

Global Town to Town Relations: An Exploratory Study of the City of Tshwane in South Africa

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Abstract: The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 describes its government as national, provincial and local sphere which are distinctive, interdepend and interrelated. The national and provincial government, by legislative and other measures must support and strengthen the capacity of the municipalities (Local Government) to manage their affairs, to exercise power and to perform their functions. Towns across the world make relationships with other towns. International relation is a complex field, its practice and scope involves numerous role players whether in government or non-governmental organizations. City of Tshwane is like other towns which seek investment opportunities for its citizens. City of Tshwane has several relations with different countries. The paper seeks to examine the impact of the relations, whether they are beneficial for the city or not. For the purpose of this paper, the study used qualitative research approach. The views and opinions of the officials were directly and indirectly captured by means of interviews and observations. The study adopted the use of data triangulation approach.

Key words: international relations; local government

JEL codes: H, M

1. Introduction

The primary focus of this paper is international relations in local government and its impact thereof. International relation is considered as an interdisciplinary field of study that focuses on foreign affairs and global issues. International Relations (IR) is a complex field, its practice and scope involves numerous role players whether in government (all spheres), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), embassies of external offices based in a country. Taking in to account that in South Africa, the issue of international relations is the province of national government particularly the President and the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

Challenges facing local governments vary from political, economic, technological, etc. South Africa as a developing country is posed to a lot of challenges. The United Nations Habitat, indicates that the fundamental problem in most local government are facing especially those managing towns in developing countries, “is the widening gap between the availability of financial resources and municipal expenditures needs”. The UN Habitat report further indicates that one of the main reasons for this increasing fiscal gap is “the rapid growth of urban population, which creates an ever-increasing demand for public services and new public infrastructure and its

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maintenance”. With these rapid challenges facing local government, the need for municipalities to establish relations that will address their challenges is pivotal and through having international counterpart, sharing good practices with other municipalities through international interactions and exchanges, can change negative perceptions (Harie, 2012) and improves practices and this may lead in to improved service delivery in local government. Harie (2012, p. 2) remarks, “South Africa is increasingly becoming more active in International Relations (IR)” and “local government have not only become international actors, but also development actors as well (Buxbaum, 2014, p. 1), the approach opens up new areas in which international experience can be valuable to municipal international relations.

Towns across the world make relationships with other towns. City of Tshwane (COT) is like other towns which seek investment opportunities for its citizens. City of Tshwane has several relations with different countries. The paper seeks to examine the impact of the relations, whether are beneficial for the city or not.

2. Research Question

According to Sim and Wright (2000, p. 17), “the core of any study is a research question which identifies the gap in existing knowledge that the study seeks to fill” and “formulating good research questions can be very difficult (White, 2008:33)” hence research question does not exist in a vacuum (Sim & Wright, 2008) and its important characteristic is to be relevant (Hulley et al., 2011, p. 22).

International relations in local government plays a very fundamental role in ensuring that municipalities share best practices and create opportunities for each other in view of improving services or lives of the citizens it serves. The relationships of towns are critical and important for the purpose of addressing challenges faced by each municipality. Officials use state resources to travel to other countries in view of establishing relationships with municipalities of those countries. Monies of the municipality are budgeted for and accounted for the purpose of promoting accountability and good governance.

The study focuses on the towns to towns relations with specific reference to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The question relating to extent which towns to towns relations have been addressed in reference to the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality is a matter of extrapolation. The question that the study asks is: what is the nature and scope of towns to towns relations in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality? Furthermore, the following sub-questions can be asked:

- To what extent does Municipal International Relations enhance development in the City of Tshwane
- How can international relations in local government address challenges of the City of Tshwane?

3. Purpose and Objective of the Study

The tenacity of the study is to determine the nature and scope of town to town relations in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. Achieving its goal, the study will follow these research objectives:

- To establish the extent to which municipal international relations enhances development in the City of Tshwane;
- To investigate how international relations in local government addresses the challenges faced by the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality;

3.1 Concepts of International Relations

According to Goodin (2010, p. 132), theories of realism revolves around four central propositions which are ;

states are the central actors in international politics rather than individuals or international organizations, international political system is anarchic as there is no supranational authority that can enforce rules over the states, actors in the international political system are rational as their actions maximize their own self-interest, and all states desire power so that they can ensure their own self-preservation.” Most theorists indicate that international relations is anarchist in nature however Milner (1991, p. 85) argues that the tendency of viewing international relations as anarchist should be put aside but anarchy is an important condition of world politics. Milner (1991, p. 85) further suggest that “strategic interdependence among the actors is at least as fundamental.

There is contention whether international relations are just a field of study or a realm of political practice. Reality is that they represent both as some take international relations as a field of study whiles other believes is merely on politics. Smit and Snidal (2008, p. 6) indicate that international relations is “an explanatory endeavour, concerned with the “is” of world politics not the “ought”. Chatterjee (2010, p. 5) defines international relations as a “branch of social science is concerned with relations among nations, and other issues like non-state actors, international political economy, security, foreign policies of major powers, globalization, international terrorism, international environment and are studies”.

3.2 Towns to Towns Relations

According to Clark (2009, p. 1) “there is no settled definition of town twinning, neither in law nor culture” but argues that town twinning is one of the modalities of international cooperation at the local level and a further explains that a modality characterized by formal twinning agreements, permanence of relationship and formal recognition by local authorities. Some prefer to use towns to towns relations as town twinning, sister towns relations, partner town or towns relations. For the purpose of this paper, towns to towns relations is used. This relationship can be social, political, and economical.

According to A. T. Kearney (2012), Global Towns Index based on how the following indicators; business activities (30%); human capital (30%); information exchange (15%); cultural experience (15%) and political engagement (10%) intertwine to determine a city’s global influence and create interrelationships with other towns in linking into the global economy. The first 49 towns are mainly in the Global North; followed by the rising East and a few Latin American go-getters. Cairo, representing Africa, debuts at surveys starting in 2008, when they were at positions 38 and 50 respectively. Nairobi was not surveyed in 2008 and has stayed at 56 in 2010 and 2012; whilst Nigeria started at 53 in 2008 and is now 59 in 2012. So either African towns are generally regressing or not moving as fast as other towns globally”.

Tshwane does not appear on the first 66 towns on the index requiring a lot of work to make an appearance amongst the world’s vibrant, innovative and highly competitive role-players. Furthermore, the global towns index also measures performance of emerging towns focusing on some strengths like gross domestic product; middle class growth; infrastructure and ease of doing improvement, as well as vulnerabilities like healthcare deterioration; lack of sufficiently skilled employees and high operational costs, especially wages and unstable industrial relations corruption increase; pollution increase and instability increase. Tshwane will need to be rated so that it builds on the positive foundation of relative strength in the high scoring indicators, and seek to eliminate weaker ones.

Tshwane is fortunate in that after South Africa re-joined the international community in 1994 its diplomatic footprint has grown both in terms of its representatives abroad and those accredited to the country. City of Tshwane is like any other municipalities which seek opportunities for its residents. The City of Tshwane since post 1994 had 18 relationships with different towns in different countries. Their relationships were mainly made

because of sharing practices, investment opportunities and encouraging tourism.

3.3 Legal Framework

International Relations in South Africa rest in national government hence the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) focuses, among other things, on consolidating South Africa's global economic, political and social relations, strengthening the African Agenda and regional integration¹. According to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996*, the president is ultimately responsible for South Africa's foreign policy and it is the president's prerogative to appoint heads of South Africa's diplomatic missions, receive foreign heads of diplomatic missions, conduct inter-state relations and enter into international agreements. The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) is entrusted with the formulation, promotion, execution and daily conduct of South Africa's foreign policy. The oversight and accountability in the formulation and conduct of South Africa's foreign policy are vested in the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO strategic plan 2015).

"It is no longer possible for municipalities to, in the new millennium, address the variety of issues by simply relying on their internal systems and capacity. A new paradigm is required to enable local government to both deliver on their mandate and to continuously improve its development trajectory at the same time" (Van Rooyen, 2008, p. 17). The need for municipalities to create relations with municipalities in other countries is pivotal. The relations must be beneficial to the advancement of economic issues with desired output of improving services.

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996*, in Chapter 3 states that government is constituted as national, provincial and local sphere of government which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. Section 154 (1) of the Constitution states that "the national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of the municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise powers and to perform their functions". Section 139 provides provincial government with an authority to intervene in local government and take any appropriate steps deem necessarily to assist particular municipality. The legislative command for local government pretence challenges to the relation between provincial government and municipalities within the province.

The responsibility of negotiating and signing of all international agreements lies with the national executive. Section 231 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides that an international agreement binds the Republic only after it has been approved by resolution in both National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), unless it is an agreement referred to in Section 231 (3). An international agreement of a technical, administrative or executive nature, or an agreement which does not require either ratification or accession, entered into by the national executive, binds the Republic without approval by the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, but must be tabled in the Assembly and the Council within a reasonable time is captured in Section 231 (3) of the Constitution. Section 231 (4) indicates that any international agreement becomes law in the Republic when it is enacted into law by national legislation; but a self-executing provision of an agreement that has been approved by parliament is law in the Republic unless it is inconsistent with the Constitution or an Act of Parliament. While Section 231 (5) provides that the Republic is bound by international agreements which were binding on the Republic when this Constitution took effect. It is important for any relations made by province or towns in different countries follow the prescripts of the constitution.

¹ <http://www.gov.za/about-sa/international-relations>.

4. Background of the City of Tshwane

Municipalities in South Africa are categorized by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, as: Category A: A municipality that has exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its area (metropolitan municipalities); Category B: A municipality that shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a Category C municipality within whose area it falls (local municipalities); and Category C: A municipality that has municipal executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one municipality (district municipalities). The City of Tshwane, which is situated in the Gauteng Province, is a metropolitan municipality or Category A municipality. In 2007, the Demarcation Board (DB) resolved that the boundaries of the City of Tshwane should be changed in line with the proposal of the Board with regards to parts of land within the Metsweding District Municipality (MDM) to be incorporated with the City of Tshwane after the local government elections of 2011 (Integrated Development Plan, (IDP) 2011, p. 2). The metropolitan municipality expanded its capacity from a population of 2 345 908 (Stats SA Community Survey, 2007) after incorporating the MDM. The MDM consisted of Kungwini Local Municipality (KLM) with population of 124 011² and Nokeng Tsa Taemane Local Municipality (NLM) with population 49 389 (Municipal Demarcation Board Assessment of Capacity for 2008/2009). The new City of Tshwane population is estimated at 2 519 308 (IDP, 2011, p. 19). The City of Tshwane is characterised by a rapidly growing population (a projected annual growth of 41%) because of an increase in immigrants, resulting in an increase in informal settlements (IDP, 2011, p. 20). The City of Tshwane is like any other municipalities which seek to create relations with other municipalities in different countries.

City of Tshwane population has increased significantly and thus requires the City to create more opportunities to its citizens. In 2008, City of Tshwane approved a municipal international relations strategy with an aim to propel and profile City of Tshwane as both a tourist and an investment destination. The strategy also seeks to address the need for improved mechanisms of integration and intergovernmental relations regarding learning and sharing of best practice through international relations. The office of the Executive Mayor is responsible for establishing, developing and maintaining international relations with various international organizations and towns in targeted countries. The international and intergovernmental unit must provide policy inputs, support and advice and lead line functionaries in their engagement with the outside world, on both bilateral and multilateral level.

It is pivotal for municipalities to strengthen ties with towns that have similar developmental needs. Chapter 5 of the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000)* indicates that there is need for an Integrated Development Plan to be developed is importance as it gives direction for the municipality. Molepo (2013, pp. 3-4) indicated that “an IDP needs to be developed to ensure that Tshwane strives to achieve the objects of local government set out in section 152 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, which are (i) to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; (ii) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; (iii) to promote social and economic development; (iv) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and (v) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government”.

² <http://www.kungwini.gov.za>.

5. Methodology

The term “research” is defined in different ways. According to Kothari (2011, p. 1) defines research as a “systematized effort to gain new knowledge and some people consider it as a movement, a movement from the known to unknown”. Khan (2011, p. 2) explains research that it has “its origin in a term means to go around or to explore.....” and Khan (2011) further explains research as “a search for facts, answers to questions and solutions to problems”. Miles and Gilbert (2005, p. 1) underpin a score that “research help us to build over more intricate models of the world and how it works, but it also challenges our assumptions and makes us look before we leap”.

Smith (2001, p. 18) underscore a point that the “link between research strategy, that being the design and methods combined, and research question is an important one and can be achieved through a critical approach to research”. According to Wynekoop & Russo (1997, p. 48) a fundamental problem of methodology research is the inconsistency definitions of “methodology” and the failure to define what an author is actually studying. The confusion of the research design and methods should be clarified for the benefit of the academic fraternity as most researchers confuse them. Molepo (2013:9), Maserumule (2011, p. 21) distinguishes “research methodology and research designs because of the fact that research methodologies are often used interchangeably with research designs as if they mean the same”. Babooa (2008, p. 139) describe research design as a “plan, structure and strategy of investigating” and Maxwell (2012, p. 2) argues that “a good research design, is one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficient and successful functioning; a flawed research design leads to poor operation or failure”. Maserumule (2011, p. 21) and Leedy (1993, p. 8) defines research methodology as a “basic procedure, and the steps insolving an unresolved” and “methodology is the philosophical framework within the research is conducted or the foundation upon which is based” (Brown, 2006). O’Leary (2004, p. 85) describes methodology as “the framework which associated with a particular set of paradigmatic assumptions that we will use to conduct our research”.

Creswell (2014, p. 4) explains the differences between qualitative, qualitative research and mixed methods research starting with qualitative as an “approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of data”. Creswell further explains quantitative research as an “approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures”. Creswell explains mixed methods research as an “approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks”. And, according to Johnson & Onwuegunzie (2004) and Hoshmand (2003), “Pragmatism research helps to shed light on how research approaches can be mixed fruitfully” and if research approaches are mixed in the best way, they can offer best opportunities for answering important research questions.

The study used qualitative research methods to examine the implications of town to town relations in view of its benefits to the City of Tshwane citizenry. The views and opinions of the officials were directly and indirectly captured by means of interviews and observations. The study adopted the use of triangulation approach. According to Chinomona (2016, p. 76), refers to data triangulation as to the use of multiple sources”. The sources used are evidence based including interviews, documents and observation. Convenience sampling which is a

non-probability sampling technique was used to select participants. 12 senior officials of the City of Tshwane were interviewed and 7 of the officials are in the Office of the Mayor which is directly dealing with international relations. The researcher had an ample opportunity to engage informally with the previous and current mayor of the City of Tshwane on international relations. Data collection and analysis were done simultaneously. Analyzing data involved categorizing and triangulating evidence from multiple sources.

6. Findings

The study found that *Change of political leadership* played a huge role in hampering the relations with other towns. The new leadership creates its own vision and mission which do not link with the current agreements and exclude previous agreements. *Party politics* affected the agreements made by the then administration as they want to introduce what is in line with their manifesto. The study found that *the agreements are not punishable if not implemented* as a result, a reluctance will occur from the city. The strategy adopted by the City is not implemented due to budget constraints. The study also found that agreements signed can be achieved over a long period of time and no clear indication of which part of the agreement is achieved. The study found that the City adopted a practice from different City that improved their system of doing things.

7. Conclusion

The need for towns to have relationships with other towns is pivotal in ensuring that the vision of the city which indicates that the need to create investment opportunities be created and such relations need to be maintained and monitored for the purpose of the implementation. The need for other studies needs to be looked into for the possibility of creating a clear modality of creating relations with other towns. Agreements signed with other towns must be implemented for the purpose of fulfilling the objective of the agreement.

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