well on her own understanding of the process of producing a manuscript. Authorship, if that is what this confers on Monica Wilson, does not mean exclusivity of even the most seminal ideas in a manuscript. Significantly, Moore confused 'detribalisation' used earlier by the Wilsons for a rejection of the category of 'tribe' or 'tribalism.' Conversely, Moore failed to account for the recurrence of this rejection of alterity in two other publications by Mafeje (Mafeje 1963, 1967) in the same period. She might simply never have bothered to read them.

In response to Mafeje's observation that she failed to account for the works of African scholars in her book with the lone exception of Valentin Mudimbe, a distinct form of erasure, Sally Moore's response was two-fold. First that she left out the works of African scholars like Magubane and Mafeje because she concentrated on books and monographs not journal articles (Moore 1996:22). Second, that she cited many more other African scholars. On both accounts, she was less than candid. The sources she used are profuse with journals articles — German, French, English, etc. (Moore 1994:135-60). Several of these are American anthropology journals, including *Current Anthropology* in which Magubane's piece appeared. It is difficult to imagine that she was unaware of Magubane's 1971 paper at the time it was published, given the uproar it generated and her seniority — she was Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Southern California at the time.

On the second charge, her response was that she did nothing of the sort and listed several African scholars she claimed she cited. Other than Mudimbe, she engaged with none of the authors. When she did, if one can call it engagement, they were part of general citation rather than an engagement with their ideas. The two references to Onwuka Dike (Moore 1994:11, 15) were from his obituary on Melville Herskovits. You would hardly know that Dike founded the famous Ibadan School of History. The references to Jomo Kenyatta were either incidental to her discussion of Malinowski or an oblique reference to Africans publishing "ethnographic monographs of their own peoples" or "emigration" (Moore 1994:132-3). In the latter, Kenyatta was part of five Africans grouped together, but the reader will have no idea what exactly they wrote. The reference to Paulin Hountondji was second hand, and part of African intellectuals who "rail against what they see as the misreading of outsiders" (Moore 1994:84); hardly an evidence of intellectual courtesy.

The only African scholar she discussed with any degree of 'seriousness' was Valentin Mudimbe, and even so, it was in a remarkably derisive and imperial manner. She referred to him as "a Zairean who lives in the United States," like he did not belong. Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa* was dismissed as "complex, indigestible, and highly opinionated" (Moore 1994:84), without any apparent awareness that to label someone opinionated is to be opinionated. If one were to look for the enduring tendency to treat Africans and their intellectuals as children, one need to go no further than read Moore. She would make similarly condescending remarks about Mafeje in a later article (Moore 1998), labelling his work as driven by 'polemic strategy', 'noises', 'diatribe', etc. As before, Moore failed to engage with a range of Mafeje's works or even the 'Anthropology and Independent Africans' (Mafeje 1998) to which she claimed she was responding. The response was more condescending than a matter of intellectual engagement. How, for instance, is the crisis of funding that African universities face an answer to the alterity immanent to Anthropology? It was as if Africans will have to choose between alterity and generous funding. Yet the high point of the rejection of alterity was when research funding was readily available *within* the universities themselves. University of Ibadan (Nigeria) rejected the idea of a Department of Anthropology in the early 1960s when it did not have any problem of research funding and its staff had no need to seek external funding. The researches undertaken by Kayode Adesogan,[9] in Organic Chemistry, were funded entirely from grants from the university (Adesogan 1987). It led to his contributing more than twenty new compounds to the lexicon of Chemistry, precisely because his scholarship was rooted in endogeneity (Adesina 2006:137). The same can be said of the diverse schools of History in Africa — from Dar-es-Salaam, to Ibadan, and Dakar. They flourished in the periods **before** the funding crisis. What they shared in common was an uncompromising rejection of the colonial racist historiography (Adesina 2005, 2006). The difference in Chemistry and History is that alterity is not immanent to them. History did not originate in the study of the 'primitive' Other nor reserved for it. It was, therefore, amenable to epistemic challenge on its own terms. The same cannot be said for Anthropology!

Mafeje was fundamentally right in seeing through this in his review of Moore's book. He ended the review by saying he did not mind the candour of those who write about Africa as:

> Simply a continent of savages (read 'tribes') and venomous beasts… As a matter of fact, I like black mambas lethal as they are and wish Africans could learn from them. Perhaps, in the circumstances their continent would cease to be a playground for knowers of absolute knowledge and they in turn would lose their absolute alterity (1997b:14).

It was a 'call to arms' that many failed to heed. The debate in *African Sociological Review* 2(1) 1998 is interesting for the persistent claims by the professional Anthropologists that Mafeje's critique was '*passé*' (Laville 1998). If Anthropology has transcended its alterity, why do so many anthropologists persist in exoticizing their 'objects' of enquiries? When the professional anthropologists transcend alterity, how will the result be different from Sociology? If, as Nkwi (Nkwi 1998:62) argued, "the trend in African Anthropology is towards the interdisciplinary approach" is the 'discipline' still a discipline? Nkwi is right in arguing that more Africans were engaged in active objections to Anthropology than Mafeje acknowledged: Mafeje mentioned himself and Magubane. A case in point is Omafume Onoge at Ibadan. But Mafeje was referring to focused dissembling of Anthropology's epistemology of alterity not the "narcissism of minor differences" within the camp (cf. Ntarangwi et al., 2006) that the deliberations of the African anthropologists he was critiquing represented. Most Africans simply walked away from the discipline rather than dissipate their energies in arguing with the 'owners' of the discipline. Central to this is the inherently racist nature of its discourse — alterity. I recognised the racist epistemology in my first term as an undergraduate; Mafeje (1976) only confirmed what I knew. More than 30 years later, we have African students expressing similar feelings within a few days of being in their first year Anthropology class at Rhodes University. It is either the discipline has overcome its epistemology of alterity or it has not. Clearly it has not, precisely because whatever the negotiations around the 'protective belt' of the discipline's core discourse, the core remains rooted in alterity.

The claim to field method (ethnography) as a defining aspect of Anthropology is equally intriguing. Ethnographic technique was used before the rise of Anthropology and is used in other disciplines beyond Anthropology. As Mafeje (Mafeje 1996) noted, he did not have to be an anthropologist to write *The theory and ethnography of African social formations*. I made extensive use of ethnographic technique in my doctoral study of a Nigerian refinery (Adesina 1988); I did it as a sociologist. A discipline's claim to being mono-methodological is hardly a positive reflection on its credibility. Research problems suggest the research techniques to adopt not the discipline; most research issues would require multiple research techniques, not being wedded to a particular research technique.

Anthropology was born of a European intellectual division of labour. When they stayed home and studied their own people, they did Sociology; when they went abroad to study other people, ate strange food and learnt strange customs and languages, they did Anthropology (Adesina 2006). The idea of a 'native anthropologist', as Onoge noted, is a contradiction. In spite of protestations

to the contrary, Anthropology is still more oriented towards the study of the 'exotic Other' than not. When they write about their own societies most still write as if they are outsiders. In 2007, it is still possible to come across a manuscript written by a Yoruba medical anthropologist with a title that reads in part: "...of the Yoruba of South-western Nigeria." It is the kind of extroversion that Hountondji (1997, 1990) warned against. Clearly, if the audience was conceived as Yoruba such exoticization would not be necessary.

Those who wish to study non-western societies in the tradition of Godelier and Meillassoux should get beyond casting these societies as exotic objects that need coding for the 'non-Native' audience and broaden their methodological scope; in other words, move over to doing Sociology.

Against Disciplinarity and Epistemology?

However, two issues that I have argued with Mafeje about and were to discuss on the planned interview are his repudiation of 'disciplines' in the social sciences and 'epistemology.' Given his ill-health in the four years before his death, I thought it would be taking undue advantage of his health condition to raise these issues on the pages of the *Codesria Bulletin.* In an intellectual appreciation such as this one these concerns are worth flagging. Mafeje's rejection of disciplines, I suspect, derives from his recognition that to develop a robust analysis of any social phenomenon you need the analytical skill drawn from a diversity of disciplines. Nevertheless, to reject disciplinarity on such ground is to confuse issues of *pedagogy* with those of *research.* While knowledge production is inherently inter-disciplinary, inter-disciplinarity works *because each discipline brings its strength to the table* of knowledge production. We address the broad scope of knowledge essential to rigorous analysis by offering 'liberal arts education', but in the context of disciplinary anchor. From the point of pedagogy, transdisciplinarity is a recipe for epistemic disaster: you end up with people who are neither conceptually rigorous nor methodologically proficient. They are more likely to regurgitate than be profound. Mafeje's own profundity comes from fusing his trainings in Biology, Sociology, Social Anthropology, Philosophy, and Economics rather their absence.

Mafeje's rejection of 'epistemology' is rooted in his aversion for dogmatism, but that is hardly the same as epistemology, which as any dictionary will attest is "the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions and foundations, and its extent and validity". The study of specific epistemic standpoints — from positivism to Marxism and postmodernism — is the business of epistemology. The crisis of dogmatic adhesion to an epistemic standpoint can hardly be construed as a crisis of epistemology. Postmodernism's pretension to being against grand narrative

ended up erecting a grand narrative of its own. What it had to say that was brilliant was not new, and what was new was not brilliant. We deconstruct postmodernism's deconstructionist claims precisely from the standpoint of Epistemology — accounting for a paradigm's presuppositions, foundations, claims to knowledge production, extent and validity, as the dictionary says.

The Pursuit of Endogeneity

Right from the start of his intellectual career, Mafeje's rejection of alterity was not simply a matter of rebellion; it was immediately about affirmation. It is instructive, for instance, that not one of those who purported to contend with him in the *ASR* 'debate' showed an awareness of anything Mafeje wrote before 1991. As mentioned earlier, the idea of endogeneity is about scholarship 'derived from within', and that is not simply a matter of ethnography. Rather than works of anthropology, Mafeje's sole-authored works in the 1960s (Mafeje 1963, 1967) are works of profound 'endogeny.' They reflect a strong sociological mindset, combining fine field-craft with analytical rigour.

In his 1967 paper, "The role of the bard in a contemporary African community', Mafeje located the *imbongi* or bard in a comparative context, drawing comparison with the Celtic bards (Mafeje 1967:195-6). He demonstrated their role as social critics who can be withering in their poetic social commentaries. Rather than 'tribe' or 'tribal' Mafeje used the categories 'contemporary African community' and *Thembu* (the AmaXhosa sub-nationality); rather than 'praise singers' Mafeje located the practitioners of the public-performance poetry as 'South African bard' and 'South African traditional bards'. It was an immediate extirpation of the discourse of alterity that would have marked the *imbongi* as a 'praise singer' of a primitive culture.[10] The practitioners we encountered were poet-laurels; public intellectuals engaged in intellectual labour. The society itself and its various functionaries, the political contestations and conflicts that marked the 1950s' Transkei region in the wake of the rise to power of the Afrikaner National Party and its Bantustan policies were free game for the *imbongi*. The paper had the hallmarks of an intellectual effort to make sense of the social processes from the contested ontological standpoints of the human agencies being investigated. It was devoid of the intellectual anxieties with acculturation — who were 'trouser-wearers' or who were 'red-clay' people — that was emblematic of the anthropologized modes of writing in South Africa of the 1950s and the 1960s. The fieldwork for the paper was undertaken while Mafeje was a student at University of Cape Town between 1959 and 1963. Much later, Mafeje (2000) would highlight "standing on home ground" sufficient to apprehend a society from its own ontological standpoint as a marker of an 'authentic interlocutor' (Mafeje 1991) — in highlighting the

difference between the authenticity of Taiwo's (1995) grasp of Yoruba deity, *Esu Elegbara,* vis-a-vis Gates (1988); more in this below. Much the same can be said for Mafeje's 1963 and 1967 works; he did both works as a graduate student. It is this capacity to apprehend a society 'from within', without 'extraversion' (Mafeje 2000:67) that marked his scholarship and gave it the ring of authenticity and 'groundedness'.

The importance of *The theory and ethnography of an African social formation —* apart from its artisanal nature and conceptual rigour — derives from Mafeje's effort to understand the interlacustrine kingdoms – *on their own terms —* from within and without the burden of fitting them into particular 'universalist' typologies. In the process all manner of intellectual totems were overturned. I suspect that this is what Mafeje meant by his rejection of 'epistemology;' the freedom to allow the data to speak to the writer rather than imposing paradigms on them. What such scholarship calls for are authentic interlocutors able to decode local 'vernaculars': the encoded local ontology and modes of comprehension (Mafeje 1991:9-10, 2000:66, 68). Mafeje argued that this is what distinguished Olufemi Taiwo's (1995) accounting for the Yoruba deity, *Esu Elegbara,* from those of Henry Louis Gate and Kwesi Prah's (1998:156-184) interlocution of the Akan codes from Anthony Kwame Appiah's (1992) 'extraverted' account.

Being an authentic interlocutor, as others have demonstrated, does not come simply from being 'a native' (Amadiume 1987; Nzegwu 2005; Oyèwùmí 1997); it requires a capacity to take local 'vernaculars' as one's intellectual reference point or anchor. The result in scholars such as Amadiume, Nzegwu, Oyèwùmí, and others has been seminal contributions to African Gender Scholarship without the status anxiety of wanting to be cosmopolitan. The same applies to the diverse African schools of History.[11] Taking one's locale seriously enough to produce works of epistemic significance has always been the essence of enduring scholarship. Similarly, there is nothing in Mafeje's works that suggests that being an 'outsider' disqualifies a scholar from producing works of profound endogeny. For Mafeje (Mafeje 1981, 1991) the French anthropologist, Claude Meillassoux, is such an example. Nor does endogeny suggest a 'de-linking' from non-endogenous systems of knowledge. Mafeje's works demonstrates this, almost to the point of raising Marxist frame of analysis to the level of a distinct discipline (cf. Mafeje 1976, 1981, 1991). Even so, Mafeje would insist that the nomothetic aspiration of any theory or paradigm must meet the test of the idiographic rather than the tyranny of received paradigms that often obscures the ability to 'see' and comprehend social processes unfolding before us on their own terms.

In his engagement with Harold Wolpe's *On the Articulation of Modes of Production,* Mafeje (Mafeje 1981) demonstrated the depth of groundedness

that makes for an authentic interlocutor in decoding the local 'vernacular'. A central assumption in Wolpe's (1981:295) attempt at apprehending the 'African redistributive economies' is that "land is held communally by the community" and the primacy of land as a means of production. The idea of 'communal property continues to suffuse the debate around the agrarian question in South Africa. Land, as Mafeje (1981:128) noted, was never a 'communal' property considering that ownership inhered in the lineage not the community; something entirely different from 'the commons' such as shared grazing land or watering hole. Significantly, Wolpe misread the processes unfolding in the periods the he was concerned with.

First "under the system of *quit-rent* all arable land is individually registered at the magistrate court in the name of the family head, who then accept liability for the annual rent... By this token" Mafeje (1981:128) asks, "are not all peasant cultivators in the reserves, far from being owners of land, tenants of the State in the strict sense?" In what way can one speak of communal land in such context?

Second, relates to the deployment of class analysis in the context. "To conduct class analysis we do not have to invent class, but rather to be alert to possible mediations in the process of class formation" (Mafeje 1981:130). In this regard, the idea that in a lineage system "a man who is a custodian of a plot of four acres belongs to a different class from one who has no such control, or to say a family which is bless with a hundred cattle belongs to a class above one with five cattle, is to reduce all social relations to mere quantities" (ibid). In the lineage system "the youth are the elders of tomorrow..., the elders are biologically committed to succession... despite their monopoly over the means of production" (ibid). What more, migrant labour system was inverting the line of dependence. Maintaining and ownership of prestige properties like livestock increasingly depended on 'remittances' from migrant worker. In the eastern Cape, Mafeje (1981:128) noted that the category of such migrants workers "who send part of the family (normally, old parents and younger children) to the reserves with some of the stock accumulated on white farms" are referred to as *amaranuga* (ibid). The elders come to depend on the younger people for the 'means of production.' A hurried deployment of 'class analysis', devoid of grounded understanding of the unfolding internal processes, risks imposing 'nomothetic' categories on the object of analysis (Mafeje 1981:133-6). One might further argue that claiming that "the class struggle [is] the motor of history" as Wolpe (1980:219) has to contend with Amilcar Cabral's (1979:125) reminder that not all societies are 'class societies' and to insist on the mantra is not only to misrepresent history but to place people in such contexts outside of history. As Mafeje (1981:130) warned "class-formation is not only an object

of theory but also an object of empirical investigation." It takes one with the insight of an authentic interlocutor to understand the limit of the nomothetic aspirations of received paradigms and modes of writing.

Added to Mafeje's location as an 'authentic interlocutor' was his much more rigorous handling of the conceptual issue of what Etienne Balibar meant by 'social formation' and why Wolpe's idea of 'articulation' misread Balibar {{3361 Mafeje, Archie 1981/f:133-6;}}; it was theme he would pick up later in his *The theory and ethnography of African social formations* in a more elaborate manner.

Mafeje demonstrated similar capacity to cut through prevailing mantras in his "Beyond 'Dual Theories' of Economic Growth" (Mafeje 1978:47-73). The village ('traditional' economy) is intricately linked to the 'modern' economy of the cities. Conceptual rigour found its validation in detailed attention to empirical data that emerged from an "insider's" capacity to decode local 'vernaculars'. Some 30 years after Mafeje's critique of the 'Dual Economy' thesis, the debate on 'two economy' is going on in South Africa without as much as an acknowledgment of his contribution in these areas. Similarly, the collection of essays in a special issue of *Africanus,*[12] concerned with a critique of the 'two economies' discourse in South Africa and Wolpe's 'articulation of modes of production' as the basis of some of such critiques, did not contain a single reference to Mafeje's works in these areas.

For Mafeje:

> Afrocentrism is nothing more than a legitimate demand that African scholars study their society from inside and cease to be purveyors of an alienated intellectual discourse... when Africans speak for themselves and about themselves, the world will hear the authentic voice, and will be forced to come to terms with it in the long-run... If we are adequately Afrocentric the international implications will not be lost on the others (2000:66-67).

The resulting product may "well lead to polycentrism rather than homogeneity/homogenisation... mutual awareness does not breed universalism" (Mafeje 2000:67).

Lessons of Mafeje's Scholarship: Concluding Remarks

The lessons that a new generation of African scholars can take from Mafeje's scholarship are many. I will mention four:

1. Deep familiarity with the literature and subject,
2. An artisanal approach to field data and writing;
3. Immense theoretical rigour, and
4. An unapologetic and relentless commitment to Africa.

Over time, Mafeje moved from being proto-Trotskyite (in the tradition of South Africa's Non-European Unity Movement) to being Afrocentric[13] but these were simply the scaffolding for deep social commitment. Noteworthy is that a rejection of dogmatism did not result in eclecticism in Mafeje's hands. You cannot walk away from any of his papers without being struck by his voracious intellectual appetite, and deep familiarity with his field, even when he moved into new fields. He took the field craft seriously and was 'artisanal' in connecting the dots. But more significantly, his prodigious intellect was immediately grounded in addressing real life problems; scholarship (however profound) must find its relevance in engagement. Mafeje's works on agrarian and land issues, development studies, democracy and governance, liberation scholarship, African epistemic standpoints, etc., constantly challenged and prodded a new generation to think large and engage in issues around us. The policy implications are enormous. He was uncompromising in demanding that Africans must insist on their own space; be completely unabashed in rejecting every form of domination. But averting alterity is not about being marooned on the tip of criticism; it must move from negation to affirmation.

Appreciation

Notes
1. This paper is concerned more with the intellectual aspects of my personal encounters with Archie Mafeje. For the mix of the more personal and part of the intellectual in this paper see my "Against Alterity— the Pursuit of Endogeneity: breaking bread with Archie Mafeje" CODESRIA Bulletin 2008, No.3 (Special Issue for the 12th General Assembly).
2. Quoting Mao Zedong via Kwesi K. Prah.
3. Much of the claims of taking on Mafeje, especially Sally Moore's, failed to acknowledge this; further on this later in this paper.
4. See the comments of the African reviewers to whom Magubane's paper was sent by the editor of Current Anthropology. Onoge, who met Magubane in the US, described him as 'the most exciting African sociologist' of the time Omafume F. Onoge. 1977.

5. Cf. http://www.powerset.com/explore/semhtml/Bantoid_langages. Also see, http://www.ethnologue.org/.

6. The paper was the point of my encounter with Mafeje, having first read the paper as a first year undergraduate at University of Ibadan, while rummaging through the journals section in the university's library basement.

7. This distinction is, of course, relative. Kathleen Gough was born 1925 while Raymond Firth was born in 1901. The distinction is more one of relative accretion to 'classical anthropology.'

8. Magubane was, actually, never an anthropologist. He trained at the University of Natal as a sociologist. That he would be considered an 'anthropologist' in North America says more about the spatial division of labour when such scholars study Africa.

9. Retired professor of Organic Chemistry, University of Ibadan (Ibadan, Nigeria).

10. The similarity included the mode of self-appointment, being arbiter and conveyer of public opinion, etc. In this Mafeje registered a disagreement with the claim by the eminent linguist, A.C. Jordan, that the imbongi has no 'parallel... in Western poetry. ' In the same breadth Mafeje pointed to the non-hereditary nature of the imbongi in contrast with the European bards.

11. See Toyin Falola's J. F. A. Ajayi and Toyin Falola. 2000 collection of JF Ade Ajayi's papers for insights into the methodological and epistemological issues that shaped the Ibadan School of History. Onwuka Dike was the founder and inspiration of the School.

12. Volume 37, Number 2, 2007. Africanus is a journal of Development Studies published by the UNISA (University of South Africa) Press.

13. My appreciation to Thandika Mkandawire, an enduring mwalimu, in this regard.

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Mafeje and Langa: The Start of an Intellectual's Journey

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Abstract

Drawing on material in the Wilson papers in the University of Cape Town archives, this article reviews the contribution Archie Mafeje made to Monica Wilson's research project in Langa (Cape Town, South Africa) in the early 1960s. It also discusses the character of the relationship between Wilson and Mafeje that emerged in the course of his contribution to the project, showing how a warm and respectful relationship was sustained through the difficult period of the late 1960s, and into the 1970s when Mafeje reformulated his arguments relating to Langa and his assessment of liberal, 'assimilationist' South African anthropology. The article concludes by drawing out some of the wider implications of this episode of intellectual history, seeking to contextualise the antipathy towards anthropology that Mafeje expressed in later years.

Résumé

Basé sur les écrits de Wilson répertoriés dans les archives de l'Université du Cap, cet article analyse la contribution d'Archie Mafeje sur le projet de recherche de Monica Wilson à Langa (Le Cap, Afrique du Sud) au début des années 1960. Il est aussi évoqué dans cet article la nature de la relation entre Wilson et Mafeje qui s'était développée au cours de la contribution de ce dernier au projet, mettant ainsi en relief la relation chaleureuse et respectueuse qu'ils ont pu maintenir malgré la période difficile de la fin des années 1960, mais aussi dans les années 1970, période durant laquelle Mafeje reformula ses arguments vis-à-vis Langa et sa critique sur l'anthropologie Sud Africaine libérale et 'assimilationiste'. En conclusion, cet article mets en lumière les effets considérables de cet épisode de l'histoire intellectuelle, tout en essayant de mettre en perspective le sentiment d'antipathie par rapport à l'anthropologie que Mafeje nourrissait dans les années qui suivront.

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Archie Mafeje's contribution to Monica Wilson's research project in the township of Langa in Cape Town was crucial. Wilson employed Mafeje as the project's field researcher from late 1961 to mid-1962. He worked very hard in this capacity, explaining – in a letter to Wilson – that, particularly in the early part of his field research, he had hardly left Langa before midnight on any of his research days.[1]

Mafeje's long hours in the field provided Wilson with the detailed case studies of life in Langa that had been sorely lacking before he came along. He also provided acute insight into the ways the different categories of residents related to each other, and their views and opinions of each other. He introduced her to the terms – such as 'ooscuse me', 'ooMac', and 'iibari' – the residents in these various categories used to refer to each other, providing sensitive explanations of their connotations, and when and where they were used or not used.

The Langa Project

The Langa project had been in considerable trouble before Mafeje was recruited as field researcher. It had actually commenced as early as 1954, shortly after Wilson's own appointment as Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The project had been conceived as a study of African urbanisation in Cape Town, and it was an interdisciplinary endeavour involving Professor Jack Simons from the School of African Life and Languages and Dr Sheila van der Horst of the university's Department of Economics. Wilson was to contribute an ethnographic study of contemporary urban life, Simons a history of the African presence in the city (with a special focus on the changing legal constraints on this presence), and Van der Horst a study of African industrial workers.[2]

Wilson and her colleagues faced several difficulties with regard to the project in the course of the 1950s. Funding was secured from the state's National Council for Social Research in 1954, but the council insisted that the UCT researchers should link up with a team of University of Stellenbosch researchers that was embarking on a broadly similar project among the so-called 'coloured' inhabitants of the city and its immediate environs.[3] This 'racial' division of labour may not have been uppermost in the researchers' minds at the outset, but it soon came to be accepted that UCT was studying the African population of Cape Town, and Stellenbosch its coloured inhabitants.

The Stellenbosch researchers included Professor R.W. Wilcocks, who was well known for his part in the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry into the so-called 'Poor White Problem' in the 1930s, the sociologists S.P. Cilliers and Erika Theron, and the anthropologist (or *volkekundige*) J.P. Bruwer.[4]

There is nothing in the record (in the Wilson papers in the UCT Archive) to suggest that there were any tensions between the two sets of researchers on personal or explicitly political grounds (although the Afrikaner Nationalists had taken over the government in 1948 and were beginning, slowly, to elaborate the policy of apartheid). But there were signs of divergence over objectives and methods of research between the two parties. The UCT researchers saw their endeavours as being of the nature of pure research, and Wilson, in particular, laid great emphasis on the necessity for detailed, qualitative inquiry. The Stellenbosch researchers, on the other hand, seemed more inclined to think in terms of policy research, and to deploy the more rapid research techniques they deemed appropriate to this end.[5]

Wider political circumstances impacted on the project when the National Council for Social Research refused, in 1955, to fund a period of research leave for Jack Simons on the grounds that the National Party government had declared him a 'listed' person (because of his communist sympathies). The UCT researchers were incensed at this obstructionism, but their Stellenbosch counterparts were not unsympathetic to the difficulties Simons faced, and the council was persuaded to change its decision in 1957 (although by then it was no longer possible for Simons to take the research leave for which he had applied earlier).[6]

Wilson's main difficulty in this period was the Social Research Council's rigid insistence on the submission of regular progress reports as the key to renewed research funding. This insistence evidently drove her close to despair, and she considered throwing in the towel on her portion of the project on several occasions in the late 1950s.[7] The problem was the extraordinary difficulty of finding a suitable researcher to conduct detailed field research in Langa. Wilson may have compounded the difficulty by her apparent insistence that any researcher had to have a Cambridge – or, at a pinch, an Oxford – background in order to qualify as suitable. She managed to employ the Cambridge-trained A.R.W. Crosse-Upcott, who had some experience of fieldwork in rural Tanganyika, for twenty-one months between mid-1955 and the end of 1957.[8] But after he left the project, to take up a permanent position in Tanganyika, Wilson went through a list of potential fieldworkers, only to be disappointed by her failure to engage their services. One of the people she tried, without success, to involve in the project was John Middleton, recently graduated from Oxford, who provided relief-teaching in Anthropology for a period when Wilson was on sabbatical leave.

Wilson was to send Mafeje to Cambridge in 1966, after he had completed a Masters degree in Social Anthropology at UCT under her supervision. In 1961 he was in his final year of a BA degree, with majors in Social

Anthropology and Psychology (he already held a BSc degree from UCT). Mafeje passed his Anthropology successfully at the end of 1961, but failed the final examination in Psychology. He told Wilson he was furious at the lack of self-discipline he had shown in approaching this final examination, not least because he was obliged to take time off from the Langa research in order to prepare for the supplementary examination – which he negotiated successfully – early in 1962.[9]

The quality of the information Mafeje acquired in the field is best understood by comparing his findings with those of Crosse-Upcott. In a rather defensive response to a request from UCT's Principal in 1959 for a yet another progress report, Wilson explained that Crosse-Upcott 'disliked town work, and though he worked hard he did not prove as good an urban field worker as he had been in a remote district'. He left her '560 pages of typed notes, reporting his observations and interviews', but she complained that 'the great difficulty in anthropological research is that it is almost impossible for one investigator to make much use of field material collected by someone else'.[10]

The small portion of Crosse-Upcott's tome that I have examined – an eleven-page report on the first nine months of his field research – gives some indication of why Wilson should have come to these conclusions.[11] He appears to have been very tentative in his approach to the residents of Langa, fearing that – aside from the 'leading personalities' with whom he conducted 'private interviews' – they were bound to regard him with animosity. His report referred to the need to avoid 'arousing concerted opposition from potentially hostile quarters', as well as 'publicity that would enable extremists to sabotage the survey'. Why he believed that Langa was peopled by 'extremists' who were necessarily 'hostile' in the mid-1950s is hard to say. Wilson observed later that 'at the time of the investigation what the inhabitants of Langa regarded as a case of corruption by a European (official) was being discussed everywhere', but she gave this as the reason why some of the things people had said to Crosse-Upcott were 'probably libellous', not as a pointer to the fact that they would not speak to him at all.[12]

Crosse-Upcott began his study of social groups in the township by looking at the churches, on the grounds that they were 'strong, friendly, and sophisticated'. His report divided the churches into 'established' and 'independent' categories, and then spent a good deal of time explaining that this 'demarcation is blurred', to such an extent that even the 'ultra-conservative African priesthood of the Anglicans' shared much of the 'nationalistic outlook typical of the "independent" Churches'. This same outlook was also to be found among the leaders of the sporting, recreational, occupational and

commercial groups whom he had interviewed (in much less detail than the church leaders), and he warned that since the leaders of the women's groups he had encountered were 'both articulate and aggressive, investigation of their affairs must proceed with caution'.[13]

Mafeje's Field Research

Crosse-Upcott may have become less hesitant as he proceeded further with his field research, but Wilson still noted in 1959 that he had 'failed to collect material on various topics (e.g. kinship and the groups of "homeboys") on which I pressed for information'.[14] Mafeje supplied material on these issues in abundance, as shown by the letters he exchanged with Wilson during his field research, and the relevant parts of the eventual book. In my opinion the best part of *Langa* is the one dealing with the 'six "home-boy" groups' (Wilson & Mafeje 1963:56–73), particularly insofar as it was able to compare the histories of these groups on the basis of when their respective members first arrived in Cape Town and the social class they achieved in the city. And I would go further to say that the chapters of the book in which Mafeje's hand is most evident as field worker (such as those on 'Home boys', 'Kinsmen', and 'Arbitration in Disputes') are far more convincing than those that relied largely on Crosse-Upcott's efforts ('Churches' and 'Clubs'). Mafeje was clearly able to give Wilson much more ethnographic detail with which to work than his predecessor had managed.

Mafeje was, of course, an 'insider' in a way Crosse-Upcott could never have been. This was not only because was he a native Xhosa-speaker, like most of the residents of Langa, but also because of his political activism, which one doubts he kept entirely to himself in the field. In the 1950s he had been associated with the Society of Young Africa (SOYA), a youth organisation affiliated to the All-African Convention (AAC), which had been founded in the mid-1930s to mobilise popular opposition to Herzog's segregationist bills (Kayser & Adhikari 2004:8). The AAC had joined forces with other movements in the 1940s to form the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), which positioned itself to the left of the African National Congress (ANC) at the time, insofar as it took an avowedly non-racial stance from the outset, and envisaged a struggle for freedom that would necessarily involve a socialist revolution in the wake of national liberation (Kayser & Adhikari 2004:5). The Cape Peninsula branch of SOYA had at least a hundred members by the end of the 1950s, drawn from working youth in the city's townships and students at tertiary institutions such as the University of Cape Town (Kayser & Adhikari 2004:9). It is therefore likely that Mafeje was known to some of Langa's younger residents in this capacity, although he may have sought not to draw

too much attention to his link to SOYA when dealing with the relatively large number of middle-class, 'ooscuse me' people in the township, who were more likely – on the basis of Crosse-Upcott's comments – to have been aligned with the ANC.

On the other hand, this link may have stood him in good stead with the migrant workers in the so-called 'barracks' in the township, and with at least some of the residents of the 'zones' (the intermediate area – between the barracks and the 'respectable' family housing – where many, not-quite-'middle-class' people still retained strong links with the Eastern Cape countryside). In the wake of the Sharpeville shootings, the Langa uprising, and the march on Cape Town by 30,000 people in March 1960, the NEUM constituents decided to launch a new organisation to take advantage of what they regarded as the 'pre-revolutionary' conditions that had arisen in the country. Mafeje was one of the founder members of the African Peoples' Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA), formed at a secret meeting in the Cape Peninsula in January 1961 (Kayser & Adhikari 2004:5). APDUSA was intended to realise the NEUM's objective of a non-racial struggle to overthrow white supremacy and achieve national liberation as a prelude to a socialist revolution. It sought to forge an alliance between the urban proletariat and the rural 'peasantry' to this end, and therefore made the issue of land redistribution in the countryside central to its programme.

APDUSA's programme was elaborated over time, of course, particularly at and after its first National Conference in 1962 (Kayser & Adhikari 2004:9). This means that, even if he had wanted to do so, Mafeje may not have been in a position to discuss its finer points with the migrant workers and members of the 'home-boy' groups in Langa during his field research in late 1961 and early 1962. Yet the general thrust of the programme, and particularly its focus on migrant workers as the bridge between proletariat and peasantry, seem evident in the interest Mafeje took in the circumstances of the residents of the Langa barracks, and the detailed case histories of the 'home-boy' groupings he passed on to Wilson. His careful noting of which of these 'home boys' still had access to rural land, even if they had spent a great many years working in the city, may have had a significance for him far beyond what Wilson read into it.

But it is important to bear in mind that, his personal credibility in Langa notwithstanding, Mafeje was also a student who had only just completed his undergraduate studies in Anthropology, as well as a neophyte field researcher working under a professor whom he clearly regarded with considerable respect. At this stage, and for a good many years after this, Mafeje indicated to Wilson that social anthropology was his chosen field and, indeed, his

'calling'.[15] He also gave evidence of a deep regard, both professional and personal, for his mentor. He wrote, for instance, in response to Wilson's comments on one of his field reports, that:

> It is very important for me to hear your comments because, as it happens, out of the many people through whose hands I have gone, you are one of the few I do not only approve of but also have complete faith and trust in. This explains, love for social anthropology aside, the tremendous pleasure I derive in working for you. You might not believe me when I tell you that, at the present moment, there is nothing I enjoy more than working on the Langa study.[16]

Mafeje was 24 years old when he wrote this effusive passage at the start of the 1960s. As another of Wilson's students (a decade later), I can empathise with the sentiments he expressed in it, sensing that he was responding to the intriguing combination of scholarly erudition, regal bearing and personal vulnerability that was manifested in the way she related to junior colleagues in whom she took an interest. My reference to 'junior colleagues' is intentional since, in my experience, Wilson made a point of treating the arguments and observations of students in whom she saw promise with great seriousness, giving them the impression that they had been admitted to an inner circle of fellow professionals (or at least professionals in-the-making). It is clear, from the correspondence concerning Langa between them, that she regarded Mafeje in exactly this light, and one may speculate that he was the student on whom she honed her skill in this regard. Wilson certainly let him know how impressed she was with his field reports, but did so in subtle ways, often combining praise with an injunction to expand his interpretation of events or go back to the field to seek further detail.[17] More explicit praise for his efforts, and open acknowledgement that they were vital to her attempt to rescue the Langa project from the doldrums in which it had landed in the late 1950s, she reserved for her communications with other people.[18]

> The part of privileged student was not always easy to play. Exactly how much intimacy was being granted by one's distinguished mentor? This question seems, on occasion, to have exercised Mafeje. I would be very pleased if you could tell me what you feel about this work and things in general. To be honest, I am anxious to hear from you. Silence from you affects me very unfavourably. The fact that you are my professor cannot be overlooked. I enjoy doing this work only if you are pleased or satisfied with it. I should imagine this would be the attitude of any student. Now, as it were, I am not certain whether one could really speak to one's professor as I am doing at the moment. Anyway, I hope you will understand my position.[19]

These personal exchanges are, I think, essential background to an appreciation of Mafeje's response to the manuscript of the *Langa* book, which Wilson gave

him for comment prior to its publication. Wilson wrote the text on her own, drawing on the field reports by Crosse-Upcott and Mafeje, but she acknowledged the latter's contribution by publishing the book as a joint endeavour. Mafeje was forthright in pointing to mistakes in areas – such as the correct spelling and use of Xhosa terms – where his knowledge was clearly superior to hers. He was similarly direct in dealing with her notoriously wayward spelling and syntax in English. The didactic tone he adopted in these instances is self-conscious, and no doubt afforded him more than a little satisfaction.

> I found this chapter very weak in punctuation. Adverbial clauses of condition, time, and concession introduced by 'if', 'when' and 'though', respectively, are often not marked off by a comma from the principal clauses they precede. When a complex sentence is introduced by a relative clause instead of the principal clause, the two clauses are always separated by a comma. … I found the same thing in the use of 'but', introducing an adversative clause or to express mere contrast. 'But' introducing the above mentioned clauses is always preceded by a comma unless, by doing so, the writer gets the feeling of 'over-stopping'.[20]

Mafeje was also direct in his response to broad political issues that arose in Wilson's text. Referring to a passage in the draft of the chapter on 'Classes and Leaders' (Chapter 7), Mafeje wrote sharply 'You describe Noni Jabavu's book "Drawn in Colour" as admirable. From what point of view is it so? One critic, an African writer and nationalist, remarked that the book is "thoroughly drenched with snobbery".… I also do not like the tone of the book. It is riddled with sentimentalism, and its condescending attitude is simply nauseating'.[21] What Wilson made of this spirited sally one does not know, but it is noticeable that she made no reference to the 'admirable' character of Jabavu's work in the final text, and mentioned her book only in a footnote.[22]

On the other hand, at the end of his commentary, Mafeje gave Wilson's text his unstinting approval.

> Other than the few points I have raised, I am satisfied with the exposition of facts in this work. I am also in agreement with the fundamental ideas expressed – that is, at no time did I find myself forced to compromise my ideas. I am particularly pleased about this because I look at this study as purely scientific work which has nothing to do with what white or black nationalists feel or think. It grieves me to think that under present conditions the[re are] certain truths which, though demonstrable, cannot be stated.[23]

Such wholehearted approbation gives pause for thought. In the light of his subsequent, and well-known, reservations about the whole 'acculturation' paradigm in anthropology (of which the book on Langa was clearly part), why should he have praised Wilson's text in this fashion? Why should he

have been able to express severe criticism of Jabavu's 'condescending' views about the thin veneer of 'civilisation' she encountered among the people of Uganda (Jabavu 1960), and yet have overlooked Wilson's notorious conclusion that 'the innumerable associations of the modern African townships (such as Langa) may, indeed, be seen as a school for civilisation', where Africans ostensibly 'gained experience in the organisation of groups which are no longer based on kinship and which are part of a money economy' (Wilson & Mafeje 1963:179)?

The evidence on the relationship between Mafeje and Wilson persuades me that one cannot reasonably ascribe the former's praise for the *Langa* draft to mere dissimulation. I do not think one can say that Mafeje indicated his agreement with 'the fundamental ideas expressed' simply for strategic reasons – in order either to flatter Wilson or to avoid criticising her. Nor do I think it would be fair to either party to suggest that Mafeje sought refuge in the idea that the Langa manuscript was 'purely scientific work' that had 'nothing to do with what black nationalists think'. This particular comment was in many ways a straightforward statement of his personal position, since he was never – either then or in his subsequent career – a narrow African nationalist. One of his admirable characteristics was that he remained true, throughout his life, to the principles of the NEUM and the African Peoples' Democratic Union, particularly regarding the importance of non-racialism and the need for the liberation struggle to continue beyond the first phase of national revolution. Fifteen years beyond the end of apartheid in South Africa, his long-standing insistence on these principles looks ever more appealing.

But in the early 1960s, one may venture to suggest, Mafeje had not yet worked out how to bring the principles derived from his political activism to bear on his standing as a beginning anthropologist. His contribution to the Langa project through his field research was masterly, but it would take him another decade and more to arrive at a position from which he could use this field research to formulate a convincing counter to Wilson's liberal interpretation of his and Crosse-Upcott's findings. Wilson's argument that the basis of social cohesion among Langa residents was undergoing a radical transition from ascription to achievement, and that social groups based on common interest were replacing those grounded in the generalised solidarity of kinship, was given added weight by the presence of so-called 'middle class' (or 'ooscuse me') people in this township in far greater numbers than in other, similar areas with which she and Mafeje were familiar. Moreover many of these people would doubtless have endorsed her liberal insistence that there was nothing, apart from the white government's intransigence, that could have prevented this wholesale transition to 'civilisation' from succeeding.

Rethinking Langa

The flaw in this conviction was easy to identify when confronted with Jabavu's views about faraway Uganda, but it was probably much more difficult for Mafeje, at this early stage, to make his own observations in Langa speak to the same objection. He returned explicitly to this issue only in 1975, in his contribution to Wilson's Festschrift (Whisson & West 1975). By this time, of course, he had his own Cambridge PhD under his belt, had been through the chastening experience of the 'Mafeje affair' at the University of Cape Town, and had been joined in interrogating the shortcomings of liberal South African anthropology by compatriots-in-exile such as Bernard Magubane (1973). Moreover the field research Mafeje had undertaken in the Transkei in the mid-1960s gave him deeper insight into circumstances in Langa, and his contribution to *Religion and Social Change* turned on a comparison between these two field sites.

Viewed on its own, Langa seemed to be an exemplification of the 'modernisation' story Wilson had sought to tell. Many of the migrant workers, who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy (and at the spatial margins of the township), were reported still to be pagans. Most of the urban residents, on the other hand, were identified as Christians, but they fell into two categories in which there was a correlation between social class and the 'types' of church to which people belonged. The 'respectable', middle-class people belonged mainly to the established churches, while the less respectable, lower-class urban residents adhered to one or other of the independent churches in Langa. Wilson's intention was, no doubt, to provide a more subtle account than this, but one could certainly read into the text of *Langa* a very straightforward story about the sequence of steps by which the urban encounter was 'schooling' black South Africans in Christianity in particular, and 'civilisation' in general.

The Transkei studies provided the vantage from which to give an alternative account of Langa. They allowed Mafeje to make two crucial points. One (which was well-known from Mayer's work in East London, but was not clearly spelt out in Langa) was that the Christian-pagan (or School-Red) division was a long-standing rural phenomenon (Mayer 1963). The other was that, in the Transkei settlements he studied, adherents of the independent churches were looked down on by established-church Christians and pagans alike. Even the All Saints Mission Station, indeed, constituted a social environment in which Anglicans and pagans regarded each other with a strong measure of respect, in part because this distinction did not correspond, anywhere near as clearly as in Langa, with social class and standing. Moreover the 'Red' pagans at the mission station were conscious, and proud, of their paganism. Mafeje argued that they were 'militant' pagans, who deliberately

refused to succumb to the self-alienation they saw among their Christian neighbours, and in this respect they stood in contrast to the 'defensive' pagans of the outlying settlement he studied, who – in the absence of in-their-faces antagonists – were merely waiting disconsolately for the tidal wave of 'western' civilisation to break over them (Mafeje 1975:177–84).

His Transkei observations allowed Mafeje to supplement the initial questions about the character of social groups and the types of churches in Langa (which he acknowledged had been 'inane') with an attempt to grasp what Christianity meant for people in the different social classes evident in Langa (Mafeje 1975:167). He emphasised that there were both pagans and Christians among the migrant workers in the barracks, pointing out that if the pagans appeared in any way apologetic about their beliefs this was because they, like their Christian counterparts, were at the bottom of the township's socio-economic hierarchy. There was little space for militant paganism in Langa. On the other hand, however, there were many merely nominal Christians, particularly among the township's youth, who were contemptuous of the Christian piety displayed by their elders, whether aligned with the established or the independent churches. In his reconsideration of the material, Mafeje clearly found these young people the most interesting category of the general population, mainly because they – like the militant pagans in the countryside – had come closest to realising that Christian piety went hand-in-hand with the 'respectable' people's willingness to mimic white, middle-class civilisation in all respects, and to ignore the obvious contradictions, as well as the costs in terms of 'self-alienation', involved in doing so.

Mafeje's contribution to Wilson's Festschrift was, in my opinion, the best piece in an otherwise pedestrian collection. This was, in large measure, because he succeeded in introducing many of the principles of his political activism into his reconsideration of the Langa field material. By 1975 he had clearly worked out how to formulate academic questions that were firmly grounded in his political convictions, and he did this by showing that some of the people in Langa, and indeed also (and perhaps particularly) in the Transkei, came close to sharing his understanding that a social order grounded in racial capitalism – not simply 'white domination' – constituted the major problem facing black South Africans.

> Does 'social change' or 'being civilised' mean, unambiguously, being assimilated into the white middle-class cosmic view? What will it take for that view to transcend itself? (Mafeje 1975:184).

Mafeje looked, in this context, to what he hoped was the growing influence of the militant urban youth, and the militant pagans in the countryside, for the answer to his questions. Whether the answer still lies in these particular

categories of the population is, no doubt, a subject for contemporary debate. But the questions he posed remain as pertinent today as they were a quarter-century and more ago.

Mafeje's reformulation of the Langa material marked a formal, and obvious, break with the teachings of his distinguished mentor. Yet this break was achieved without any hint of hostility or rancour. One might reasonably expect no such hint to be apparent in a contribution to a book intended to honour Monica Wilson and her scholarship. But it is also the case that there is no evidence of any parting of personal ways in the private correspondence between Wilson and Mafeje in the 1960s and 1970s. Their regard for each other survived the ordeal to which it was subjected during the abortive attempt to appoint him to a teaching position in the Anthropology Department at the University of Cape Town in 1968.[24] At the height of this crisis, Wilson wrote to Mafeje in Cambridge to suggest that he might wish to consider turning the job down, because the South African government's hostile reaction to his initial appointment indicated that any career he might have at the university would be neither easy nor of long duration. Mafeje's reply was solicitous and firm. He regretted the difficult situation in which Wilson had been placed on his account, but he also declined the idea of withdrawing from the job.[25] For many years after this he continued to address Wilson in his letters as 'Aunt Monica'.

Speaking Truth to Power

In the light of his later writings, we have become accustomed to the idea of Archie Mafeje as a scholar who spoke truth, unfailingly, to power. The value of the archival material relating to his early career is that it shows that he had to work hard to develop the skill to be able to do this. He did not criticise the *Langa* manuscript on substantive or theoretical grounds in the early 1960s. The fact that he did not do so was not an indication that he was unwilling to criticise his mentor, or that he had not yet arrived at the political principles that guided his later work. His endorsement of the manuscript suggests, rather, that he had not worked out how to marshal the findings of his field research in Langa in a way that would allow him to support his political convictions by means of his anthropology. His contribution to *Religion and Social Change* shows, on the other hand, that he had found a way to do this by the mid-1970s.

The start of Mafeje's intellectual journey therefore tells us several important things. One is that it requires time, and careful reflection, to be able to speak truth to power effectively. Another important insight is that while speaking truth to power calls for hard and uncompromising intellectual argument, it

does not require personal animosity towards, or the denial of respect for, those with whom one comes to argue.

A third lesson, on which I wish to dwell for a moment in concluding this article, is that the act of speaking such truth is most effective, in the case of an anthropologist, when it is grounded in a sophisticated understanding of one's own ethnography. In this respect I am struck by the fact that Mafeje always insisted on the importance of his ethnographic inquiries, even when, in later years, he explicitly turned his back on the notion that he was an anthropologist (Mafeje 1998a, 1998b). What he objected to about anthropology was not its methods of research or the evidence that could be produced by careful participant observation. Even at his most critical he took care to endorse the value of this form of inquiry relative to others. In this respect, one may say, he remained faithful to Wilson's injunction that any attempt to understand the circumstances of people in Africa required first-hand inquiry into what they made of these circumstances themselves.

What Mafeje objected to, by contrast, was an anthropology in which particular epistemological assumptions – which he invariably characterised as 'Western' – were allowed to overwhelm whatever it was that people on the ground had to say about the conditions in which they found themselves. In this article, I have shown how he developed his argument on this score in his early research in Langa. Liberal observers such as Wilson suggested that Africans in towns had embarked on a process of social transformation that would remake them, ever more closely over time, in the image of 'Western civilisation'. This was not in all senses incorrect, since these observers would have been able to point to people in places such as Langa who believed that they were undergoing this process of refashioning themselves. But the crucial point, at which Mafeje had arrived by the mid-1970s, was that this was by no means true of all the residents of Langa. This insight allowed him to distinguish between 'assimilation' as an analytical framework (which he, like Magubane, rejected outright), and 'assimilation' as an ideology to which some people in Langa undoubtedly subscribed. It also allowed him to argue that their adherence to this ideology was something that had to be explained by means of a more acceptable analytical approach, giving rise to his insistence that many of the 'respectable' residents of the township had become caught in the contradictions of a form of nationalism that encouraged them to mimic 'Europeans' in order to demonstrate that they were every bit as good, and as sophisticated, as the latter were purported to be.

Mafeje knew that the presence of such people had to be acknowledged. But he also knew that it was necessary to show, as Wilson and other liberal anthropologists had not, that there were others in Langa who had not succumbed to these contradictions, and were on the road to overcoming

them. Liberal anthropology could accommodate a narrative of African liberation based on assimilation, but it could not recognise the voices of the people who challenged the assumptions on which this narrative rested.

Mafeje objected to this kind of anthropology because anthropology was the discipline he knew best – the one he had said was his 'calling' at the outset of his professional career. Had he had cause to express himself with equal fervour in respect of other disciplines, he would no doubt have found the epistemological premises of their liberal versions as objectionable as those of liberal anthropology. What clearly distressed him in later years was the attempt by African scholars to resuscitate a form of anthropology that had evidently learnt nothing from his own confrontation with liberal thinking, and that sought – from a position of self-imposed disadvantage – to mimic 'Western' academic orthodoxy.

Notes

1. University of Cape Town, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Godfrey and Monica Wilson Papers, BC 880 (hereafter BC 880), Correspondence with Archie Mafeje re Research 1960–1, K1.2 (hereafter K1.2), Mafeje to Wilson, 22 July 1961.
2. BC 880, Proposals, correspondence, reports 1953–1962, K1.1 (hereafter K1.1), Proposal to the National Council for Social Research (NCSR), 29 March 1954.
3. BC 880, K1.1, NCSR to University of Cape Town (UCT), 25 April 1954.
4. BC 880, K1.1, Universiteit van Stellenbosch, *Ontwikkeling van Wes-Kaaplandse Navorsingsprojek*.
5. BC 880, K1.1, Wilson to T.B. Davie, 17 May 1954.
6. BC 880, K1.1, Minutes of a Meeting of the Supervisory Committee, 3 June 1957; Wilson to UCT Principal, 6 October 1959.
7. BC 880, K1.1, Minutes of a Meeting of the Liaison Committee for Research on Non-Europeans in the Western Cape, 18 August 1956; Minutes of a Meeting of the Supervisory Committee, 3 June 1957; Wilson to UCT Principal, 6 October 1959.
8. BC 880, K1.1, Wilson to UCT Principal, 6 October 1959.
9. BC 880, K1.2, Mafeje to Wilson, 20 January 1962.
10. See note 8.
11. BC880, K1.1, A.R.W. Crosse-Upcott, *Progress Report on a Survey of Langa African Township, July 1955–March 1956*.
12. BC 880, K1.1, Wilson to UCT Principal, 6 October 1959.
13. See note 11.
14. See note 12.
15. BC 880, K1.2, Mafeje to Wilson, 13 February 1962.
16. BC 880, K1.2, Mafeje to Wilson, 20 January 1962.
17. BC 880, K1.2, Wilson to Mafeje (undated).

18. BC 880, K1.1, Wilson to Secretary, National Council for Social Research, 20 June 1962.
19. BC 880, K1.2, Mafeje to Wilson, 18 January 1962.
20. BC 880, K1.2, A. Mafeje, *Comments on the Manuscript* (undated).
21. See note 20.
22. Wilson & Mafeje 1963:143.
23. See note 20.
24. UCT Libraries, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Sir Richard Luyt Papers, BC 1072, Mafeje Affair 1968, B2.
25. BC 880, Correspondence, K1.

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