

GOVERNANCE PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Tania Coetzee[#]

Abstract

The notion and concept of governance is becoming increasingly important in order to bring about prosperity, proper living conditions and progress. The principles and values relating to good governance are a prerequisite for order and stability in a country. Good governance practices are also globally supported by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is important for developing countries to understand and take note of good governance practices. There is pressure on African states to establish good governance practices. What can be done to establish good governance practices in Africa? Governance practices include openness, honesty and integrity; but these practices are not always maintained in some African states. Africa countries have made good progress in implementing governance principles but unfortunately, examples of corruption and unethical behaviour and poor policy implementation problems as well as poor partnerships are common.

In this article the focus falls on the conceptualisation of good governance practices and the analysis of governance in Africa. African states should realise that their perceptions, attitudes and actions toward good governance need to and can change.

Keywords: Governance, accountability, legitimacy, poor governance, Africa, accountability.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/contjas.v4i2.6>

Pratiques de Gouvernance en Afrique

Résumé

La notion et le concept de gouvernance deviennent de plus en plus importants pour pouvoir assurer la prospérité, les conditions de vie adéquates

[#] Programme Director and Senior Lecturer, Governance and Political Transformation, Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Republic of South Africa.

et le progrès. Les principes et les valeurs liés à la bonne gouvernance constituent une condition préalable à l'ordre et à la stabilité dans un pays. Les bonnes pratiques de gouvernance sont également soutenues globalement par des institutions telles que la Banque Mondiale et le Fonds Monétaire International. Il est important que les pays en voie de développement comprennent et tiennent compte des bonnes pratiques de gouvernance. La pression s'accroît pour que les pays africains établissent de bonnes pratiques de gouvernance. Que faire pour établir les bonnes pratiques en Afrique? Les pratiques de gouvernance comprennent la franchise, l'honnêteté et l'intégrité ; cependant ces pratiques sont rarement soutenues dans les pays africains. Bien que les pays africains aient réalisé des progrès en matière de la mise en œuvre des principes de gouvernance, malheureusement, des pratiques telles que la corruption et le comportement contraire à l'éthique ainsi que les problèmes liés à la mauvaise mise en œuvre des politiques et les mauvais partenariats sont communes.

Dans cet article, l'accent est mis sur la conceptualisation des bonnes pratiques de gouvernance et l'analyse de la gouvernance en Afrique. Les pays africains devraient reconnaître que les perceptions, les attitudes et les actions dirigées vers la bonne gouvernance peuvent et devraient changer.

Introductory remarks

The term *governance*¹ is often used; thus, the danger exists that the concept could lose its value and meaning. Often the term *governance* is used to explain everything that relates to government; for this reason it is essential to investigate the meaning of the concept. In every society, good governance is becoming more important, which necessitates the discourse on good governance (including responsibility, accountability and transparency) (Munshi, Abraham and Chaudhuri 2009:ix). Increasingly, good governance

¹ Governance refers to the actions and methods of the government (institution) as well as the systems and norms of action. Government also refers to the state institution (authority with its legislative, executive and judicial institutions).

practices are required to measure the actual performance of a government. Citizens of a state, by enforcing good governance practices, can hold the government accountable for their actions (Bevir 2009:99).

The issue relating to good governance is that it is only good if it contributes to the quality of life of the citizens of a state (Fourie and Schoeman 2010:153). Good governance is a prerequisite for development in different societies, together with norms and values such as political transparency, and proper administrative and management responsibility, which should be present (Fourie 2009:1115–6; Fourie and Schoeman 2010:153). The definition of good governance, according to the World Bank, focuses on equilibrium and on an efficient liberal society with equitable income redistribution amongst the citizens (Diarra & Plane 2014:474). Governments in Africa realise that good governance practices are essential for prosperity and stability. These measuring instruments of good governance are accepted worldwide, but the application and perceptions of good governance principles and practices differ from state to state.

The remark can be made that African states have had mixed success regarding the establishment of good governance practices. The challenge in the regard is that good governance practices take time to establish. It is important that a state should realise the value of good governance practices and be able to see the advantages it holds for its citizens. Why is progress with good governance practices so time-consuming and why are these practices so difficult to establish? What factors play a role in the establishment of good governance practices?

The research is qualitative, descriptive and analytical in approach, and the concept of governance and all the relevant concepts are analysed. There needs to be a distinction between good and poor governance, and the characteristics of each were identified. Furthermore, it is important to investigate governance in Africa and understand the context and stumbling blocks for the establishment of what amounts to good governance. The article concludes with recommendations to improve good governance practices.

Conceptualisation of governance

In order to explain (conceptualise) governance and good governance, various concepts related to governance will be discussed.

The concept, meaning and explanation of governance

Governance can be defined as the action or manner of governing (Munshi, Abrahan and Chaudhuri 2009:1; Louw 2012:89). Governance also refers to all formal and informal actions of a government to reach a specific, common goal (Munshi, Abrahan and Chaudhuri 2009:1). Governance refers to specific systems, institutions and norms. Furthermore, governance is seen in terms of forms of power and authority, as well as regulations to maintain order in the activities of a state (Bevir 2009:3; Louw 2012:89).

Thus, governance is the “core business” of a government, which includes decision-making, conflict resolution, organising elections, and the distribution of economic and social resources (Cole 2008:1; Munshi, Abrahan and Chaudhuri 2009:4). Resources should be utilised effectively and responsibly, and they should be economically viable to deliver the maximum output — results and improvement in the quality of life (Mpehle and Qwabe 2008:259–60). Economic governance provides the material needs of a society (Kassa 2011:4).

It should be clearly stated that the government as an institution is not the only role-player in the establishment of good governance. There are non-government role-players that are also responsible for the delivery of various services to the citizens of a state (Bevir 2009:4). Therefore, there is a network of authors and partnerships responsible for governance (Chhotray and Stoker 2010:17). It is, however, important that these role-players, who are part of decision-making, should be held responsible for their actions (Bevir 2009:4). At the same time, effective governance requires the total commitment of the role-players involved (Fourie 2009:1118) and the acceptance of the decisions taken by the role-players.

One important viewpoint relating to governance is that it focuses on the improvement of the relationship and interaction between a government and its society (Cloete and Auriacombe 2008:449). Governance does not only refer to the relationship between a government and social organisations, but it also refers to how the needs of the citizens are met (Kassa 2011:4). Therefore, the emphasis is on the implementation and output of the government. Thus, this relationship and interaction is based on consensus and mediation between the different interest groups in the society. For good governance to be present there should be a strong civil society, characterised by freedom of association, freedom of speech, and respect for various civil and political rights (Bevir 2009:27).

Accountability means to be accountable for your actions, to make your actions public, and to explain them to the public by means of debate (Mle and Maclean 2011:1367; Cammack 2012: 258-259). If political accountability is lacking in a state, it can limit good governance. Here African states specifically are referred to, where inadequate accountability to citizens exists. This negatively influences democracy. If there is political accountability, it could lead to greater stability. This could lead to the implementation of good governance principles (Bodych 2012:11) to meet the aforementioned demands. Also compare Kassa (2011:5) in this regard. To achieve transparency, there should be clear guidelines for acceptance, clear lines of reporting, and liability (Fourie 2009:1118). Liability focuses on the execution of an instruction and the outcomes of the instruction (Bevir 2009:34–5).

Another important concept is transparency, which is one of the basic elements of governance. Transparency relates to the flow and availability of information. However, what is important is the manner in which government information is made available, as well as the opportunity for interaction between the government and civil society. Public participation is thus important for governance and democracy (Cloete and Auriacombe 2008:450,462; Mle and Maclean 2011:1367). It is problematic if legislation limits or minimises the freedom of access to information. Principles of good

governance and democratisation require transparency and the willingness to be criticised (Cloete and Auriacombe 2008:462–3). If the flow of information is limited, it lowers the level of transparency (Cloete and Auriacombe 2008:462–3, 450) and the trust in a government.

Democracy can be seen as one of the prerequisites of good governance. Democracy brings forth new dimensions and changes in government practices (Chhotray and Stoker 2010:10). Together with this comes the public participation of citizens in local government processes as an impetus for development (Mle and Maclean 2011:1369). According to the World Bank “democracy now emerged as the benchmark regime with the presence of ‘checks and balances’, including those associated with participation by civil society.” (Diarra & Plane 2014:474). Governance refers to representation and responsible government, in accordance with the will of the majority (Bevir 2009:27). Participation by the public in decision-making is also a way to demand liability from the government. The aim of participatory governance is to deepen and broaden democracy, to empower the public, and to prevent domination by one party (Chhotray and Stoker 2010:167–9; Govender and Reddy 2011:61). In addition, public participation should go hand-in-hand with the necessary transparency and openness (Mle and Maclean 2011:1377–8). Therefore, participatory governance is committed to good decision-making with the aim of addressing need and challenges (Chhotray and Stoker 2010:172), to ultimately lead to a stable state.

To summarise, good governance means a public democratic participation of citizens, which is open, transparent, accountable and representative of all individuals and groups within communities, who are attempting to be part of decision-making (Govender and Reddy 2011:62; Kassa 2011:5-7). Harrison (2005: 243-244) clearly explains that the World Bank uses certain concepts such as accountability, transparency, ownership and participation. These concepts determine the criteria used to assess governance.

Good governance and poor or bad governance

The concept of good governance indicates a phenomena of poor governance on the flipside of the coin.

Good governance is associated with control of executive authority, representation, supremacy of the law, an independent bench, an honest police force, an competent and well-equipped civil service, a clear line of liability and transparency, and lastly, responsible decision-making competency (Bevir 2009: 26-7). The King Report identifies further characteristics of good governance, namely: discipline, independence, non-corrupt practices, fairness, and socially responsible decision-making (Fourie 2009: 1116–7; Fourie and Schoeman 2010: 153). Elements of good governance refer to participation, human rights, economic reform, and effective management of resources, social structures and practices (Bevir 2009: 92). Thus, good governance refers to networks that support the development of local government. The emphasis, therefore, is on the active participation of civil society in decision-making and policy (Govender and Reddy 2011:65). Also compare Norris 2011:185.

The opposite of good governance is poor governance which, among others, goes hand-in-hand with the misappropriation of public funds for private gain. Other traits include the absence of the rule of law, rules that limit the free functioning of markets, the expenditure of resources that are not focused on development, and a decision-making process that is not transparent (Munshi, Abrahan and Chaudhuri 2009: 5). Furthermore, poor governance refers to a government that does not provide the basic needs of its people, which is not able to make available sufficient food, fuel, energy and technology, and that cannot control or eradicate social problems or rising child mortality. Another characteristic of poor governance is the lack of trust in the political elite (Ball and Peters 2000: 303).

The elements and traits of poor governance also manifest in the following aspects, namely: poor economic performance and underdevelopment, an increase in the debt burden, high levels of corruption and fraud, institutional weakness, high crime statistics, service delivery problems and protest action,

unregulated migration and lawlessness, poor communication, lack of accountability, poor relationships between the communities and political officials, poor financial management, a weak capacity to deliver services, intra- and inter-party political problems and issues, wastage of supplies and resources, and incompetence (Mle and Maclean 2011: 1371; Bevir 2009: 93).

Against the backdrop of the above-mentioned it would appear that good governance and poor governance have clear guidelines and clearly demarcated criteria. It is actually easy to rate good and poor governance since the emphasis is on the performance, the actions and the manner or way in which decisions are made by a government. Good performance indicates good governance, but poor performance indicates poor governance.

Governance in Africa²

Africa is exposed to the above criteria and is evaluated and assessed accordingly by international states regarding good and poor governance. The following discussion will thus attempt to indicate the possible reasons why African states find it difficult to establish good governance practices.

A lot of time and energy is spent on assisting African states to establish good governance practices and to develop democracies and democratic values (Netswera and Phago 2011: 130). The aims of governance include political stability, economic development and social justice. The value of good governance lies in efficacy, harmony, individual rights or communal goals, and lastly, in economic development (Munshi, Abraham and Chaudhuri 2009: 20-2).

The World Bank has made a significant contribution to the establishment of “good governance” internationally. The World Bank tried to influence and convince international countries to apply good governance principles and to

² Please note that there will be no particular reference made to South Africa, although South Africa is part of Africa.

implement the values and norms for good governance. This is referred to as “Soft Power”. Soft Power is a term which is used by the World Bank to influence countries to adhere to good governance principles. On the other hand the “Hard Power”, term used by the World Bank, refers to a more forceful use of good governance as criteria for the allocation of development aid (financial support from donors) to African countries (Diarra & Plane 2014: 474-475).

The World Bank had considerable influence during the 1988-2008 period when the World Bank was the largest producer of knowledge on governance. By publishing articles and furnishing the world community with information, the World Bank was able to spread the message of the importance, value and contributions of implementing good governance in different countries. The World Bank was further able to promote international benchmarking for assessing governance criteria used by countries to receive development aid and funding for development (Diarra & Plane 2014: 474-478).

What is important to remember is that the World Bank had its historical origins in the Western culture and liberal world-view focusing on liberalism as ideology. Liberalism shaped the vision of political, economic and social “good” in the world. The World Bank perspectives on good governance was also shaped by this ideology. The World Bank did not take into consideration the different cultural, traditional and ethnic values and customs of Africa. It is further said that the World Bank did not actually change or adjust their perspectives on Africa. There is thus a contrast between the Western liberal thought and the latest political developments of clientelism and corporatism in Africa (Harrison 2005:240-242).

From an African perspective, African values and norms play a deterministic role in governance structures (Fourie and Schoeman 2010:146). The view can be expressed that Africa has experienced and is still experiencing a multitude of problems. These problems have their origin in the colonial era, which established the following governance practices on the continent:

- limited citizen participation;
- poor accountability;

- poor relations between those who govern and the African population;
- the rulers ascribing to themselves the right to implement rules and laws and to develop structures that do away with all local control;
- the development of limited state structures;
- the destruction of traditional institutions and organisations; and the establishment of a central government;
- not permitting real representation in government (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011:183).

The decolonisation of the 1960s held the promise of accountable government, but it did not become a reality. One-party and military dictatorships did, however, develop. According to Chirwa and Nijzink (2012: 2) “Africa is arguably a continent where the problem of ‘accountable government’ remains most stark”. The most important factor was that a Western style African elite developed; this was the pattern of governance after independence (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011:183). During the anti-colonisation era, citizens emphasised political independence and freedom. Thus, the emphasis was not on economic development, or social and economic freedom and rights. The emphasis was also not on the efficacy of the government; thus, no real change took place in the quality of life of the citizens of Africa after independence (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 1-2). Effective local government was thus not a priority in African states (Netswere and Phago 2011:130).

Perceptions play a major role when one examines the reasons for poor governance in Africa. One such perception is that Africa is not able to establish and maintain good governance practices. Another perception relates to wealthy states (Western states) that believe that Africa is corrupt (Murphy in Thomas 2012: 33). The characteristics of governance in non-developing countries include: the limited role of the government in markets; insufficient focus on reform; the lack of substance in policy; limited capacity and misallocation of resources; poor policy implementation; absence of transparency; limited policy

change; the government being unable to formulate its own vision; fiscal restrictions and a huge debt burden; poor participation at grassroots level and poor knowledge of good governance practices; and the inability to involve partners (Pomerants 2011: 162).

Another perception is that poor development in a state is the direct result of poor governance. The reason for poor development in Africa is a lack of good governance structures and the political will to apply good governance principles. Good political and economic institutions are necessary to bring about development in Africa (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011: 175, 182). However, it is difficult to find authoritarian governments that apply good governance practices with good economic outcomes or performance (Bodych 2012: 10; Weingarth and Wiederer 2011: 181). Capacity and low performance are real problems in Africa (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011: 182). Viewed in a positive light, good governance policies assist African states to develop good practices and to attend to the needs of the citizens (Bodych 2012:10). Unfortunately, many resources in African states are managed in an inept and ineffective manner. The effects of corruption and conflict leave a lasting negative perception of governance in Africa (Thomas 2012: 32). Western states find it extremely difficult to offer development aid to African states because of the corruption and misappropriation of financial aid and resources (Ponmerants 2011:166). It is clear that poor infrastructure, the lack of maintenance, and corruption negatively affect Africa's governance structures (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011:179). It is especially clear that Africa centralises its public resources and economy (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011:186-7). An example is the Democratic Republic of Congo, which could be one of Africa's wealthiest countries. It is, however, one of the African states that is considered extremely risky with regards to investment as a result of poor governance (Conway 2012:14). We find the opposite in Botswana where there is little corruption. It is also a politically stable country and there is political plurality – all of which is manifested in good governance practices. According to the World Bank, Botswana is seen as one of the African countries that apply

good governance practices as there is accountability, political stability, the absence of violence, an effective government, regular elections, the state authority is divided (legislative, executive and legal), and the supremacy of the law is recognised (Mogalakwe 2008:106, 110). Notwithstanding Botswana's good record, there are no portfolio committees in the parliamentary system. This limits the participation of civil society in the formulation of policy and in decision-making (Mogalakwe 2008:110). It is worth mentioning that as far back as 2010 support for the opposition was said to be growing (Bond 2011:42).

Niger can be seen as an example of a country with poor governance practices. Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, Uganda and Senegal are also characterised by uprisings against dictatorships. Corruption in Zimbabwe and Kenya is reason for concern, while coups d'état in Mauritania, Guinea, Niger and Madagascar have increased instability in these countries (Bond 2011:32).

The impression should however not exist that everything is either positive or negative. Here the example of Zambia is clear evidence of the fact that good governance in the field of tax collection is characteristic of good governance practices. This has led to improved infrastructure and generally a better quality of life for the citizens of the country (Conway 2012:17). Zambia, however, is also experiencing challenges in regards to establishing constitutionalism and constitutional reform. It is especially the legislative process, where the citizenry should be able to participate, which has not become a reality yet (Simutanyi 2012:26-27). The accountability of the government is undermined as it is not an open and transparent process (Simutanyi 2012: 40-41). In Uganda, there have been positive developments in terms of the importance of the independent bench in the constitutional dispensation (Glappen and Kanyongolo 2012: 51). Similarly, specific mention can be made of Ethiopia, Ghana and Rwanda as countries where economic development, the deepening of democracy, and strong leadership – all important elements of good governance, exist (Pala 2013: 35). In Ghana, the importance of the accountability of the parliament towards its citizenry and constituencies,

political parties, extended families, traditional leaders and civil organisations is emphasised (Cammack 2012:263). In Ethiopia, there is progress in the legal systems and in decentralisation to implement government policy more effectively. Programmes and strategies to improve transparency and accountability are also in place in this African country. In addition, various institutions (anti-corruption and human rights) have been established to implement good governance in Ethiopia. Political leaders also oversee the establishment of good governance practices. Notwithstanding these positive developments, challenges remain with regards to communication strategies and in making partners and interest groups part of the decision-making process (Kassa 2011:8-9). In Malawi, there has been progress in terms of the recognition and establishment of human rights; whereas in the past there was not accountability, now good governance practices exist in the new constitutional dispensation. This is happening by means of the national human rights institutions and commissions. These institutions contribute to transparency and good governance. The national human rights institutions also support the government in curbing maladministration (Chirwa and Kapindu 2012: 143).

The Tanzania Accountability Transparency and Integrity Project (2001) is based on a commitment of political leaders to the reforms and another project relies on a cadre of senior public service managers with skills (Harrison 2005:249).

This reflects a general desire by the Bank to ensure that the projects it funds have champions or change agents within the bureaucracy (Harrison 2005:249).

The funds which were made available from the World Bank made it possible to bring about information change and it had a real effect on improving the administration in the public sphere of Tanzania. The processes and procedures for payment of the civil service were much more transparent than before (Harrison 2005:250).

According to Norris (2011:192-193), the following African states are rated on a scale of 1 to 7 (of which 1 is lowest and 7 highest) in terms of the

establishment of democracy: Ethiopia has a rating of 3/7, Zambia 4/7, Malawi 6/7, and Ghana 6.5/7. In terms of corruption on the corruption index, Ethiopia, Zambia, Mali and Rwanda scored between 2 and 4 on a scale of 1 to 10 (of which 1 is highest and 10 lowest).

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that one cannot generalise. Perceptions must change. Western states are inclined to generalise and to believe that all African states are unable to establish or enforce good governance practices. The opposite has been confirmed by the above-mentioned discussion — Africa is able to establish good governance practices.

Not all African states and their leadership can be held responsible for the failure after independence to establish good governance and the accompanying failure of attending to developmental projects. It is also worth mentioning that African citizens expected too much from their leaders in the post-colonial era; the leaders could not meet their expectations as a result of a lack of legitimacy. Legitimate leadership is critically important to the success of state capacity and development (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 2–3). Concern is often expressed about the decline in the legitimacy of African states, low levels of political participation, corruption, and limited accountability in African states (Bond 2011: 35). It is clear that ethnic interests, personal loyalty and service are important in Africa's governance patterns (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011: 193). In other words, capacity is not a priority in Africa's governance practices. Africa has a poor record in terms of good governance practices (tax collection and poor accountability), thus governments in Africa cannot provide for their citizens' needs (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011:196–7). Thus far, African states have concentrated their efforts more on international legitimacy and democratic values. It has been suggested that more emphasis should be placed on internal national legitimacy than international legitimacy. This will also improve governance practices (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 7). Unfortunately, Africa is characterised by authoritarian systems of government, which are not legitimate (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 9). The question can thus be asked

whether poor governance practices are a result of poor leadership and a lack of legitimacy.

How can Africa's governance practices be revised and adapted to satisfy the need for good governance practices? Does the political will, conviction and shared values exist to establish good governance? What will motivate Africa to implement good governance practices or will Africa be forced to implement good governance practices, according to Western standards, for the sake of survival? Is Africa unable to implement good governance practices as a result of established patterns? The following discussion will examine what is needed to establish good governance practices.

What is necessary to establish good governance practices?

For good governance, the following must be present – implementation of policy, economic development, and a corruption-free climate (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 3–4). To establish good governance practices, the role of the government should be examined and the power of the government cannot be passive. The government should be involved to such an extent that capacity and economic development can take place (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 4). To assist the government with this task and function, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was established to maintain better control over mineral reserves and resources (Thomas 2012:32). The EITI was launched by the then UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, in September 2002. Limited resources, misappropriation of funds, and limited services are characteristic of African states (Denters 2011:315). To promote good governance in Africa, mechanisms such as the New Economic Partnership of Africa Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (Pomerants 2011:167) exist to encourage transparency and accountability. The Bank-wide Governance and Anti-Corruption Strategy of the World Bank attempts to address the problems of Africa's governance. However, there are underlying

political and economic problems, political instability, and unrest that negatively impact on governance (Bond 2011:33, 35). The possible result could be improved economic growth and poverty alleviation (Thomas 2012: 32), but unfortunately the aforementioned are inadequate to require transparency from the state, corporations and industries in an attempt to manifest good governance, economic growth and the fair distribution of resources (Thomas 2012:32). African states are characterised by the fact that they do not limit expenses, which leads to the problematic situation in which they find themselves (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011: 188).

Good governance focuses on a participatory manner of governance that is responsible, accountable and transparent. It is also based on the principles of efficacy, legitimacy and consensus which place the rights and interests of individuals and citizens first. There should also be the political will to establish prosperity for African societies and sustainable development through social justice (Munshi, Abrahan and Chaudhuri 2009: 24-25). It is clear from the foregoing what exactly is required for good governance, but the question is how to achieve it.

Good governance implies consensus between various partners. This includes networks of partners that bind together the government, public authority and civil society (Considine and Afzal 2011: 376). They are thus involved in decision-making, the formulation of policies, and the outcome of policies that endeavour to address problems effectively (Cole 2008: 11, 12). Thus, governance can be seen as the process of negotiation between different governance actors (Cole 2008: 15). Example of such actors include managers, politicians, citizens, interest groups, non-governmental groups, think tanks, advisors and the media (Chhotray and Stoker 2010: 240; Cole 2008: 15).

A further aspect that should be addressed is the link and underlying relationship and co-operation between the citizenry and the government (Miruka 2010: 122). Africa does not, however, perform well in regards to the participation of the public in decision-making; the accountability of leaders is also not well-established (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011: 189). Political

institutions have not improved in the democratisation process and Africa is characterised by low levels of participation in the political arena (Weingarth and Wiederer 2011: 190). Participatory governance should be emphasised, which is seen as the transformation and transfer of power and decision-making. In other words, it refers to broadening the decision-making processes and making them more transparent. Democratic governance cannot exist without participation that should co-ordinate different groups (Chhotray and Stoker 2010: 179). Thus, there should be transparency of public decision-making processes and structures, which offer feedback to communities and citizens (Netswere and Phago 2011: 135). Participatory governance should include participation from the planning phase, the budgeting phase, the monitoring phase, the accountability phase and the development of policy and programmes (Fourie and Schoeman 2010: 154). Participation of the society and citizens in decision-making processes contribute to a growth in transparency and accountability (Munshi, Abrahan and Chaudhuri 2009: 6, 7); see also Pieterse (in Govender and Reddy 2011: 68) in this regard. Effective democratic governance cannot occur when access to information regarding decision-making is limited (Cloete and Auriacombe 2008: 451). It also negatively influences the public sector and limits the implementation of policy (Cloete and Auriacombe 2008: 451).

Thus far, the focus was on the principles and requirements for good governance. In Africa specifically it is important to convince leaders on the continent to promote good governance practices by inculcating respect for the constitution, democracy and human rights as part of their dispensation. Legislative principles should also be applied to make good governance a reality (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 14–5); African leaders in particular should focus on honest, accountable and participatory governance; good governance practices; and the eradication of corruption (Mbata and Mangu 2008: 17). Leaders should also be seen as exemplary. If African leaders are corrupt and act unethically, it is not an example of good governance and good behaviour. How then can such leaders expect discipline and ethical behaviour from their

followers (Mle and Maclean 2011:1376)? How can good governance practices be established if leaders act unethically?

Since the 1990s African states have realised that a dictatorship has a negative effect on development. New interest arose in democracy and governance, together with a realisation of the importance for developing countries to appoint legitimate and accountable leaders. In this way the interests and needs of the people can be addressed (Mbata and Mangu 2008:5). To promote democracy and good political governance is critically important. The government with effective capacity can deliver the necessary services that address the needs of its citizens. There is a direct link between good governance and good service delivery on the one hand and poor governance and poor service delivery on the other (Munshi, Abrahan and Chaudhuri 2009: 6,7).

What is also important is to realise that the Western World and western ideas have influenced African countries in their efforts at establishing good governance. Western states not only had a very strong influence on Africa, they actually shaped the African state's trade relations and promoted Western agendas. African states had to align themselves with the West in order to receive development aid. The World Bank must take into consideration the African state's perspectives on governance and development and must change their approach to accommodate African state politics (Harrison 2005:251). "Post-structural theories of the African state contrast strikingly and profoundly with the World Bank's approach." (Harrison 2005:252).

Closing remarks

States worldwide are categorised and judged according to their good or poor governance practices. For states to receive development aid, they must apply and accept the principles of good governance. If they neglect to do this, African states run the risk of not receiving financial aid. States worldwide should therefore apply the principles of good governance and enforce good

governance practices. Accountability is a positive aspect of good governance. More governments should be accountable to their citizenry on how funds are spent, how policy is made, and how decisions are made. “Accountability is needed to ensure fairness, equality and equity in public decision-making” (Chirwa and Nijzink 2012: 4).

It is clear from the examples mentioned above that Africa realises the value of good governance and that African states are taking steps to implement good governance; states in Africa are focusing more on good governance practices. African states have, however, developed a “new culture”, especially after decolonialisation. Several academics agree that African leaders remain power-hungry and that they have followed the example set by their colonisers by repressing and exploiting their citizens. States in Africa are battling to cast off the shackles of colonisation and to implement the principles of accountability, responsibility and transparency. However, there are states that have succeeded in implementing these principles and that can serve as a model for Africa.

Within the context of good governance and the establishment of good governance in Africa, the Western world and the World Bank need to give more recognition to the history and indigenous character of African states. There is a real disjuncture between African and Western perspectives regarding governance. “The clientelist forms of politics that define post-colonial states are not a product of a class project but a contemporary manifestation of a dynamic national/African/ethnic culture. Cultural relations provide the ontology for the approach to African states.” (Harrison 2005: 252).

The focus should be on the global implementation of good governance practices, while the factor in common should be the establishment of good governance practices for the benefit of the entire population. A common denominator should be identified; this common denominator should be governance and good governance. In other words, good governance practices should lead to the improvement of humanity’s outlook on life and the improvement of standards of living. How can the cycle of poverty and the abuse of power be broken? How can Africa establish its own real identity? The

answer lies in good governance practices, which will realise greater co-operation on the continent and encourage investment in Africa. The success of governance reforms in Africa will depend much on the actions, and perceptions of the World Bank and its willingness to accommodate or take into account the political, economic, and socio-cultural characteristics and the history and ideologies of African countries.

Bibliography

- Ahrens, J.R.C., and J. Weingarth. (eds.). 2011. *Good governance in the 21st century. Conflict, institutional change, and development in the era of globalization*. Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Ball, A.R. and B.G. Peters. 2000. *Modern politics and government*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Bevir, M. 2009. *Key concepts in governance*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Bevir, M. (ed.) 2011. *The Sage handbook of governance*. London: Sage.
- Bodych, M. 2012. Is 'good' governance good for business? A cross-national analysis of firms in African countries. *Africa Growth Agenda*, July/Sept: 10-12.
- Bond, P. 2011. Africa's 'Recovery'. Economic growth, governance and social protest. *Africa Insight*, 41(3): 30-45.
- Cammack, D. 2012. Understanding local forms of accountability: Initial findings from Ghana and Malawi. In Chirwa, D.M. and Nijzink, L. (eds.). 2012. *Accountable government in Africa. Perspectives from public law and political studies*. Paris: UCT Press: 255-272.
- Chhotray, V. and G. Stoker. 2010. *Governance theory and practice. A cross-disciplinary approach*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chirwa, D. M. and Kapindu, R. E. 2012. Accountable governance and the role of national human rights institutions: The experience of the Malawi Human

- Rights Commission. In Chirwa, D.M. and Nijzink, L. (eds.). 2012. *Accountable government in Africa. Perspectives from public law and political studies*. Paris: UCT Press: 140-159.
- Chirwa, D. M. and Nijzink, L. 2012. Accountable government in Africa: Introduction. In Chirwa, D.M. and Nijzink, L. (eds.). 2012. *Accountable government in Africa. Perspectives from public law and political studies*. Paris: UCT Press. 1-12.
- Cloete, F. and C. Auriacombe. 2008. Counterproductive impact of freedom of accession information-related legislation on good governance outcomes in South Africa. *Tydskrif vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Reg, (Journal of South African Law)* 3: 449-463.
- Cole, A. 2008. *Governing and governance in France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Considine, M. and K. A. Afzal. 2011. *Legitimacy*. In Bevir. M. (ed.). 2011. *The Sage handbook of governance*. London: Sage.
- Conway, J. E. 2012. Prospecting for better governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Africa in Fact*, (3):14–17.
- Denters, B. 2011. *Local governance*. In Bevir M. (ed.). 2011. *The Sage handbook of governance*. London: Sage.
- Diarra, G. and P. Plane. 2014. Assessing the World Bank’s influence on the Good Governance Paradigm. *Oxford Development Studies*. 42(4):473-487.
- Fourie, D. 2009. Institutional mechanisms and good governance: a perspective on the South African public sector. *Journal of Public Administration*, 44(4):1114–1123.
- Fourie, D. J. and L. Schoeman. 2010. Local Government and sustainable post-settlement support for restitution: in search of efficient governance objectives in public administration. *Journal of Public Administration*, 45(1.1):145–161.
- Gloppen, S. and F. E. Kanyongolo. 2012. Judicial independence and the judicialisation of electoral politics in Malawi and Uganda. In Chirwa, D.M.

- and Nijzink, L. (eds.). 2012. *Accountable government in Africa. Perspectives from public law and political studies*. UCT Press: Paris: 43-69.
- Govender, J. and P. S. Reddy. 2011. The imperative of participation in South African local government. *Africanus*, 41(2):60–77.
- Harrison, G. 2005. The World Bank, Governance and theories of public action in Africa. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*. 7(2): 240-260.
- Kassa, C. B. 2011. The challenges and prospects of civil service reform and good governance in Ethiopia. *African Journal of Public Affairs*. 4(3):1-11.
- Louw, V. N. 2012. From public administration to governance: Science of ideology? *Journal of Public Administration*, 47(1): 88-101.
- Mbata, A. and B. Mangu. 2008. State reconstruction, leadership legitimacy and democratic governance in Africa. *Politeia*, 27(2): 1-24.
- Miruka, C. O. 2010. Game theoretic considerations for Kenyan health governance. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, 16(1):117-128.
- Mle, T. R. and S. Maclean. 2011. Ethics, integrity and good governance: the case of South Africa's local sphere of government. *Journal of Public Administration*, 46(4):1364-1388.
- Mogalakwe, M. 2008. Botswana. Exploding the Myth of Exceptionality. *African Insight*, 38(1):105-117.
- Mpehle, Z. and B. Qwabe. 2008. Performance auditing as means to entrench professional ethos in the public sector: a South African local government perspective. *Journal of Public Administration*, 41(3.1):258-270.
- Munshi, S., B. P. Abraham and S. Chaudhuri. 2009. *The intelligent person's guide to good governance*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Netswera, F. G. and K. G. Phago. 2011. Perceptions about municipal governance in the post-1996 era. The case of Thulamela Local Municipality. *Africa Insight*, 41(2):130–141.
- Norris, P. 2011. *Measuring governance*. In Bevir M. (ed.) 2011. *The Sage handbook of governance*. London: Sage.

- Pala, C. 2013. Diamonds are forever. *Africa in Fact*, (8): 33-35.
- Pomerants, P. R. 2011 *Development theory*. In Bevir M. (ed.). 2011. *The Sage handbook of governance*. London: Sage.
- Simutanyi, N. 2012. The politics of constitutional reform in Zambia: From executive dominance to public participation? In Chirwa, D.M. and Nijzink, L. (eds). 2012. *Accountable government in Africa. Perspectives from public law and political studies*. Paris: UCT Press. 26-42.
- Thomas, M. 2012. Transparency alone fails to reveal corruption. *Africa in Fact*, (3):32–35.
- Weingarth, J. and W. Wiederer. 2011. *Africa: SADC proof that institutions do matter*. In Ahrens, Caspers and Weingartatter. In Ahrens, Caspers and Weingarth (eds.) 2011.