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**A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS: A VALUE CREATING IMPERATIVE
FOR SERVICE DELIVERY ENHANCEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OR A
MECHANISM FOR COMPLIANCE: A CASE STUDY IN THE DEPARTMENT
OF ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM**

BY

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I wish to state and thereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, unless it is specified to the contrary in the text. I also wish to state that to the best of my knowledge, this dissertation has never been submitted for any degree, be it at the University of KwaZulu-Natal or any other university.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANC	– African National Congress
ASGISA	– Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa
CASE	- Community Agency for Social Enquiry
DAC	– Department of Arts and Culture
DACT	– Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism
DEC	– Department of Education and Culture
DSD	– Department of Social Development
FAFO	- Institute for Applied Social Science
GDS	– Growth and Development Strategy
IFP	- Inkatha Freedom Party
JIPSA	– Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
KZN	– KwaZulu-Natal
MEC	– Member of Executive Council
MTEF	– Mid-Term Expenditure Framework
PFMA	- Public Finance Management Act
RSA	– Republic of South Africa
SMME	– Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprise

ABSTRACT

As the first decade of the 21st century nears its end, it is undoubtedly clear that the challenges facing the world today are profoundly different in both character and prominence from those faced by various societies during the last decade of the 20th century. In part, this change derives from, among other things, the rapid growth in the use of information technology, intensification of globalization and its attendant consequences and the hyper-competitive business environment within which most, if not all, business organizations operate.

These factors, together with the visible and unrelenting shift away from the ‘industrial economy’ to ‘service economy’, accompanied by an emphasis on human rights culture across the globe, are radically changing the way people as citizens and people as customers, individually and collectively, understand their role in this new emerging context. Coupled with this changing network of individual and collective psyches is the changing nature and role expected of both the business and government institutions. In response to these changing expectations, businesses and governments are continuously seeking to find creative and working ways to better respond to the needs of their stakeholders. As part of this developing dynamic, the government of the Republic of South Africa has sought to target its strategy planning process as one mechanism through which the enhancement of its service delivery endeavour may be achieved. Taking the cue from their national counterpart, provincial governments are following on the same footsteps.

In view of the prominence enjoyed by the strategic planning process in government circles as a tool, firstly, for linking and integrating departmental budgets and service delivery intentions, and secondly, channel efforts and energies of public servants to enhance service delivery improvement for the electorate, the need to examine the strategic planning process becomes critical. This study, therefore, finds its conceptual origin in the context of this developing dynamic. To this end, the KZN Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism has been identified as a case to study whether the strategic planning process is understood, and therefore used, as a value-creating imperative for service delivery enhancement in the public sector, or mechanism for compliance.

To accomplish its purpose, the study relies primarily on the responses received from interviews conducted with the employees of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism on the question of the department’s strategy planning process. Coupled with this primary source of information, literature review was also conducted as a secondary source. This process is important in that it provides an opportunity for the researcher to conduct a comparative analysis, firstly, to establish whether what the department says it does strategically has any link or relation to what is contained in the literature on strategy. Secondly, it affords space to assess whether the rhetorical articulations of the department on its strategic planning process link back to what the department does in practice around the same phenomena. On the basis of this analysis and assessment, the study moves on to articulate, whether, in its own opinion, based on its findings, the strategy planning

process is currently used by the department as a value-creating mechanism for service delivery improvement or a mechanism for compliance.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a background to the study is briefly outlined. This is followed by a problem statement which seeks to sketch the contextual dynamic which necessitated the need to embark on a study of this nature. Part of sketching the problem statement would be an attempt at pinpointing the objectives of the study and the purpose it seeks to achieve. Beyond the problem statement, an endeavour is made at providing the meaning of strategy in the context of what the research seeks to achieve. This conceptual definition of strategy is followed by a brief description of the historical development of the concept.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Before briefly outlining the background to the study, it might be necessary first of all to indicate that the title of the study is:

Strategic planning process: Value-creating imperative for service delivery enhancement in the public sector, or mechanism for compliance: a case study in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism

It is not uncommon in South Africa to regard the first ten years of democracy as a decade of beginning a journey of undoing the legacy of apartheid. This, it is claimed, could be demonstrated by a progressive abolishment of apartheid laws and enacting laws and policies that find their existence in the spirit of the new constitution as per its adoption which, among other things, seeks to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Equally significant is the tendency to regard the second decade of democracy as a decade of delivery. This notion, it could be argued, had been made particularly popular by

politicians in the ruling African National Congress. As a result, it would seem, as is often the case, that technocrats in both State departments and parastatals had, without any sufficient degree of critical questioning, accepted and internalized this notion. This uncritical acceptance of such political statements clearly manifests itself in some of the pronouncements by government technocrats whenever they are required to pronounce on their department's areas of delivery focus. As Yako (2007: 5) in the strategic plan of the Department of Environmental affairs and Tourism maintains:

This year comes halfway towards the end of the current term of office for the 2005/6 to 2009/10 electoral mandate. Emphasis in this revised plan has been placed on improvement of service delivery and biased focus on designated groups such as women, the youth and people with physical disabilities.

Given the strategic significance and positioning in society of both State departments and parastatals to the fulfilment of the ruling party's promised commitments and promises to the electorate, the ruling executive have sought to ensure that this notion of the second decade of democracy as a decade of delivery permeates various State departments' activities in order to become a reality.

Strategic planning processes in all spheres of government have been identified as being central in ensuring that political pronouncements made by politicians to society are realizable. It is within this context of the vitality of the strategic planning process of the State as a mechanism strategically positioned to facilitate the delivery of promised commitments to the electorate that this study is conceptualized. This point becomes clear when one considers the 2006 to 2010 strategic document of the national Department of Social Development in its assertion that:

The strategic thrust of human development for the Department of Social Development (DSD) emanates from its mandate. Therefore the Department's mandate is based on key commitments including those detailed in the Constitution and the Plan of Action and Follow Up of the World Summit for Social Development.

It is suspected that the strategic planning process is seen within government circles as a vital link between the political elite in power and the electorate. This purported link and

the significance of the strategic planning process is further captured in KZN Provincial Government Task Team report (1996) appointed to investigate the administrative and/or managerial issues affecting the provincial administration of KwaZulu-Natal in its assertion that:

It is recommended that the Director-General performs an exercise with Heads of Departments where the principles of the overall strategies of KZN (GDS) are fully integrated into the plans and activities of the line departments.

According to the task team report, specific targets for achievement against these overall policies had to be set with each head of department, and each individual department held accountable for its achievement.

Flowing from the citation above, it would seem that the recommendation of the investigative task team sees a logical, unambiguous and linear connection between the strategic planning process of the various departments and the delivery of strategic objectives conceptualized and articulated in these strategic planning processes. This view forms part of the thinking within government circles with regard to the role of the strategic planning process. However, the validity of the assumption, propounded above, of a logical and linear connection between a strategic planning process and the delivery of strategic objectives is, however, questioned by other strategy theorists. Instead, they advance a notion of a complex strategy process where the delivery of objectives cannot be known in advance. As Kurtz and Snowden (2003) point out:

Emergent patterns can be perceived but not predicted... in this space, structured methods that seize upon such retrospectively coherent patterns and codify them into procedures will confront only new and different patterns for which they are ill prepared. Once a pattern has stabilized, each of which also would have appeared logical in retrospect. Patterns may indeed repeat for a time in this space, but we cannot be sure that they will continue to repeat because the underlying sources of the patterns are not open to inspection.

It would seem, Kurtz and Snowden, argue for a notion of strategy that is conceptually and practically different from an unproblematic and linear notion of strategy depicted in the

KZN task team report cited above, that seeks to portray strategy conception and development as an aspect of the strategy management process distinctly separable from its implementation, review and refinement.

Commenting on a similar notion of strategy, Stacey (2003: 51) points out that strategic choice makes a distinction between the formulation of a strategy and its implementation. The formulation of the strategy is the analytical procedure of preparing a plan; that is, a set of goals, the intended actions required to achieve the goals, and the forecasts of the consequences of those actions over a long period of time.

Part of this linear and unproblematic notion of the strategy making process, is the conventionalist view in management parlance of structure following the strategy which, in practical terms means that strategy must first be determined before designing the organizational structure. In line with such thinking, world-wide observation reveals that governments, in their endeavour to connect with the electorate for service delivery purposes, organize themselves along portfolio or departmental delivery points.

As such, it is contended in this study that, in line with this international trend, the South African government has designed its structures and operations in such a way that these facilitate the delivery of its stated strategic objectives. This kind of thinking finds its practical expression in the Department of Social Development's strategic plan's (2006-2010) assertion that the aim of the approach is to build a self-reliant nation in partnership with all stakeholders, premised on principles of equity, sustainability, access and people-centredness. The same document goes further to assert that arising from these principles is the need for institutional arrangements that are guided by the key operational concepts of partnership and co-operative governance.

Similarly, the report of the task team appointed to investigate administrative and/or managerial issues affecting the provincial administration of KwaZulu-Natal states that "It was the responsibility of the new Administration to develop and implement organizational structures to render services to all people of the province."

Inherently contained in this view is the assumption that an individual, or a group of a few individuals, are responsible for developing and implementing organizational strategies. Further, it is assumed that such an individual or a group of individuals can potentially stand outside of an organization, look at its context, analyze and understand it, and on the basis of such understanding redesign its structure and operations to fit strategically with the demands of its environmental context. Stacey (2003: 51), in his observation of a similar kind of thinking, argues that the essence of strategic choice theory is that it assumes the existence of a possibility that a few powerful individuals in organizations are capable of standing outside their organizations and modelling them in the interest of controlling them.

This theory, according to Stacey's (2003: 51) observation, further assumes that organizations change successfully when top executives form the right intention for the overall future shape of the whole organization and specify in enough detail how this is to be achieved. Simply put, the theory assumes that those in powerful positions in organizations are able to conceptualize the manner in which the organization is likely to change even before this happens and then proceed to install such envisioned change.

Such over-reliance on a single person, or a group of people, to conceive, implement and drive the strategy of the organization is sharply contrasted in the view presented by Mintzberg, Lampel, Quinn and Goshal (2004: 268) wherein they contend that effective strategy execution relies on teams and task forces. Central to these teams and task forces is the integration of managers of various kinds in order to encourage mutual adjustment. This is key to the mechanism of coordination within and between teams and considerable decentralization within these teams, which are located at various places in the organization and involve various mixtures of line managers and staff and operating experts.

The other area worth mentioning in this deliberate and prescriptive approach is the assumption that all relevant knowledge must first be established before any intended strategy is implemented. In simple terms, this view assumes that the situation within and

outside the organization remains relatively stable, or at least predictable. A closer observation of organizations' contemporary world though, suggests that such assumed stability and predictability is somewhat delusional.

The assumption inherent in the prescriptive and deliberate approach continues to present and render the strategy making process too simplistic and operationally flawed. As Faulkner (2002: 23) points out, as organizations try to prepare for futures with significant uncertainties, they are finding that many traditional management concepts that have helped to achieve organizational success in stable environments do not effectively prepare organizations for an increasingly uncertain and dynamic future.

Having attempted above to depict a broad contextual dynamic that, in essence, potentially informs and influences the strategic planning process of government and possibly other state institutions in South Africa, the study will now turn its focus to the research problem statement as it particularly relates to the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism in KwaZulu-Natal. It is believed that the problem statement will help contextualize the conceptualization of the need to conduct the study in question.

1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The focus of the study is on the strategic planning process. The study seeks to determine whether the strategic planning process is used by the department as a vehicle for enhancing its service delivery imperatives or as a compliance exercise with Treasury's regulations. The need to explore this topic was borne out of a literature review relating to strategy conceptualization and execution. Part of this literature review entailed the researcher's participation in the department's 5-year strategy review and refinement as an invited participant.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism was established in June 2004 by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal in terms of the Executive authority and powers provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). The establishment of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism replaced and assumed the

rights and obligations of the Department of Education and Culture which had been in existence since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994.

From around May 1994 to April 2004, the Department of Education and Culture, was part of a coalition government between the IFP and the ANC. In June 2004, the Department of Education and Culture was de-established and reconfigured. One of the culminations of this process was the formation of a new department for arts, culture and tourism. The parent department remained as a department of education. The Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism had by this time had its own Member of the Executive Council. In April 2006, a new Member of the Executive Council took over the political leadership of the department. This changed dynamic in the life of the department brought with it challenges which any future department's strategic planning process had to take into consideration. This is encapsulated in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism's *Draft Strategic Plan Document* (2007: 5).

Inherent in the change of the political head of the department, are new aspirations to move the department into great heights. Amongst these are the prominent issues of the role of the department in the realization of the ASGISA objectives, the implementation of the provincial spatial development plan, intergovernmental relations, integration of resources and the capacity of the department to deliver according to the expectations of the electorate

The departmental strategy review and refinement exercise held in the early part of March 2007, to which the researcher was invited to participate, took place within the first year of the new Member of the Executive Council's tenure.

The strategy review and refinement and its intended subsequent implementation and monitoring takes place in the context of increasing pressure for both spheres of government in the province to make real their promises of delivery. This increasing pressure is alluded to in the *Draft Strategic Plan Document's* (2007: 5) statement that, "...the pressure to make a mark that is recognizable by our communities in the new dispensation is a main informant of the direction that the Department of Arts, Culture and

Tourism in this Province must take.” Key to the department’s strategy as captured in its *Draft Strategic Plan Document (2007: 12)* is the need:

To ensure cultural diversity and the advancement of artistic disciplines into viable industries; to promote multilingualism, redress past linguistic imbalances and develop the previously marginalized languages; to develop and transform the tourism sector, and promote the province as the preferred tourist destination.

The greatest challenge confronting the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism in respect of the execution of its delivery promises is the context of an increasingly globalizing, westernizing and rapidly changing macro socio-political and economic context. This view around the changing character of the environment is supported in the assertion by Buchanan & Huczynski (2005: 547) that “commentators noted how organizations’ environments, both in the private and public sectors, had become more complex, more prone to sudden, unexpected changes and would continue to be so in the future”.

Values contained in this globally westernizing macro environment appear to be inconsistent with the values of the predominant traditional cultures in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, particularly the amaZulu culture. On the other hand, the province of KwaZulu-Natal is considered to have potential job creation growth through tourism. The department is, at least in its rhetoric, using the process of strategic planning to enhance its cognitive capacity, firstly to anticipate probable changes in the environment and secondly to be better able to respond to the demands arising from such changes. The belief in utilizing strategy as a mechanism to enhance and increase the organization’s capacity to respond to its environment is captured in Hodgkinson and Sparrow’s (2004: 3) comment that “cognitive competence is crucial to strategic responsiveness and the organization’s capacity to learn and renew itself in these turbulent times.”

Compounding the challenge confronting the DACT is a stark reality that unlike other departments whose expected deliverables are on identifiable and tangible things, for example houses, the DACT’s expected deliverables are, in the main, on intangible things,

for example culture. Some writers, for instance, define culture as the “total lifeways characteristic of the members of a society, including tools, knowledge, and patterned ways of thinking and acting, that are learned and shared and are not the direct product of biological inheritance” (Sanderson, 1995: 39).

According to (Schein (1985) in Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004: 643) organization culture is the pattern of basic assumptions which a group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to problems. Whilst the two definitions of culture cited above refer to both societal and organizational culture respectively, they both, nonetheless, unambiguously point to the intangible nature of culture.

Another difficulty facing the DACT is a related challenge of attributing, with any degree of certainty, any identifiable increase or decrease in provincial tourism specifically to the work and activities of the DACT. Any hope of success in the area of tourism necessarily requires an integrated and coordinated intervention from various departments in the provincial and the local spheres of government, which makes attribution only to the DACT problematic.

The significance of this study lies in its objective to study a real phenomenon as the most likely way to yield real solutions to real problems confronting employees and managers in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism as they engage in their work. The title of the study indicates that its objective is to study and therefore determine whether or not the strategic planning process is used by the department as a vehicle for enhancing service delivery or as a compliance tool. In the light of this objective, understanding derived from this study will assist the department to develop better insight into its own activities and processes around the strategic planning process.

It is hoped that this will provide the department with the necessary knowledge and insight to improve its systems and processes in order to have the necessary impact on its service delivery imperatives. The importance of strategy in this regard is expressed in the statement that without reflection the manager cannot form very clear ideas about the purpose of the business, its possible future environments, and what changes are needed from the present commercial position and resources of the business, and how those changes might be attained (Mathur & Kenyon, 2001: 16).

The generation of the system-specific knowledge that is uniquely Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism is likely to create internal conditions, where, faced with a complex, ambiguous and continuously changing environment, organizational actors have to absorb, process, make sense of and disseminate a bewildering flow of information in order to make decisions and solve problems (Lant and Shapira (2001a) in Hodgkinson and Sparrow, 2004: 9).

It is contended that the research approach and methodology that will be utilized for the purposes of this study will be able to provide an in-depth understanding of the life in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism on the issue of strategy development and implementation. It is, however, critical to indicate that, despite the richness of data that a case study method is potentially capable of generating, findings from such a study cannot realistically be generalized into a wider population outside that being studied. It is also an established fact that a case study method can sometimes distort facts.

During interviews for instance, the interviewee may relate an event or an occurrence purely from his or her own personal experience based on his or her perceptions of what is real. This condition is best captured in the view that “there are possibilities of subjective distortions, omissions, additions, or inaccuracies resulting from biased recall, observation, or reporting” (Braud and Anderson, 1998: 280).

1.3 THE DYNAMISM AND FLUIDITY OF THE STRATEGY CONCEPT

A close exploration of the literature on the concept of strategy indicates that any attempt at providing one definition of strategy as the commonly shared understanding of what strategy really is would be overly-simplistic. A more realistic approach to the concept of strategy would be the deployment of a view that regards strategy as a complex social concept with the potential incapacity of any commonly shared and precisely understood definition. The problematic nature of finding one commonly and widely accepted definition of strategy is reflected in the statement by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998: 9) that they offer no such easy definition of strategy but instead “argue that strategy (not to mention ten such different schools about it) requires a number of definitions, five in particular”.

Similarly, De Wit and Meyer (2004: 8) point to the difficulty of agreeing on a precise definition of strategy which avoids conflicting interpretations of what should be considered strategy and, by extension, what should be understood by the term ‘strategic management’. They go on to argue that, in any case, any precise definition of the term ‘strategy’ would potentially create the impression that the fundamental concepts in the area of strategy are generally accepted and hardly questioned. This, according to De Wit and Meyer, would be misleading in that there are indeed strongly differing opinions on most of the key issues, and the disagreements run so deep that even a common definition of the term strategy is illusive.

The difficulty in converging in one definition of strategy is further exacerbated by the contextual complexity within which such strategies are developed and implemented as articulated by Mathur and Kenyon (1997: 50) that:

The answer is that this untidy complexity is inherent in the competitive facts of business. This framework has not invented the untidiness of the real world; it merely acknowledges it. Without this more complex language, managers have again and again slipped into an illusory world in which they can by their own decisions bring about results which will in fact depend on decisions taken by people outside the company”.

It is this challenge created by the difficulty to agree on any one shared definition of the term 'strategy' that sits at the core of the investigation that the study seeks to conduct. Central to this challenge is the fact that, given their own definition and understanding of what strategy is, students of strategy, strategy theorists and managers alike tend to disregard other potentially viable alternative explanations and approaches and proceed on the premise that their own views are the most workable in dealing with strategic issues. This could potentially be emanating from a desperate need and attempt to navigate through a complex issue without having to be confronted by and therefore having to deal with, accompanying complex challenges.

As Stacey (2003: 2) emphatically reiterates, it may be very tempting to jump straight into defining what a strategy is and how it should be formulated and implemented, or to explain immediately how organizations change and how this change should be managed. In view of the above, the study contends that its investigation would probably be served well if, rather than quickly jumping into easy and comforting solutions, as alluded to by Stacey above, a space is created to step back in order to fully appreciate the complexity, dynamism and fluidity of the term strategy in order to ensure that the central question of interrogating issues of strategy is itself not derived from quick and easy solutions.

It is also important to indicate that in its quest to understand this complex issue, certain write ups, containing views held in the early stages of the emergence of strategy as an 'independent' management discipline, have been used for the purposes of this dissertation. Despite the passage of time, these views remain resilient as they continue to loom large in the minds of those in positions of influence in many organizations on matters of strategy. As a result, in more ways than one, the influence derived from these views is still very large in many organizations and therefore remain relevant in any attempt to understand the question of strategy and its attendant processes.

1.4 BRIEF OUTLINE OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

Chapter one has dealt with the background to the study, the motivation for this study in the form of a problem statement and the dynamism inherent in the concept of strategy;

Chapter two focuses its attention on the theoretical perspectives around the issue of strategy. Three perspectives are identified for the purposes of this study. These are the strategic choice, the learning organization and the open systems perspectives. From here;

Chapter three looks at the overall research methodology and the procedure adopted by the study in its pursuance of its investigation. Both primary and secondary sources used to gather data for purposes of this study are discussed in this chapter. After this;

Chapter four takes over to provide the background information on the department with particular emphasis on sketching its environment necessary for understanding the issue under investigation in its proper context.

Chapter five outlines the results and findings of the study after which it provides analysis and interpretation of the findings. The study concludes with;

Chapter six outlining how this study concludes its investigation and further provide recommendation in the context of its own findings.

CHAPTER TWO

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The question of strategy represents probably one of the most contentious areas of study in the discipline of management with very little, if any, agreement among theoreticians, practitioners and managers on its precise definition. Disagreement on the precise definition of what is strategy, as it relates to its breadth, depth and complexity had always formed part of the debate around the concept. In their contribution to this debate, Mintzberg, et al (1998: 3) had this to say:

We are the blind people and strategy formation is our elephant. Since no one has had the vision to see the entire beast, everyone has grabbed hold of some part or other and “railed on in utter ignorance” about the rest. We certainly do not get an elephant by adding up its parts. An elephant is more than that. Yet to comprehend the whole we also need to understand the parts.

In its consideration of strategy, the *Economist* (1988) maintains that “top managers of big firms devote the bulk of their efforts to formulating strategy, though there is remarkably little agreement about what it is”. In the same article it is further argued that, served by hordes of underlings, and with their huge desks uncluttered by the daily minutiae of business, top managers consider setting strategy as their most valuable contribution... more puzzling though is the fact that consultants and theorists jostling to advise businesses cannot even agree on the most basic questions of what strategy is.

It is in the context of this confusion and uncertainty around the precise definition or common understanding of what strategy is that this chapter seeks to examine the major theoretical approaches around the concept of strategy. However, given the broad nature of the concept of strategy and strategic management, it may not be possible in this study to discuss all theoretical approaches related to this concept. As a consequence the study will confine itself to the strategic choice, learning organization and open systems approaches.

Discussion of the various theoretical approaches seeks to examine the manner in which these schools of thought have attempted to explain the concept of strategy and gain insight into objectives advocated by each.

2.1 THE STRATEGIC CHOICE PERSPECTIVE

(Wiener (1948) cited in Stacey, 2003: 33) captures more succinctly the origins of the strategic choice perspective and the basis upon which it is firmly rooted in his assertion that “when we desire a motion to follow a given pattern, the difference between the pattern and the actually performed motion is used as a new input to cause the part regulated to move in such a way as to bring the motion closer to that given by that given pattern.” As depicted in the above citation, the primary concern of the strategic choice perspective remains that of addressing itself to a negative feedback process of a pre-given reality existing outside of human beings trying to understand it. In this instance, this pre-given reality represents an organizational strategy. In this context, an outcome of managerial action is progressively and consistently compared to a plan agreed to prior to implementation in order to determine whether or not its execution is as planned.

According to the strategic choice theory, a distinct and identifiable line exists between strategy formulation and execution. These two dimensions of strategy are conceived and therefore understood as two separate processes, as Spender (in Zack, 1999: 118) points out that there it is assumed that all important aspects of the implementation activity can be thought through beforehand, and that the implementer will later build an explicit model of the implementation’s practical details.

Strategy formulation is understood to precede strategy implementation and involves such activities as environmental scanning and setting out of goals and devising action plans in the context of information provided by the environmental scanning exercise. As Stacey, (2003: 51) puts it, “The formulation of the strategy is the analytical procedure of preparing a plan, that is, a set of goals, the intended actions required to achieve the goals and forecasts of the consequences of those actions over a long period of time. The plan,

therefore, plays the role of the externally set point of reference required for the operation of cybernetic system.”

A similar line of thinking that portrays deliberateness and control on the part of those engaged in strategy formation is clearly reflected in Levicki's (2003: 75) assertion that one accumulates competencies through the accretion of know-how, contacts, distribution channels and relationships with sellers and employees and further assembles relationships with buyers and knowledge about the types of further products or extensions to current products they might buy.

Inherent in this approach is the emphasis on planning ahead. This notion of planning ahead is somehow inextricably bound up with the question of deliberateness, prescription and control. The view espoused in this paradigm seems to advance the notion that without proper planning strategy execution is doomed. This view is based on the understanding that for strategy to be effectively executed, the organization needs to assign appropriate resources that will enable strategy execution and realization. Noting a similar trend, Spender (in Zack, 1999: 120) states,

The learning organization, which must have some mechanism for increasing its stock of knowledge can be illuminated by contrast with a bureaucracy which requires all the knowledge articulated in its structure and rules to be present prior to its establishment.

Emphasis on planning ahead with the view to knowing and controlling almost every variable in advance seems to be one fundamental characteristic of most bureaucracies. Such an attribute appears to emanate from the conviction that strategic choice approach to dealing with issues of organizational strategy is the only viable approach. Hence the central messages of the planning school fitted in neatly with what was observed by Mintzberg, Lampel, Quinn and Goshal, (2004: 159) as “the whole trend in management education and business, as well as big government practice, with its emphasis on formal procedure, formal training, formal analysis and lots of numbers.”

In the same vein, the implementation aspect of strategy has its own identifiable activities, distinct from those of the formulation dimension, which, among others, include the design of systems and organizational structures intended to support and enhance the effective implementation of the planned strategy. According to this school of thought, Stacey (2003: 51) points out that implementation is the procedure of designing systems to ensure that plans are carried out in the intended manner and periodically adjusted to keep the organization on track to achieve its goals.

Such distinction both conceptually and practically is further articulated in Hooley, Graham, and Piercy (2004: 39): that the establishment of an effective marketing strategy starts with a detailed and creative assessment of the company's capabilities, both its strengths and weaknesses relative to the competition and the opportunities and threats posed by the environment. On the basis of this analysis, the core strategy of the company will be selected, identifying marketing objectives and the broad focus for achieving them.

Similarly, Levicki (2003: 90) states "when deciding the strategic thrust of a business, it must never in any way be dependent on turning around a weakness in the organization's skills base. At best, it can include one neutral skill and then only if a credible plan to turn that neutral rapidly into a strength has been prepared and the resources necessary to achieve it voted into action".

Inherent in this articulation is an environmental state that is static and unproblematic. The view depicts a contextual environment that is given and predetermined, ready to be acted upon either by managers and/or strategists for their own strategic purposes. It is clear that the portrayal of static external and internal contexts of organizations is assumed to allow senior managers and strategists to read what is required by these contexts and, on the basis of that, decide what ought to be done.

Mintzberg et al (2004), in their critique of strategy approaches that put stronger emphasis on deliberateness and control, also observe the assumption of this element of statism in the strategic context of many organizations in articulating that there is ultimately one and

only one best answer to any strategy question and, in this context, implementation is assumed to follow the discovery of strategy. This approach, however, appears to be sitting in contrast with the dynamic nature of the strategic context as depicted by Hoskisson, Hitt, Ireland (2004) in their assertion that “dynamic in nature... the strategic management process is used to match the conditions of an ever-changing market and competitive structure with a firm’s continuously evolving resources, capabilities, and competencies”.

Central to both these approaches, though, is an element of a conscious and deliberate act on the part of those presumed critical determinants of organizational strategies. The view is posited whether by design, or inadvertently, that strategists are deliberate actors who think rationally and weigh all possible pros and cons in their consideration of strategic issues before pronouncing on strategic decisions. According to Mintzberg, et al, (1998: 32) this school of thought offers little room for incrementalist views or emergent strategies which allow “formulation” to continue during and after “implementation.” This according to Mintzberg, et al is “consistent with classical notions of rationality-diagnosis followed by prescription and then action.”

This view of strategists as rational, thinking individuals capable of thinking in advance, anticipate and resolve problems even before they happen becomes much more pronounced in the context of De Wit and Meyer’s (2005: 27) postulation that “to deal with these strategic problems, managers must not simply think, but they must go through a strategic reasoning process, searching for ways to define and resolve the challenges at hand,”. In his commentary on the impact of Chandler on organizational theory and practice, Fligstein (2008: 242) points out that he viewed managers of big enterprises as people who both confronted practical problems and figured out how to organize their firms to produce wealth of nations. Elaborating on this widely held view, Fligstein (2008: 243) maintains thus:

Chandler argued that managers at the turn of the century acted to integrate their firms in response to the inability of markets to coordinate productive activities in a reliable way. In order to take advantage of mass markets, managers built vertically integrated firms.

On the basis of the above expressions, an image is created beyond any shred of doubt that strategists and/or managers have all in themselves to know what is potentially likely to happen to their organizations and accordingly act for the benefit of such organizations. This view, seeking to portray individuals involved in strategic development and planning activities as rational and logical beings capable of operating outside their value and emotional make-up is not necessarily supported by empirical evidence though. In fact, in sharp contrast with this dominant view, evidence coming out of various studies in organizations demonstrates that both managers' values and their cognitive makeup play a significant role in the decisions that they make and their behavioral dispositions.

One of these studies is by Simon and March cited in Fligstein (2008: 243) which, in contrast starts with a model of individuals who were equipped with "bounded rationality". The central thesis of the findings being that human beings could not acquire all the relevant information in any particular situation and that even if they do, their cognitive capacity is not sufficient to process it. A similar observation is made by Onge (in Zack, 2003: 229) that "the work we have done in trying to understand the deep-seated values of individuals in our organizations tells us that many managers are currently incapable of collaborating because of their mental orientation and lack of interpersonal skills".

A view, therefore, that seeks to depict managers as being in possession of a capacity to assimilate all there is to know, think objectively in a rational and logical manner without being influenced by their value system is rather simplistic and devoid of truth. On the contrary, closer inspection of the strategic management process reveals that the process is much more complex and does not easily, or necessarily, lend itself to rational and logical conception and implementation. Similarly, the concept of strategy cannot realistically be assumed to contain any inherent potential as to render the superficial distinction and compartmentalization of its various activities feasible.

Emphasizing the complexity of the strategic management process De Wit and Meyer, (2005: 7) point out that,

The division of the strategy into a number of sequential phases has also drawn heavy criticism from authors who believe that in reality no such identifiable stages exist. They dismiss the linear analysis-formulation-implementation distinction as an unwarranted simplification, arguing that the strategy process is messier, with analysis, formulation and implementation activities going all at the same time, thoroughly intertwined with one another.

Commenting on the same issue, Mintzberg (1994: 241) in his observation, points out that the general assumption behind much of the planning literature is that the process is an unhurried one that unfolds on a predetermined schedule with carefully considered formulation followed by tightly controlled implementation. He goes further to assert that “if the empirical research has taught us anything at all about strategy formation, it is that the process is a fundamentally dynamic one, corresponding to the dynamic conditions that drives it.

Observations by De Wit and Meyer and Mintzberg clearly suggest that organizations do not first make strategies and then execute them as intended. Rather, strategies are usually formed incrementally, as organizations think and act in small iterative steps, letting strategies emerge as they go along. It would seem therefore that any view propagating for a separation between strategy conceptualization and implementation is superficial and overly-simplistic and fails to grasp the complexity and dynamism involved in the process. Despite research evidence to the contrary, inherent in its propositional arguments, strategic choice perspective assumes that strategists, or managers involved in strategy development, have the capacity and propensity clearly to identify, define and therefore predict what is likely to happen in the future with a reasonable degree of precision. This assumption becomes clearly visible when considered in the context of what is regarded as primary in any strategic process. On this important issue, Hooley, Saunders and Piercy (2004: 33) maintain that the essence of developing a marketing strategy for a company is to ensure that the company’s capabilities are matched to the competitive environment in which it operates, not just for today but into the foreseeable future. They go on to posit the view that for commercial organizations this means ensuring that their resources and

capabilities match the needs and requirements of the external market environment in which they operate.

This does not, however, in any way exclude non-commercial organizations. According to the same authors, in the case of charitable or public utilities, this means achieving a fit between their ability to serve and the requirements of the public or causes they are seeking to serve. Similarly De Wit and Meyer (2005: 66) in their observation noted that proponents of the strategic choice perspective prefer to press strategy formation into an ordered, mechanistic straight jacket. They further argue that planners are often compulsive in their desire for order, predictability and efficiency. It seems Hamel (2000: 213) was operating within the same paradigm when he argued that “to deliver the combinations of predictability and managed risk that Enron’s customers wanted without creating significant risk for Enron, the company had to build new core competencies in fields such as finance, law, insurance, credit analysis and energy market analysis

This fixation with predictability and control of the future demonstrated by proponents of the strategic choice perspective and their accompanying advocates has the potential to divert focus, energy and attention from what probably is the most critical aspect of any strategic process; that is, ensuring meaningful stakeholder participation on issues of organizational life for organizational effectiveness and sustenance. In fact, history has consistently and unambiguously demonstrated unsuccessful attempts by past generations to predict the future with some degree of precision. The worrying impression created by this fixation with predictability and control is best articulated by Stacey (2003: 81) in his assertion that this theory provides a partial and limited explanation of how organizational life unfolds. It further provides powerful explanations of, and prescriptions for, the predictable, repetitive aspects of organizational life over short time frames into the future.

He further asserts that life in organizations is woven from inextricable strands of the predictable and the unpredictable, the stable and the unstable, the orderly and the disorderly, and on the basis of such conviction, it is reasonable to conclude that any

theoretical explanation that preoccupies itself with predictability and controllability provides a partial and overly-simplistic explanation of the strategy process.

It is apparent, in the context of the citation above, that life in organizations is much more complex than the picture painted by strategic choice perspective proponents. This complexity makes strategy development and implementation an uneven and unpredictable process, with its ultimate outcome providing no guarantees. It is probably with this recognition in mind that De Wit and Meyer (2005: 66) note that:

...innovation whether in products or strategies, is not a process that can be neatly structured and controlled. Novel insights and creative ideas cannot be generated on demand, but surface at unexpected moments, often in unexpected places. Nor are new ideas born full-grown, ready to be evaluated and implemented. In reality, innovation requires brooding, tinkering, experimentation, testing and patience, as new ideas grow and take shape.

This view by the two authors above captures quite vividly the fluidity and dynamism involved in the life of organizations generally and in the strategic development process in particular. History is littered with organizational experiences where life-sustaining moments for such organizations happened in the midst of uncertainty and confusion without any pre-thought and consciously determined decision and its potential outcome, but which nonetheless changed the life of the organization for the better.

2.2 THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION PERSPECTIVE

The learning organization perspective, like the strategic choice approach, has its theoretical foundations anchored in cybernetics. Evidence of this derivation becomes clearer when one considers the statement by Senge (1990: 150) that:

These gaps can make a vision seem unrealistic or fanciful. They can discourage us or make us feel hopeless. But the gap between vision and current reality is also a source of energy. If there was no gap there would be no need for any action to move toward the vision. Indeed, the gap is the source of creative energy.

As indicated in the discussion above, cyberneticists are concerned more about system negative feedback. Unlike cyberneticists though, learning organization theorists' point of departure is their emphasis on the importance of both negative and positive feedback. This is the observation made by Stacey (2003: 83) in his assertion that:

In their modeling work, systems dynamicists used nonlinear equations that incorporated positive feedback effects and generated rather complex dynamics. These models also display some cyclical behaviour that is due to the structure of the system itself, not just changes in the environment.

Similarly, Frydman, Wilson and Wyer (2000: 8), argue that "if we can stop thinking in terms of "events" that we must react to and begin to acquire "systems thinking" then we can see the structure of the system and discern the structural causes of behaviour". Arguing from an almost similar viewpoint, Hunter (2005: 277) argues that the value of systems thinking analysis is that it seeks to extend the traditional supply-chain model or Porter's value chain framework to include elements outside logistical or organizational construct, including but not limited to power relations, capital movement, migration, social relations and trade both "within boxes and within the links of connecting boxes" in its endeavour to understand the operation of the world economy.

Arising from the observation of these complex dynamics, learning organization theorists believe that organizations excel when they are able to tap the commitment and capacity of all their members. This belief is captured in Stacey's (2003: 128) analysis of the learning organization theory where he asserts that "organizations learn when people in cohesive teams trust each other enough to expose the assumptions they are making to the scrutiny of others and then together change shared assumptions which block change".

On the issue similar to the one raised by Stacey above, Frydman, Wilson, and Wyer (2000: 54) assert that when people engage in real learning, they begin to make underpinnings of their thinking explicit, both to themselves and others and if assumptions can be made explicit, then, they are open to being questioned, tested and changed. In this sense, it is easy to discern a distinction between the strategic choice approach which, does not accord any significance learning role of people involved in the strategic process, and therefore, their ability to influence the course of developments, and the learning organization approach.

Reiterating the centrality of learning in any organization's strategic success, Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1998) in Birchall and Tovstiga (2005: 29) argue that an important aspect of the dynamic nature of strategic capabilities is their relationship to development through learning. Since it is a well established fact that of all resources at the disposal of any organization, the only resource capable of learning is its people, it would not be unreasonable to argue that people are at the core of any organization's strategic success.

The view of the importance of people in the success of organizations is further articulated in Senge's (1990: 69) assertion that the five learning disciplines of the learning organization theory are concerned with a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality and from reacting to the present to creating their future. The positioning of people at the centre of organizational success is probably one fundamental contribution of the learning organization perspective that is conspicuously absent in the other school of thought discussed above.

On the surface, this view seems to suggest that the organization's strategy is best served by the provision of space for the meaningful participation of interested stakeholders in its development and implementation. This is in clear contrast with the view espoused by the strategic choice approach that propagates intervention by an all-powerful individual or group of senior individuals in an organization if strategic changes are to be effected. As

Stacey (2003: 51) points out, “the plan is chosen by the most powerful individual in the organization or by a small group of top executives - the dominant coalition”.

This strategic choice view supporting the criticality of an all-powerful individual in the strategy making process is further unambiguously articulated in Levicki's (2003: 92) statement that one promising young executive “...completed a great brand and name change. He had even analyzed what organizational behaviour changes were needed to ensure the business stopped making losses. But he never had a chance to make it happen”. It must, however, be said that this strategic choice approach, does not sit comfortably with the thinking within the learning organization paradigm which advocates accumulative and progressive learning in the context of people working together. As Quinn (1980: 51) states:

All my data suggest that strategic decisions do not come solely from power-political interplays. Nor do they lend themselves to aggregation in a single massive decision matrix where all factors can be treated quantitatively-or even relatively simultaneously-to arrive at a holistic optimum.

Learning organization theory stresses the importance of learning together suggesting that organizational strategy emerges from stakeholder interaction within organizations. As can be expected, the question of learning together raises the cultural dimension of human existence. It is a well established view that any learning together by diverse people can only be made easier by an existence of some kind of a shared culture. Where differing cultures exist, the task of learning together is made much more difficult. This view is made clear in the findings by Fitzgerald and Hirao (2005: 310) that in businesses founded through mergers, the relationship between headquarters and the constituent firms and the tensions resulting from different corporate cultures and employment practices were not easily resolved. Such findings seem to suggest that culture has a central role to play both in terms of determining and implementing strategy

Arguing this point further, Fitzgerald and Hirao (2005: 311) maintain that acceptance of large-scale organization, and consequently the maximization of organizational efficiency,

were not so straightforward and the motivation of workers was not merely pecuniary but was also based on some degree of common purpose and corporate culture.

Emphasis on interaction and learning together is grounded on the conviction that organizations comprise subsystems and/or components and it is in the connectivity and interaction of these subsystems and/or components, that organizations find their life and meaning.

This observation is made much more explicit by Spender (in Zack, 1999: 120) when he asserts that it seems obvious that firms and their employees do learn. He goes on to maintain that, in this learning process, not only do they learn how to design products and make particular processes work, they also learn about co-ordination both between the firm's constituent activities and with its environment. Similarly, Senge (1990: 217/18) asserts that experience suggests that visions that are genuinely shared require on-going conversation where individuals not only feel free to express their dreams, but learn how to listen to each other's dreams and out of such listening, new insights into what is possible gradually emerge.

It is therefore in this context, according to learning organization theory proponents, that various functional areas in organizations ought to streamline, integrate and align their activities in order to ensure success. This value of connectivity and integration is captured by Grant's observation (in Zack, 1999: 9) that "McDonalds possesses outstanding functional capabilities within product development, market research, human resource management, financial control, and operations management. However, critical to McDonald's success is the integration of these functional capabilities to create McDonald's remarkable consistency of products and services in thousands of restaurants spread across most of the globe".

It is worth noting that the learning organization perspective, unlike its strategic choice theory counterpart, does not necessarily view the unfolding of strategy development and execution in a linear and sequential paradigm. Where the strategic choice theory regards the strategy process as beginning with strategy analysis, formulation, implementation and

review, learning organization perspective advances a view that is much more complicated than such an idealized, linear progression view. The learning organization theory appears to present a perspective that views strategic analysis, formulation, implementation and review as inextricably intertwined and less sequential, rather than as deliberate processes prescribed in advance to follow a particular sequence.

This uneven and less prescribed approach to the development and execution of strategy propagated by the learning organization theory is made explicit by Lynch (1997, 54) in the emergent approach in which strategies emerge from an on-going system of experimentation, negotiation and discussion, are not implemented immediately and may also involve learning and change within the organization itself. This, by implication, means that the outcome of strategy cannot necessarily be determined in advance, but will emerge in the course of organizational life as organizational members continue to confront new problems and challenges in their day-to-day collective deliberations and interactions. This view is articulated in the observation by Lynch (1997: 22) that other commentators take the view that corporate strategy emerges, adapting to human needs and continuing to develop over time.

The learning aspect in strategy conceptualization and execution emphasized by the learning organization approach appears to sit compatibly with the systems dynamics view of non-linear relationship between action and consequence. History, for instance, is fraught with practical instances where consequences of specific interventions have emerged on system parts that were never intended for such interventions. As a result of this frequent occurrence which, in some cases, emerges after a prolonged period of time, organizations have found it difficult to make any discernible connection between the action and consequence. What becomes extremely critical for leadership in these organizations is not to overly-focus their energies to what should or is likely to happen in the future but must learn to reflect on past and current actions and decisions to better understand the impact of their actions and decisions. On the same breadth, Diehl and Sterman, Brehmer (1992) in (Repenning and Sterman (1997) note that experimental

studies have demonstrated a rapid decline in quality of decision making as time delays between improvement efforts and results increase.

The emergent nature of strategy and non-linearity between action and consequences propounded by this view suggests an evolving, incremental and continuous process with its interconnected and inextricably bound up components not easily and readily identifiable and distinguishable in practice. Such a complex, highly integrated and inextricably intertwined process cannot therefore be easily or usefully summarized in a plan which then requires sequential implementation. Indeed, emergent corporate strategy is a strategy whose final objective is unclear and whose elements are developed during the course of its life, as the strategy proceeds. Similarly, Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998: 177/8) point out that:

... when significant strategic redirection did take place, it rarely originated from a formal strategic planning effort, indeed often not even in the offices of the senior management. Instead strategies could be traced back to a variety of little actions and decisions made by all sorts people (sometimes accidentally or serendipitously, with no thought of their strategic consequences).

On a note similar to the one above, Prahalad and Hamel (in Zack, 1999: 46) point out that core competence is communication, involvement and a deep commitment to working across organizational boundaries. They go on to suggest that competence involves many levels of people and that all the functions and the skills that together constitute core competence must coalesce around individuals whose efforts are not so narrowly focused that they cannot recognize the opportunities for blending their functional expertise with those of others in new and interesting ways.

Drucker (in Lynch, 1997: 791) seems to have been thinking along similar lines as he cautions against strategy predictions, maintaining that it is not very difficult to predict the future, but the problem remains that it is pointless. He further asserts that “many futurologists have high batting averages – the way they measure themselves and are commonly measured. They do a good job foretelling some things. But what are always far more important are fundamental changes that happened though no one predicted them

or could possibly have predicted them". A similar view is propounded in Lindblom's description of "policy making", in Mintzberg et al (1998: 179) as a "serial", "remedial" and "fragmented" process, in which decisions are made at the margin, more to solve problems than to exploit opportunities, with little regard for ultimate goals or even for connections between different decisions.

Given the theory's emphasis on the collective learning and emergent dimension of such learning, it would appear that the view that organizations can with any degree of certainty and precision plan for the long-term sustainability of the organization is considered a fallacy by the proponents of the learning organization theory. This observation is anchored in the understanding that real and meaningful collective learning cannot have its outcomes precisely engineered and planned in advance, in view of the fact that its outcome is dependent on the various individuals involved in the learning. This view is further articulated by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (in Zack, 1999: 94) in their assertion that, while individual skills are of relevance, their value depends upon their employment in particular organizational settings.

In essence, according to Teece et al, effective learning cannot realistically be divorced from the social and collective existence of human beings. The inherent attachment of learning processes to the social and collective human existence makes it possible for learning not only to occur through the imitation and emulation of individuals, as with teacher-student or master-apprentice, but also as a result of joint contributions to the understanding of complex problems.

Whilst learning theory differs in strategic approach from the strategic choice theory, both theories appear to share a similar worldview with regard to the need for organizational design if organizations are to realize their strategic objectives. Both theories seem to move from the premise that organizational strategy is too important to be left to chance, and therefore deliberate effort must be made to ensure that organizations are systematically designed to enhance their strategic delivery capability. In the main, the design effort is assumed to be the prerogative of some within organizations.

2.3 THE OPEN SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

The open systems theoretical perspective is conceptualized also from within the systems thinking perspective. There are, however, some notable differences between the open systems perspective and the other two theories discussed above. Central to these are differences relating to the view that organizations as systems not only comprise of interconnected and interrelated subsystems, but are also inextricably intertwined with their external environments. For instance, on this issue Stacey (2003: 130) points out that organizations are systems because they consist of a number of component subsystems that are interrelated and interdependent and are open to their environments because they are connected to those environments.

Based on this viewpoint, it is reasonable to argue that organizations are as much influenced by what is happening internally as they are by that which takes place externally. This open systems viewpoint is captured succinctly in the citation that:

A slow conversion began to take place in the region around Porto with the manufacture of mixed textiles of cotton and silk. In the mid-nineteenth century, handloom weaving of cotton textiles for the labouring classes was fairly widespread in Porto. In 1881 The huge growth of the domestic and workshop industry producing printed cotins and stripped cotton materials was particularly striking in this city: more than a quarter of its total population was engaged in this activity.

This citation is important in two respects. Firstly, it shows the interconnectedness and interface not only of the internal “subsystems” within a system but how the system relates to other systems external to it. Secondly, it exposes the limitations of the strategic choice approach arguing that strategy making is deliberate and predetermined. Like the learning organization theory, the open systems approach takes the view that strategy making cannot wholly be determined in advance since it is extremely difficult if not impossible to anticipate and be precise about all external variables in advance. In actual fact, the citation above, demonstrates the gradual and emergence nature of strategy. This view is grounded on the premise that it is improbable that one or a group of strategists would have planned in advance developments related in the citation.

Operating from within the open-systems conceptual framework, many strategy theorists have, for instance, emphasized the need for organizations to consider their external environments in strategy deliberations. In their endeavour to highlight the importance of the external environment, De Wit and Meyer (2005: 52) maintain that only understanding only the current state of affairs is generally insufficient. It is necessary to analyze the direction in which external circumstances are developing and the trends that can be discerned, including factors that drive industry and market dynamics.

In the same vein, David, Collis and Montgomery (in Zack, 1999: 35) highlight the point in their argument that, at the same time, investing in core competencies without examining the competitive dynamics that determine industry attractiveness is dangerous. It is clear therefore, in the context of David et al, that ignoring the external environment of the organization and its accompanying demands and challenges could, in time, prove detrimental and counter-productive to the organization as managers risk investing heavily in resources that potentially will yield insignificant value or low returns.

The fundamental contribution of the open systems theory to the study and understanding of strategy as a discipline is its emphasis on the linkages and interdependence of the organization with factors in its external environment, over and above the integration and interconnectedness of various components believed to constitute the organization. Such heavy emphasis on linkages, interdependence, integration and interconnectedness at various levels, both within the organization itself and external to it, raises awareness and recognition of the fact that tampering with one element, either within the organization or within the external environment, is likely to have repercussions in either of the environments.

Stacey (2003: 130) reflects on this in his assertion that changing one component in an open system will clearly have knock-on effects in many other components because of the prevalence of interconnection. Such knock-on effects are confined not only to the subsystems within a system, but are also applicable in the interconnected relationship between the system and its environment. This, by implication, suggests that changes in

the environment are more likely to impact on changes in the organizational system and its subsystems.

In raising the criticality of the need to consider the relationship between the external and internal environments, the open systems theory draws an operational line between the organization and its external environment. As Stacey (2003: 130) puts it, each subsystem within a system, and each system within its environment, has a boundary separating it from other subsystems and other systems.

It makes sense, therefore, from an open systems viewpoint, that any strategic consideration must necessarily take into account the possible impact the external environment is likely to have on the organization and the effect organizational actions are likely to have on the environment. It is probably in this spirit that Hooley, Saunders and Piercy (2004: 93) commented that, of central importance in developing and implementing a robust marketing strategy, is awareness of how the environment in which marketing takes place is changing.

Critically surveying and understanding the external environment is probably vital on two fronts. Firstly, it is important in that it alerts the organization of the changes taking place outside the organization, impacting on the organization itself. Such understanding undoubtedly develops and enhances the organization's capacity to respond and adapt to the changes taking place. But, most importantly, it alerts organizational members to the fact that the change currently sweeping through the organization is not static but is itself in a perpetual state of change, putting pressure on the organization to develop a perpetual capacity to change.

Lawrence and Lorsch in 1967 (in Stacey, 2003: 131) point out that open systems are thought of as having maintenance subsystems to sustain orderly relationships between the parts of the system. These systems are thought to be incompatible with change taking place within the organization, given what is regarded as their fundamental role; that is, to maintain stability and order within the organization. This view further finds expression in

the statement by De Wit and Meyer (2005: 88) that proponents of this perspective point out that people and organizations exhibit a natural reluctance to change, arguing that humans have a strong preference for stability and, once general policy has been determined, most firms are inclined to settle into a fixed way of working.

This study contends that consequent upon this propensity to stability, employees develop the preference to operate within structures that are solid and rigidly defined, with clearly scoped and formal processes, accompanied by standard operating procedures. This formality further calls for clearly identified competence areas and the distribution of power and authority which is regulated through formalized layers and a bureaucratized hierarchy in which there is no blurring of lines of demarcation. This organizational stability will tend to sustain itself both in intensity and duration if all these elements form a consistent and cohesive configuration.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The organization which is the subject of this study is the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism was established in June 2004 by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal in terms of the Executive authority and powers provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).

In its formation, the KZN Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism took over part of the functions which were under the jurisdiction of the KZN Department of Education and Culture. With regard specifically to these functions, the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism replaced and assumed the rights and obligations of the Department of Education and Culture which had been in existence since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994. This is clearly stated in a departmental forensic report document stipulating that “the MEC of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism (“DACT”) is the successor in title of the former KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (DEC)”.

In this chapter, an outline is provided of the methods employed for the purposes of data gathering. Concurrent with this outline is an attempt to sketch a procedure followed in data gathering. It is on the basis of this that it will be shown why it was necessary to employ a case study method as an instrument for executing this exercise.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to examine the concept of strategic planning from two perspectives; firstly, as a value-creating mechanism, in the service delivery endeavour, and, secondly, as a mechanism for compliance. Given this requirement, it makes sense therefore to use a case study method because of its ability to examine the concept in its real life context, in which lines of demarcation are clearly drawn between the concept and its context. In this context, multiple sources of data are being used. It is the contention of the researcher that the analysis of the concept of strategic process in one

department provides an opportunity for gaining in-depth understanding of the experiences, behaviours and attitudes of the two parties in their day-to-day interaction. On the adoption of the case study method of gathering data, Eisenhardt (1989: 548/9) states that case studies are particularly well-suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate. This type of work, according to Eisenhardt, serves to complement the incremental theory building from normal science where the former is useful in early stages of research on a topic. or when a fresh perspective is needed, while the latter is useful in later stages of knowledge. Similarly, Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz (1998: 162) argue that case studies contribute in important ways to our knowledge since they arise out of a need to understand and explain complex phenomena.

Commenting on the same issue of employing case studies as a method of data collection, Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianslund, (1995: 87/8) maintain that:

An intensive study of selected examples is a very useful method of gaining insight and suggesting hypotheses for further research in relatively less-known areas where there is little experience and theory available to serve as a guide.

Informed by this kind of conceptual view, this study also employs case study as a method for data collection. The employment of a case study analysis is guided by the understanding that the study does not intend testing any existing hypotheses, but aims rather at gaining an insight into the process through which the strategic planning process in the department is conceived and executed. On the basis of such insight and understanding, it will determine whether or not this process adds any value. In view of the conceptual articulation made above, it is clear that the issues meant for exploration by this study do not lend themselves to quantitative research, hence the employment of a qualitative form of data gathering.

The choice of a qualitative method for the purposes of this study, and the value it is potentially poised to yield, in advancing the objectives of this study, have been carefully

considered. It was subsequent to an interrogation of the pros and cons of various research approaches available that the qualitative approach is employed. The relevance and, most importantly, appropriateness of qualitative methods for research in understanding human life and its evolution is made explicit in Strauss and Corbin's assertion cited in Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianslund (1995: 85), that qualitative research is thus common in social and behavioural sciences and among practitioners who want to understand human behaviour and functions. According to Strauss and Corbin, this is demonstrated by its suitability in studying organizations, groups and individuals.

This viewpoint demonstrates the fact that quantitative methods of data gathering, regarded by many theoreticians and scholars as the only scientific methods with the capacity to provide objective and scientifically sound and accurate data, are not always relevant to all situations. Some contexts are more amenable to being studied using qualitative methods of investigation. It is on the basis of this understanding, and other contextual realities, that a case study analysis for the purposes of this study presented itself as the most viable and appropriate alternative.

Having pointed out the value of case study investigations, it is equally significant that the downside of this investigative endeavour be borne in mind. One limitation among others, of this approach relates, for instance, to the fact that findings and conclusions drawn cannot easily be generalized to other cases, given the understanding that, more often than not, they are specific to the case under interrogation.

As part of the case study methodology employed for the purposes of this exercise, it becomes necessary to utilize various sources of data. The study utilized both the primary and secondary sources of data respectively. With regard to primary sources of data, the study employed interviews. Twenty four employees out of a possible thirty identified in advance, were interviewed. Of the twenty-four employees interviewed, three are in executive, five in senior, eight in middle and junior management levels and eight were employees at operational levels. These employees are stationed at both the corporate and regional offices of the department except those at executive management level all of which are located at the corporate office. In respect of secondary sources of data the

study reviewed past literature on strategy issues and strategic management. In the main, the primary object for utilizing secondary data to complement data gathered through interviews was informed by the researcher's belief that part of the data deemed necessary and relevant for drawing conclusions was already available in areas of data storage, for instance in libraries.

This allowed for time and money to be saved, since engaging in primary sources of data collection can sometimes be very expensive and time-consuming. Utilization of secondary sources of data was cautiously approached, given the researcher's understanding that data gathered through these sources may have been meant for areas of study not necessarily similar to the one under investigation and therefore making the drawing of conclusions to apply to the study under investigation not necessarily appropriate. Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianslund (1995: 56) makes the above viewpoint markedly clear in their assertion that:

There are some serious drawbacks in working with secondary data. We should be careful in using data only because they are easily available and save us time and money. One of the main problems is that these data are collected for another study with different objectives and may not completely fit our problem. It is therefore of utmost importance to identify what we are studying, what we already know about the topic, and what we want to have as further information on the topic.

In addition to the drawbacks expressed in the citation above relating to the relevance and appropriateness of generalizability with regard to the usability of secondary data meant for other unique contexts is the limitation created by time constraints which made it difficult to tap into all potential and possible sources of data.

3.2 DOCUMENTARY STUDY

The selection of a documentary study method was prompted by its potential capacity to provide insight into history and establish the closest possible truth about the subject under investigation. In this case, this form of data collection has been chosen in an endeavour to get to understand the nature of the process of strategy development and execution in the department under scrutiny. This attempt will utilize documentary guidelines in the form

of prescripts developed by the provincial treasury that serve as a framework guiding the process of strategy development and execution. Part of this exercise would include the consideration of strategy documents developed by the department itself in its preparation of its strategic sessions. The value of documents, particularly for the purposes of this research, is contained in its potential advantage of having very little, if any, reactivity since most of these documents were developed not necessarily for research purposes, but for record and information dissemination purposes. Through documentary research, the researcher has access not only to the historical information relating to how the strategic process has evolved over time but also how it is unfolding going forward.

Given that one of the objects of the study is to uncover past processes and practices of strategy development and execution in order to understand how these have shaped the department of today, the employment of a qualitative method in the form of studying documents is more likely to yield positive results. In his view on qualitative data, Miles (1979: 54) pointed out that qualitative data are attractive for many reasons:

They are rich, full, earthly, holistic and real as their face validity seems unimpeachable, and they have the ability to preserve chronological flow where that is important, and suffer minimally from retrospective distortion.

On the basis of this view, it is not unreasonable to support the argument advanced by Miles that qualitative data, in principle, offer a far more precise way to assess causality in organizational affairs than arcane efforts like cross-lagged correlations.

The value of documentary evidence has its own limitation though. Whilst in the main the data provided are relatively reliable, they represent, however, a part reflection of the broader issues, because what gets recorded captures only part of what was discussed by those involved in deliberations. More often than not, data collected through this form of data gathering reflect views of dominant and powerful stakeholders at the exclusion of those of other relevant stakeholders who, by virtue of the balance of power relations in the workplace, have their views disregarded by the mainstream communication processes and/or documents of value within that workplace.

3.3 UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Over and above data collection through the documentary method discussed in the section above, data was also collected through interviewing certain individuals and groups who, in the opinion of the researcher, would provide the study with invaluable information that would enable the researcher to formulate an opinion. In conducting such interviews, purposive sampling was employed. Using this sampling technique, the researcher used his judgement in terms of who the key stakeholders are and who would be most likely to provide information that would be catalytic in drawing some conclusions on the study.

In view of this line of thinking, interviews with top, senior and middle management employee groups in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism were conducted. As far as those identified to participate in the study are concerned, care was taken to ensure that they constituted employees who had been with the department of Education and Culture before or had joined the department after its establishment as the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism.

Care was also taken to ensure that female employees were included among the group of employees participating in the study. Central to this study has been the intention to ensure that the process of day-to-day interaction among various stakeholders is clearly captured and understood vis-a-vis the strategic planning process and implementation.

This requirement necessitated a choice being made between structured and unstructured interviewing methods. As Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianlund (1999:65) point out, this choice had to be carefully managed so that, in in-depth, unstructured interviews, one could gain a more accurate and clear picture of a respondent's position or behaviour. They go on to argue that this is possible because of open-ended questions and because respondents are free to answer according to their own thinking, as they are not constrained by a few alternatives.

In line with this conceptual view, unstructured interviews have been employed in this study. It is contended that data generated through interviews will complement data gathered through the documentary method, thus providing the researcher with a complete

and accurate picture of the process of strategic planning and execution. It is, however, noted that unstructured interviews also have their own limitation as Churchill (cited in Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianlund, 1995:66) observes:

Among the shortcomings of this adopted form of interviewing is the fact that in-depth and unstructured interviews can take a longer time than filling in structured questionnaires and may even require several interviews with the same respondent.

Coupled with the limitation of time is the critical issue of human memory, particularly if respondents are interviewed on past issues. This shortcoming is probably best encapsulated in the assertion in Ghauri et al (1995: 87) that:

We have to trust human memory, which records selective parts of our reality which makes it quite possible that two different people, while going through a certain situation or experience, record or remember different things.

Given this undeniable reality of the possibility of different people's attaching different and sometimes irreconcilable meaning to a similar situation owing to individualized cognitive mediation and interpretation, and the fact that people are prone to making mistakes, it is important that the usage of such methods should be cross-checked, where one written source is cross-checked with another, or a written source with an interview, or two interviews with each other. Given this reality, extra care has been taken to ensure that cross-checking using other available sources of data was conducted to minimize the potential of distorted and sometimes fabricated information, since interviewees had at times given totally different and sometimes contradictory portrayals of their understanding of the strategy process and its evolution.

3.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The initial step in this research process was approaching the head of department of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism to seek permission to conduct a study. Such permission was granted and, subsequent to the granting of permission, an extensive literature review was conducted to expose and familiarize the researcher with the subject in question. The literature review looked at books and journals that dealt with the issue of

strategic management processes. This process contributed immensely in shaping the subsequent thoughts of the researcher, thus clarifying some of the fundamental concepts and issues on the question of strategic planning and management.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE DEPARTMENT

This section is constructed mainly from the information extracted from various departmental documentary sources, including, but not limited to, departmental internal documents, strategic planning session documents and strategic plans, and unstructured interviews with management and employees respectively.

4.1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Primary to this section of the dissertation is the contextualization of the strategic planning process in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism. Central to the contextualization endeavour is an outline of the environmental context within which the department operates. Such an environmental context will briefly explore the historical evolution of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism. An effort will be made to anchor the purported outline within the context of the province of KwaZulu-Natal socio-economic dynamic in the post-apartheid dispensation. It is also important to indicate that as the historical contextualization is attempted, efforts will be made to further locate the discussion in the context of what the department seeks to achieve going forward.

Whilst it may seem that the realization of the objective of this study does not necessarily require that the department's past be evoked, it is the view of the researcher that such a historical and contextual overview is of primary significance. Such significance becomes much clearer when one considers the view of Teece, Pisano and Shuen (cited in Zack, 1999: 98):

Where a firm can go is a function of its current position and the paths ahead. Its current position is often shaped by the path it has traveled. The notion of path dependencies recognizes that 'history matters.' Bygones are rarely bygones, despite the predictions of rational actor theory. Thus a firm's previous investments and its repertoire of routines (its 'history') constrain its future behavior.

Similarly, Birchall and Tovstiga (2005: 39) maintain that where the firm can go in the future is determined by the path it has taken in the past and that the notion of path

dependence recognizes that the organization's future options are determined by its history. It is this significance, and the potentially greater influence of history, so eloquently captured in the citations above, that make it pivotally critical to provide both a historical and contextual overview of the organization in an attempt to conceptualize, and therefore locate, the understanding of the department's current strategic trajectory. It is clear from the citation above that an organization's strategic historical path does not only shape it and inform its current strategy but also its potential future direction.

4.2 CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM

The Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism forms part of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government. In its current form, the department was established after the 2004 general election. The formation and the legal standing of the DACT is captured in the statement extracted from the *Draft Strategic Plan Document* (2007) that the "KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism was established in June 2004 by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal in terms of the Executive authority and powers provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)". Consequent to the establishment of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, it replaced and assumed rights and obligations historically entrusted to the Department of Education and Culture which had been in existence since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994.

The Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism's primary responsibility in the province is, in the main, the development of arts, culture and tourism. This responsibility is undoubtedly and unambiguously captured in the articulation by the MEC for Arts, Culture and Tourism, the Honourable, W.G. Thusi in the provincial department's *Draft Strategic Plan Document* (2007) that "the five-year strategic and performance plan is a map which points to the department's position in the ASGISA, JIPSA and the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy; and how we, in this department can play a role in achieving that future".

The document further spells out “the strategic goals, objectives and targets and the deliberate steps the department intends taking going into the next five years to sustain all forms of arts and cultures, and in the process seeking to uplift those that were disadvantaged by apartheid by broadening community participation in arts, culture and tourism and ensuring that arts, culture and tourism become vehicles for poverty alleviation and economic empowerment”. In terms of alignment with the national government’s departmental arrangement, the portfolios for which the KZN DACT is responsible in the province fall under the jurisdiction of two different national departments; that is, the Department of Arts and Culture and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

Based on this understanding, there are elements for which the KZN DACT is responsible that emanate from and are aligned to the National Department of Arts and Culture, and those flowing from and in alignment with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. To demonstrate this relationship and possible alignment, it is worth considering the Republic of South Africa’s Minister of Arts and Culture, the Honourable, Pallo Jordan’s assertion in the foreword of the National Department of Arts and Culture *Strategic Plan Document (2007: 4)*

Our cumulative experience and history of the first decade of freedom and democracy has underscored the importance of evaluating our arts, culture and heritage policies and legislation with a view to identify challenges, redress and maximize the transformation and liberation project in the arts and culture sector... Arts, culture and heritage programmes and projects will be constantly monitored and evaluated during this period.

Similarly, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable, Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, in the foreword of the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism’s *Strategic Plan Document (2007: 2)* states that tourism retains its status as a major material contributor to the ASGISA objectives of job creation and poverty alleviation. Van Schalkwyk’s assertion is based on the recorded continual increase in arrivals at South Africa’s airports and other points of entry. Such developments reinforce the belief, amongst others, that this increase in

tourists coming into the country will continue, particularly as the country gears itself for the 2010 World Cup.

The mandate of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism derives from the constitution of the Republic of South Africa and a number of various other pieces of legislation. For instance, section 31 (1) (a) and (b) of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of the community, to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language and form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

In the context of the right enshrined in the Constitution of the citizenry and various socio-cultural groups to exercise their culture, the Culture Promotion Act 35 of 1983 provides for the preservation, development, fostering and extension of culture in the Republic by planning, organizing, co-ordinating and providing facilities for the utilization of leisure and for non-formal education. It further provides for the development and promotion of cultural relations with other countries, the establishment of regional councils for cultural affairs, and the conferring of certain powers upon ministers in order to achieve those objects. Section 1 (1) of the same act stipulates that

...in so far as the administration of a provision of this act has under section 235 (8) of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act 2000 of 1993) assigned to a competent authority within the jurisdiction of the government of a province and the provision is applied in or with reference to the province concerned, means the competent authority...

On the question of tourism, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the Honourable, Van Schalkwyk, in the department's *Strategic Plan Document (2007)* states that among other things, "tourism retains its status as a major material contributor to the ASGISA's objectives of job creation and poverty alleviation".

Given the country's high level of unemployment and increasingly deepening levels of poverty, it is clear that the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism aims to encourage people to use arts, culture and tourism for the fulfilment not only of their cultural

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aspirations but as economic imperatives. Arts, culture and tourism are seen as critical components in the on-going drive to reduce high levels of unemployment and alleviate poverty.

Evidence of this socio-economic-focused approach to arts, culture and tourism is contained in the provincial Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism's *Draft Strategic Plan Document (2007)* which asserts that:

...inherent in the change of the political head of the department, are new aspirations to move the department into great heights. Amongst these are the prominent issues of the role of the department in the realization of the ASGISA objectives, the implementation of the provincial spatial development plan, intergovernmental relations, integration of resources and the capacity of the department to deliver according to the expectations of the electorate.

Given the strategic focus of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism which seeks to put emphasis on these socio-economic issues, it makes sense to expect the department's strategic planning process to engage with and hold dialogue on these issues. Within such a context, it may also be expected that the extent to which the department's strategy is able to impact positively on its strategic objectives will be determined, in part, by its ability to create improvement in the lives of people around these core strategic issues.

The view above further demonstrates a change in approach and emphasis on issues of arts, culture and tourism with the coming into power of the new political head. This is reflected in the provincial department of arts, culture and tourism's *Draft Strategic Plan Document (2007)* that "inherent in the change of the political head of the department, are new aspirations to move the department into great heights". Such change in emphasis appears to be locating arts, culture and tourism within the overall context of economic movement and growth. These are progressively positioned as critical elements and drivers in the pursuit for development, economic growth and poverty alleviation. It would seem that this change in emphasis and approach is in line with the overall strategic thrust of the provincial government. In line with this strategic thrust, the MEC for Finance and

Economic Development in the province, the Honourable, Zweli Mkhize, in his *speech at the Tourism World gala dinner* (2007: 2/3 states:

The major challenge before us today is to ensure that the country's success in attracting international tourists helps accelerate economic growth. Since the advent of democracy tourism has had a significant impact on the KZN economy and South Africa as a whole. We have an established tourism industry that provides a locus for stimulating other sectors. Tourism is not just for the benefit of hotels and restaurants only, but for all the stakeholders in the entire value chain.

A similar line of argument is advanced by the Minister of Arts and Culture of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable, Pallo Jordan, in the foreword of the department's *Strategic Plan Document* (2007: 4) that, "...the National Department of Arts and Culture has formulated and will implement an arts and culture 2010 strategy in the period leading to 2010 in order to enhance the role of arts and culture in the economy and society."

It is quite clear yet again, considering the above articulation by Jordaan, that emphasis is on shifting the department's historical focus on arts and culture as phenomena falling outside economic mainstream towards locating these as integral components of economic activities with the potential to economically benefit people. As he further asserts, "these and other trends reflect the strategic direction and action plan of the DAC that requires maximum support and confidence". It would seem, the notion of understanding arts and culture as integral to societal development, economic growth and poverty alleviation, and therefore its location within the overall integrated effort and initiatives designed to stimulate economic growth, was beginning to take root in government circles. There may be various reasons why this is the case. Fundamental to these, the study contends, is the potential governance legitimacy crisis such social discord is likely to manifest. As a result of this, government at all levels appears to have prioritized the issue employment creation and poverty alleviation. This is clearly reflected in Mbeki's (2008: 2) assertion that:

None of the great social problems we have to solve is capable of resolution outside the context of the creation of jobs and the alleviation and eradication of poverty. This relates to everything, from the improvement of the health of our people, to reducing the levels of

crime, raising the levels of literacy and numeracy and opening the doors of learning and culture.

The study further contends that such deepening levels of poverty, high rates of unemployment and the increasingly huge gap between the rich and poor are fast approaching, if not already, reached crisis proportions. Vavi (2005: 2) in respect of the economy's relentless tendency to shed jobs in scales unprecedented asserts that "the causes of mass unemployment are easily found. Above all, government has not moved consistently to restructure the apartheid economy. Instead, it adopted a neo-liberal export strategy that left our industries unprotected and unsupported. Job losses resulted on a mass scale while new employment lagged far behind growth in the labour force." Consequent to such job losses, the majority of people are increasingly becoming poorer.

To this end, Ehrenreicht (2008: 3) asserts that part of the problem is that people are taking the short route to greed and wealth that disregards the longer route that is sustainable and inclusive. This shorter route, Ehrenreicht argues, "...forgets that part of the reason some people are so desperately poor is because others are so obscenely wealthy and the only way in which to build a society that has greater levels of social cohesion is to build a society that is equal and fair and constantly works to greater levels of equality."

Exacerbating this potentially catastrophic combination of high unemployment, deep levels of poverty and huge divide between the rich and poor is the fact that the formal sector of the economy, historically understood to be primary source of employment creation in South Africa is disappointingly failing to provide employment opportunities for the majority of potential employees. This observation however, appears to be a global phenomenon. Commenting on the global nature of this phenomenon, Evans (2007: 2) states that even the most globally successful exporters of manufactured goods cannot rely on the manufacturing sector to provide livelihoods for their citizens. He further supports this argument by citing the Chinese employment statistics demonstrating that "from 1995 to 2002, the total number of manufacturing jobs in China shrank by 15 million suggesting that it is now unlikely that formal manufacturing jobs will ever employ more than 15% of

the labour force in the 21st Century.” Similarly, Erasmus (1999) in the FAFO report (cited in Torres 2000: 53) points out that only one of thirty new entrants in the labour market can be expected to find job in the formal sector of the economy. These conditions of increasing unemployment and deepening levels of poverty appear to be at the source of the government’s drive to shift focus and attention and therefore its understanding of arts, culture and tourism as central pillars in its integrated strategy to grow the economy and create jobs.

The prioritization of economic growth and job creation is evident in almost all government thinking and endeavours. The point being made here is that the conceptual transition taking place around viewing arts, culture and tourism as phenomena falling outside the economic mainstream to a paradigm in which these are regarded central to economic activity constitutes part of this overall endeavour. An observation not dissimilar to this one is made in the CASE report in Torres (2000: 175) that while less focus is currently given to economic infrastructure, service delivery and the provision of such infrastructure remains central to alleviating the daily hardships experienced by many millions of South Africans. The report further asserts that aside from job creation and the generation of economic growth, service provision is a central focus of the government.

Given this emerging paradigm shift articulated above, it is not unreasonable to posit the view that the following assertion by Mkhize (2007: 2/3) derives and is informed by it.

The major challenge before us today is to ensure that the country’s success in attracting international tourists helps accelerate economic growth. Since the advent of democracy tourism has had a significant impact on the KZN economy and South Africa as a whole. We have an established tourism industry that provides a locus for stimulating other sectors. Tourism is not just for the benefit of hotels and restaurants only, but for all the stakeholders in the entire value chain.

In the same vein, the emphasis by the Minister of Arts and Culture, the Honourable Pallo Jordan, cited in the department’s *Strategic Plan Document* (2007: 4) on the role of arts and culture and its perceived contribution to the development and enhancement of the economy, captured in the statement that the “DAC has formulated and will implement an

arts and culture 2010 strategy in the period leading to 2010 in order to enhance the role of arts and culture in the economy and society”, reflects a similar kind of thinking.

Parallel to these articulations, it may also be necessary to contextualize these views further by bringing into this discussion assertions by the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, the Honourable, Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, cited in the Department’s *Strategic Plan Document* (2007: 2) that tourism retains its status as a major material contributor to the ASGISA objectives of job creation and poverty alleviation. He further points out that the sector’s performance continues to witness a dramatic increase in arrivals, and that the industry has also begun its process of preparing for the 2010 World Cup. The point which this discussion seeks to drive home is the notion that the shift seen in the provincial Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, in terms of its emphasis on the role of the department on economic growth and sustainability, must be located and therefore understood within the context of the governments overall strategy to deal with issues of joblessness, poverty, underdevelopment and its related undercurrents.

It would therefore, not be unreasonable to advance the argument that, until recently, arts and culture, to a greater extent and tourism to a lesser extent, were never regarded by the democratic government as fundamental in economic growth and job creation. A potential reason for the less-focused approach to arts and culture as a significant contributor to economic growth and job creation could probably be found in the minimalist interpretation of the Constitution. For instance, section 31 (1) (a) and (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that “persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of the community, to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language, and form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.”

An argument can therefore be mounted that a minimalist interpretation of the above discounts the economic perspective that may inherently be contained in this constitutional clause. This minimalist view and interpretation of the constitutional provision gives the

impression that arts and cultural rights are, in the main, meant for building and sustaining social identity, cohesion and social development among cultural, religious and linguistic groups. It is probable that this interpretation of the constitutional provision relating to issues of arts and culture led to their being depicted and therefore treated from an economically-neutral perspective.

There is however, another perspective from which the less prioritization of arts and culture may be understood. It is highly probable given the mountainous challenges faced by the post-apartheid government and the constrained resources at its disposal to deal with such challenges, some kind of prioritization had to be done. In such prioritization, it is also possible that some areas emerged as more critical than others given their role during the period of apartheid and the negative impact these might have had in society. To put this in perspective, it might be possible given the historical role played by the apartheid education system in entrenching and perpetuating the exploitation and subjugation of the majority of the people of South Africa that the educational system, was in all likelihood bound to attract the government's maximum attention both in terms of prioritization and resource allocation. This could be found in arts and culture being just one among many other components within the provincial education department.

Transition from considering arts and culture as just one component among many others within the Department of Education to being a major component of critical focus within the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism posed serious challenges for the department. This could, on the balance of probabilities, potentially be indicative of and demonstrate an initial lack of clear focus and direction within the new, stand-alone, Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism in respect of arts and culture's purported role in social development, economic growth and poverty alleviation. This lack of clear focus and direction was, in all likelihood, inherited from the Department of Education and Culture during the era when arts and culture was just one among many other components in education and culture.

Evidence of this difficulty is unambiguously captured in the *Draft Strategic Plan Document's* (2007: 4) assertion that "the department has struggled with the critical

service delivery questions and models in its effort to address poverty and the challenge of economic growth and job creation”.

Consequently, the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism initially battled with deciding on its investment priorities and development initiatives in order to ensure sustainability and maximum impact.

By its own admission, the department pointed out that it has taken time to make a resolution concerning the sustainable approach to development. Eventually, it would seem, the department decided that its success in promoting all forms of traditions of dance, drama, music, theatre, visual arts, crafts, design, and written and oral literature lies in its ability to build and sustain strategic partnerships with interest groups in society and enhance understanding of the business of creative industries by all those interest groups from the marginalized background.

Having attempted above to outline a brief historical evolution and context of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, it is now necessary to turn to what the department seeks to do with its strategy planning process. To be able to do this, critical consideration must be given to the declared strategic goal of the department. This goal is spelt out in the department’s *Draft Strategic Plan Document* (2007) as the:

Development, promotion and transformation of arts, culture, language services, sustainable libraries information, archives and tourism in the province in order to contribute to sustainable economic growth and opportunities, nation building, good governance and social and human capital development.

Within this contextual understanding, the department appears, to all intents and purposes, to seek to ensure that through its strategic planning sessions or strategy planning process, it is able to give effect to this strategic goal. Put simply, the department seeks through its strategy planning process to develop, promote and transform arts, culture, language services, sustainable libraries information, archives and tourism in order to contribute to sustainable economic growth, nation building, nation building and human development. One major issue that probably calls for clarity, given the department’s attempted link

between its strategy process and the achievement of its strategic goal, is the role of strategy in the organization. Strategy is indeed a complex organizational phenomenon. Consequent to the dynamic complexity inherent in any strategy process, it is, more often than not, difficult to predict with any degree of certainty the likely outcome of an organization's strategic endeavour. This makes cause and effect highly unpredictable due to a gap that exists between action and the outcome and the difficulty with which outcome can realistically be attributed to any one action. The sense of unpredictability running through most of organizations' strategic efforts was confirmed in a study conducted by Pereira (2002: 117) when she found that:

A slow reconversion began to take place in the region around Porto with the manufacture of mixed textiles of cotton and silk. In the mid-nineteenth century, handloom weaving of cotton textiles labouring classes was fairly widespread in Porto. In 1881, the huge of the growth of the domestic and workshop industry producing printed cotins and stripped cotton materials was particularly striking in this city: more than a quarter of its total population was engaged in this activity.

A closer look at the above citation appears to suggest that when the reconversion began to take place in the region around Porto, the positive impact this had by the mid-nineteenth century could not realistically have been predicted. The complexity of the concept of strategy is further evidenced by a lack of common definition or collective understanding around the concept of strategy and its potential use and significance.

For instance, Grant (cited in Zack, 1999: 3) states that strategy has been defined as "the match an organization makes between its internal resources and skills... and the opportunities and risks created by its external environment". Others like Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn (2003: 237) do not regard strategy merely as a match between internal resources and external opportunities, but regard it as a continual transformation and reinvention of themselves to maintain a competitive edge. Despite differences of opinion around the concept of strategy, many strategy scholars, theoreticians and business people agree that the impact of strategy is likely to be felt over a long period. In line with this long-range viewpoint, Hayes, Pisano, Upton and Wheelwright (2005: 35) point out that strategy has to operate over an extended time horizon and embrace a broad spectrum of

activities ranging from resource allocation processes to day-to-day operations. Hayes et al (2005: 35) further argue that strategy must mould decisions affecting these different sets of activities into a coherent pattern, both over time and across groups that often compete for the same resources.

On the basis of this, it is reasonable to advance the view that the goal postulated in the department's draft strategic plan above reflects a need on the part of the department to conduct its operations differently from its current configuration. This calls for engagement to change the management process. This is further postulated in the argument advanced in the *Draft Strategic Plan Document* (2007) that:

...the results of the strategy development process which are reflected as performance targets for the medium term in the annual performance plan document distilled views on the preferred future position of the department". This, according to the department, creates a tension between the current reality and the preferred future position of the department; hence, energy was displayed by the management team in defining and planning on specific business initiatives and interventions.

This notion of change is central to contemporary organizations as pointed out by Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn (2003) in their assertion that it is an accepted tenet of modern life that change is constant, of greater magnitude and far less predictable than ever before, and for this reason is acknowledged as being one of the most important and difficult issues facing organizations today. Taking this argument further Dunphy et al (2003: 11) argue as follows:

Wherever we are in society and the world of work, we can engage in the debate about the social role of the corporation. All of us can contribute to a redefinition of corporations to ensure they become major contributors to sustainability rather than social and environmental predators undermining a world fit to live in. There is a huge opportunity here to ensure that all corporations are instruments of a broader social purpose than the generation of short-term wealth for shareholders.

Likewise, the *Statement of the National Executive Committee* of the African National Congress (2007: 5) notes that:

Economic growth and development is at the heart about empowering the masses to take control of their own lives, ensuring that they have the means and opportunity to enjoy the freedoms for which they have fought for a long time. They must therefore be an integral and driving force behind this effort. In this respect there is a clear role for participation by the non-governmental organizations and civil society structures. There is also a profound need for sustained cooperation between the government and its social partners – labour, business and civil society.

It would, on the basis of the above, seem that the success of the department's attempts to implement its strategy should be judged, in the main, by its ability to deliver its purported services, mandated by the Constitution, to those that are meant to benefit from such service delivery. It must, in addition, be mentioned that such service delivery must be to the satisfaction of, and add value to, those it is meant to benefit. It would seem that the MEC for the provincial Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, the Honourable, W.G. Thusi, had this in mind when she asserted in the department's draft strategic document (2007: 2) that:

The department must, as a matter of urgency, take deliberate steps to ensure that the next five years' initiatives that the department embarks upon contain the possibility that all art forms and cultures uplift those that were disadvantaged by apartheid, broaden community participation in arts, culture and tourism, and ensure that arts, culture and tourism become vehicles for poverty alleviation and economic empowerment.

In turn, it is assumed that by so doing the department would be fulfilling its mandatory obligation to the citizenry of the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The results discussed hereunder are an outcome of an interview process with various respondents in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism identified in Chapter Three of this research project. It must, however, be pointed out that an endeavour has been made to locate the respondents' responses within the context not only of all interview responses, but also within the context of documentary investigation that was conducted. Further indication must be made that, for reporting and simplicity purposes, it has not been possible to outline each and every conversation and all responses to questions posed.

Instead, the approach adopted for the purposes of this exercise has been to broadly outline issues and concerns articulated by various participants. However, where it becomes necessary to provide specific quotations by respondents to elaborate and clarify issues being discussed, the report will seek to do that.

Before outlining the findings of the research, it is necessary to locate the study within its proper organizational context. This organizational context is primarily premised and informed by what the department has identified as its strategic goal. This goal is stated in its *Draft Strategic Plan Document* (2007) as:

...the development, promotion and transformation of arts, culture, language services, sustainable libraries and information, archives and tourism in the province in order to contribute to sustainable economic growth and opportunities, nation building, good governance and social and human capital development.

Inherent in this strategic goal is the idea that the department should be able to deliver this in a period not exceeding the 5-year period that corresponds to the election cycle. Linked to this strategic goal are strategic objectives that must be attainable within a period of three years corresponding to the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). Among such objectives are:

To ensure cultural diversity and the advancement of artistic disciplines into viable industries, promote multi-lingualism, redress past linguistic imbalances and develop the previously marginalized languages and develop and transform the tourism sector and promote the province as the preferred tourist destination.

The object of this study is to determine whether the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism uses its strategic planning process as a value-creating imperative for service delivery enhancement in the public sector or as a mechanism for compliance. Any such determination, therefore, can realistically be made only in the context of whether or not the department's strategic planning process adds positive value to the enhancement or enrichment of the identified strategic objectives and goals. This, by implication, requires that part of this study should necessarily be able to pronounce on an existence of a positive relation or otherwise between the department's strategic planning process, and its delivery of identified strategic goal and service delivery objectives.

Part of determining whether or not the strategic planning process of the department adds value to its service delivery efforts aimed at benefiting intended beneficiaries entails establishing whether or not intended beneficiaries' needs, wants and aspirations are taken on board in processes of the department's strategy enactment. This determination becomes critical in the context that if, indeed, government's service delivery efforts are meant for interests the government purports to represent, these must be factored in, in its planning processes. This view is clearly articulated in the assertion by Hardman (2005: 66) that the effect of government policy at the local level is largely dependent on allowance for strategic choices to be made on the basis of particular contexts and environment.

It must be acknowledged though that the study did not examine the implementation aspect of the strategy process. By implication, the study will not be able to examine the extent and therefore pronounce itself on whether what is agreed during the strategic planning process is effectively carried through in practice. Any findings discussed are derived primarily on the conceptualization aspect of the process manifested in the department's planning process and the interactive processes constituting part of it. Discussions and responses provided by the respondents must therefore be located within

the aforesaid context. For the purposes of this study, the need to separate conceptualization and execution aspects is an attempt to deal and appropriately respond to the assumptions inherent in a government's strategic making process. Among these is the assumption that strategy conceptualization precedes strategy execution, hence a need for the strategic planning process that must produce detailed implementation plans thought through in advance. As Mintzberg, (2000: 13) correctly points out that the assumption underlying strategic planning is that analysis will produce synthesis i.e. decomposition of the process of strategy making into a series of articulated steps, each to be carried out as specified in sequence, will produce integrated strategies.

Having attempted to briefly outline the operating environment of the study necessary to understand the findings of the study in context, it now seems proper to proceed with a consideration of questions used in the study before discussing the findings. As was alluded to earlier in this dissertation, under the section dealing with research methodology and procedure, informal interviews were conducted with various stakeholders in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, and the questions that follow are those that were used during interviews to elicit responses around the phenomenon under investigation.

Whilst these questions were prepared in advance of the interviews, they were nonetheless not meant to be restrictive, but were rather used to direct the interview sessions to those issues deemed critical by the researcher in order to achieve the set objective of the research. The questions were asked of all the respondents who participated in the study. However, because of the open-ended nature of the questions, subsequent follow-up questions were determined by each respondent's response.

- 1) What do you understand to be the strategy of the KZN Dept of Arts, Culture and Tourism?
- 2) What do you understand the primary purpose of having a departmental strategy to be?
- 3) Are there known key pillars of the strategy within the department and, if there are, what would these be?

- 4) Please unpack the KZN departmental strategy process as you understand it and outline for me how your divisional/operational unit contributes to this process.
- 5) In the strategy process you have just outlined, does any identifiable distinction, both conceptually and practically, exist between strategy development and strategy execution?
- 6) Please explain aspects of your strategy process that are deemed part of the strategy development and those regarded as part of strategy implementation.
- 7) Is there any other provincial department, other than the KZN Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, that plays a role in your strategy development and execution process?
- 8) If there is, what department is that, and what specific role does it have in your strategic management process?
- 9) In strategy management parlance, the issue of strategic planning is considered important. Does your strategy process agree with this thinking and, if it does, how far into the future do your strategy planning sessions plan for?
- 10) Do you as a person/group agree with the view that long-term planning is crucial for the success of the department and, if you do, what value-add do you think this process has in the successful operation of the department?
- 11) At which level of the department does the strategy planning process take place and to what extent are all departmental operational areas involved in the process?
- 12) To what extent are ordinary departmental employees involved in the process of strategy development and implementation?
- 13) In your view, does any linkage exist between the department's strategy planning process and its day-to-day operation, and, if it does, what is the nature of this relationship?
- 14) To what extent is the implementation of your departmental strategy measured both in terms of its progress and success and, on the basis of that, can you provide your assessment of its progress and success?
- 15) In terms of your understanding of the strategic management process, do you regard strategy as being a consciously planned and deliberate process or a process that emerges through chance in the process of management by trial and error?
- 16) Who do you regard to be the department's primary customers and competitors and in the context of your understanding of these, how does your strategy seek to ensure the department's service delivery success?

- 17) Could you provide your understanding of the supply and demand sides of your strategy process and, on the basis of that explanation outline your strategy's key focus areas?

Information gathered through this process were recorded in writing in the form of notes taken during the interviews and collated for purposes of analysis and interpretation. The section that follows seeks to discuss the findings of the study and provide some analysis and interpretation of the findings by the researcher. At this point, it is worth noting comments by Stacey (2003: 1) when he says, "...it is from my own experience that I describe, compare and comment on the various theories, and how they differ". Similarly, the analysis and interpretation of these findings must be understood within the context of the researcher's experience.

This statement, by implication, means that other people going through the same findings may not necessarily agree with the perspective provided, interpretation given and therefore the conclusion reached. This probability finds expression with a further argument by Stacey (2003: 1) that the experience of the perceiver inevitably colours how she/he describes those theories and what she/he has to say about them and on the basis of this, invites his readers to consider whether what she/he has to say resonates in any way with their experience. In terms of the study's findings, the first issue that the study looks into relates to the respondent's understanding of the department's strategy. It would seem, based on the responses provided by the majority of respondents that the issue of strategy and strategic management remains a challenge for the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism.

This observation is informed by responses provided by most respondents. In fact, the majority of respondents provided divergent views, probably an indication of differing understanding of the strategy of the department. It must be pointed out that on an issue of this nature one would ordinarily expect employees working for the same organization to have converging views. This becomes particularly worrisome in view of the fact that some of these divergent views are held by people holding senior managerial positions. Obviously, this observation is grounded and informed by a particular assumption. And the assumption made by the researcher in this case, is that employees at managerial levels

should, under normal circumstances and with all else being equal, be able to relate to an outsider similar messages - on issues of strategy, for instance - when asked what the strategy of the organization is. A further assumption made is that managers, in the main, form the core of the leadership team of the department.

Flowing from this latter assumption, therefore, is the view that the leadership core is thought to be critical in leading the department's strategic change process. As Dunphy et al (2005: 265) state, "...we need clarity of vision, knowledge of what we wish to change and the skills to implement the changes". It may therefore, in the context of Dunphy's observation, be argued that where the leadership core of the organization does not share a common understanding of the organizational strategy, having a collective clarity of vision and accompanying knowledge and skills to change what ought to be changed becomes difficult.

Demonstrating the point made above regarding the divergence of understanding, calls for a citation of two responses provided to the first question that deals with the issue of what the strategy of the KZN Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism is. The head of Human Resources in the department understood the strategy of the department to be the facilitation of arts and culture in the province, such that all cultures and arts are elevated to a level where they enjoy equal status in the eyes of the respective communities. He further indicated that part of the strategy is to provide direction to the tourism potential that the department would espouse in view of the fact that KZN is a tourist destination. When a similar question was posed to the head of corporate services, the immediate manager of the head of Human Resources, her response was that the departmental strategy was to "ensure that the arts, culture and tourism sector contributes to the economic growth of the province."

In view of the two responses outlined above, it is apparent that, while both respondents provided answers that might not necessarily be regarded as so divergent as to be irreconcilable, this does present itself as a matter of particular concern. Indeed, this appears to be more of a concern to the strategic choice approach to strategy making than it would be to the other strategic perspectives. This particular concern should be

understood within the context that the two diverging views are from individuals who are very senior in the organization. Complicating matters further is the fact that one employee is reporting to the other and that these are very senior positions within the department. With all else being equal, the view taken by the strategic choice theory would probably be that, at this level of the organization, there should be a similar understanding of its strategy. This similarity should be in terms of both conceptual understanding and articulation. This view grounds itself on the basis that the strategic choice approach considers common understanding and shared vision, particularly among those at the higher echelons of the organization, to be of critical significance. Such common understanding and shared vision among senior executives and managers, according to strategic choice perspective, is probably a prerequisite for successful change management in organizations.

This becomes evident in the observation by Stacey (2003: 51) that “organizations change successfully when top executives form the right intention of the overall future shape of the whole organization and specify in enough detail how this is to be achieved”. The existence of diverging views at executive or senior managerial level may, according to the strategic choice approach, be interpreted to denote a weakness or gap that may need to be plugged before the organization could succeed in its strategic change endeavours.

The observation made above, that the convergence of views at the level of the managers interviewed must be both of conceptual understanding and articulation is critical for strategic choice theorists. Its criticality is founded on the belief and conviction that managers must operate as a coherent unit from their conception of the future right up to the detail of how that future is to be achieved.

Within a similar context, Stacey (2003: 52) notes unambiguously that managers can be said to be planning the future of their organization only when, as a group, they share a common intention to achieve a particular future composition and level of performance. A possibility that responses provided may indeed contain a similar conceptual view and understanding of what the strategy is, but that the manner in which such responses are articulated diverges, may not necessarily find space within the strategic choice mentality.

This may, in fact, be interpreted as denoting a divergence in conceptual understanding of the organizational goal. The articulation above is but one view. There is another alternative view. It is indeed possible that people might articulate the same goal or vision differently. This does not in itself signify divergence as far as conceptual understanding of the goal is concerned.

Contrary to the view articulated above, Dunphy et al (2005: 265) maintain that people do indeed need to know what they want to achieve but further asserts that "...our understanding of the goal doesn't have to be precise when we begin. What we need is a 'strategic intent', a direction, a deep, intuitive response to the organizational situation in which we find ourselves." This statement by Dunphy et al sits comfortably with the argument that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate, and therefore know with any degree of certainty, what is likely to happen in the future, particularly if that future is far off.

In fact, this view further argues that the future cannot be determined in advance from a distance, but is co-created in interaction by various stakeholders as they continuously engage in their day-to-day operation. The obvious implication of this assertion is that it is not necessarily true that change will be successful only in the event that both the change destination and its route is known in advance and shared by those deemed central in leading the purported change. In fact, the point is further reiterated by Dunphy et al (2005: 276-7) that vision emerges from dialogue; that is, both inner dialogue with ourselves and dialogue within the organization and with its external stakeholders. On the basis of this, therefore, the task of a change agent remains that of working in collaboration with others to create new meaning, which in turn creates new realities.

This depiction of life in organizations may indeed be true and, in fact, might represent an accurate reflection of reality in real organizations. However, it is contended in this research that its applicability and usefulness may hold relevance only in situations where it is certain beyond any reasonable doubt that, at the very least, the conceptual understanding of the vision, goal and strategy is collectively shared and the divergence is confined only to its articulation.

There is, however, no guarantee that this is the case in this instance. In the absence of such assurance, it may not be unreasonable to assume that divergence in articulation potentially carries with it divergence in conceptual understanding. The point advanced in this research is that both possibilities are real and ought not be discounted without any further examination of the details associated with either of the two. It is, however, not within the scope of this exercise to pursue such investigation. Suffice to say that, for the purposes of this dissertation, both alternatives are possible realities.

The other issue worth noting for the purposes of discussion in this research relates to the departmental strategy process. The overwhelming majority of respondents interviewed seem to converge around a similar process followed in the development and in implementation of strategy. Participants pointed out that the process, in the main, begins with national government's pronouncement on those issues deemed strategically important for the government's delivery during its term of office and beyond.

This pronouncement by the national government is communicated largely through the State President's State of the Nation address on an annual basis. Issues that are deemed critical and of priority in this national pronouncement are picked up by the KZN Premier in his State of the Province address. Likewise, the MEC for arts, culture and tourism would pick up those issues that relate to arts, culture and tourism in her budget speech. And these are the issues that form the core of the strategy of the department. For instance, in her response, the manager of financial services pointed out that their strategy review process starts with the State of the Nation address by the State President. Flowing from this, they would consider other input documents like the Provincial Growth Development Strategy, Spatial Development Plan, ASGISA and JIPSA. On the basis of this and other related information, "we would then extract that which we believe is relevant to our strategic plan and put forward our thought and certain recommendations to the executive for them to take on board when they meet to develop the department's strategic plan".

The approach espoused by the majority of respondents seems to place greater emphasis on the supply side of the strategy process. Little, if any mention was made by almost all the respondents, of any serious consideration, of the demand side of the strategy process

as an input to their process of strategy development and review. This situation potentially demonstrates either a lack of will to seriously engage the views, aspirations and interests of people the government purports to serve. Alternatively, this could be indicative of a lack of understanding of the importance of the involvement and participation of ordinary citizens in the identification of their needs and solutions thereof. A similar attitude can be discerned from the findings of the CASE report in Torres (2000: 124) in its observation that:

For some, the conclusion seems to be that while community participation is important, it is desirable only at certain stages in the delivery process. For example, communities should not play a role in needs assessment or the creation of a priority list because of their narrow view.

During this study's investigation, the responses provided by the respondents suggest an over-preoccupation with that which emanates from the government at the expense of the needs of the end-users. This situation may not necessarily lead to the benefit of those that strategy development and implementation are hoping to benefit. Under these conditions, a possibility exists that even if the department were to deliver on its set strategy successfully, this might not necessarily delight its targeted customers, but rather those holding political power in government. This situation clearly represents a glaring weakness on the part of the department's strategy making process and sits contrary to the notion of interactive and participatory governance expressed in Mbeki's (2008: 8) assertion that "working with other social partners, we shall ensure that by the end of this year, the second National Anti-corruption Programme is adopted and that the action plan agreed with organized business is implemented."

The importance of considering the demand side of any strategy process is eloquently stated by Mathur and Kenyon (2001: 6) in their assertion that "customer preferences are often shaped by the actions of sellers, but they are certainly also affected by social and economic changes over which suppliers have no influence. The demand side needs to be analysed in its own right". As a result of this reality, Mathur and Kenyon (2001: 5-6) feel the focus should be on customer-centred strategies because of their concern with what offerings the company is to sell in the future, and on how customers will see those

offerings in comparison with their competing substitutes. Similarly, Mbeki (2008: 5) argues that at the centre of the government's economic programme is, and should always be the consideration whether their success is helping to improve the quality of life of all South Africans, acting as an important weapon in the war on poverty and accelerating advance towards the attainment of such objectives as the reduction of unemployment and advancing the goal of health for all. It seems, in view of this articulation that governmental departments are duty bound to bring on board views, needs and aspirations of those they purport to serve and ensure that they programmes are delivered to serve the interests of such their constituencies.

On the issue of any identifiable distinction, both conceptually and practically, between strategy development and strategy execution, an overwhelming majority of those interviewed responded in the affirmative. This affirmative response was further supported by the participants' experiences in respect of the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism's strategy making process and their interaction with such a process. The majority view appears to be that the role of conceptualizing and developing a departmental strategy remains that of top management.

The operationalization and implementation of such a strategy becomes the responsibility of other levels within the department. Whilst some respondents pointed out that inputs and contributions from other employees are sought through a consultation process, such aspects of the strategic management process remain essentially that of top management. Here are some of the responses that support the distinction view:

"There is definitely distinction between the two components of the strategy process. With regard to the development aspect, political heads of departments and top management are responsible for dealing with issues at a strategic direction level and the implementation is then left to departmental officials to deal with."

"Strategic planning is the responsibility of top executives in the department. However, in executing this responsibility they need to ensure that they consult other organizational levels for input into the strategic session. The issue of implementing the plans is cascaded to every employee within the department to implement."

On the basis of the responses received on this issue, it is certainly not unreasonable to argue that the department subscribes to the notion of delineation between strategy development and execution, a notion which, in the main, is propounded by the strategic choice theorists. As Stacey (2003: 51) points out, “strategic choice theory makes a distinction between the formulation of a strategy and its implementation”. In this observation, he presents the notion that the formulation aspect entails the preparation of a plan, the setting of goals, the intended action required to achieve such identified goals and, further, forecasting likely consequences of such actions over a prolonged period of time, whereas implementation is about designing systems to ensure that plans are carried out as intended and periodically adjusted to keep the organization on track to achieve its goals.

Other strategy scholars and theoreticians are not convinced by an argument that seeks to delineate between strategy development and implementation. In fact, the view articulated by such scholars is that strategy development and implementation constitute a highly complex process, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to compartmentalize the components of this process.

In a sense, the process is viewed as cyclical, with various components of the strategy process feeding on and off each other in an integrated and complex fashion to allow any form of distinction and separation among the various components. The messy nature of a strategic process is alluded to in the assertion by Hayes, Pisano, Upton and Wheelwright (2005: 55-56) that in dealing with issues of strategy, people throughout the organization are continually identifying opportunities, developing new knowledge and capabilities, and testing their ideas. They further argue that “initiatives are undertaken, changed in mid-course as new information becomes available and better ideas surface, and sometimes abandoned so that energy can be focused on a different approach”.

This messy and interactive complexity of various components of the strategy making process is eloquently dealt with in Mueller cited in Buick, and Wickstron (2004: 293) in his questioning of the policy implications of 11 September 2001, in the US whether global terrorism should lead to a re-evaluation of how to design constitutions, how to

award citizenship and how to protect property rights. In so doing Mueller problematizes the “social dilemmas that western societies face in seeking to adhere to liberal values while at the same time protecting citizens residents, and future citizens from terror.” It is quite clear on the basis of this Mueller’s problematization of these issues that strategy making is not a linear, sequential process that can easily be delineated into strategy conceptualization and implementation.

The view expressed above appears to take into account dynamic realities happening in complex organizations, as opposed to a somewhat very static and idealized notion of strategy development propagated by the compartmentalization school of thought. In fact, consequent to this dynamism and complexity characteristic of the strategy process, it might not be unreasonable to posit the view that for the majority of organizations, strategy, in any logical and meaningful way, becomes evident only during strategy review with the benefit of hindsight.

This observation, however, does not in any way negate the importance and criticality of advanced planning. Indeed, it serves to point to a need for organizations to remain flexible and adaptable in the context of ever-changing operational conditions confronting them. Central to this observation is the creation of a workable balance between planning in advance and building organizational flexibility for adaptation and responsiveness required for modern organizations.

On the question of whether or not provincial Treasury adds any identifiable value to the department’s strategy process, many respondents appear not totally convinced. Views in this regard seem ambivalent. Whilst the majority of the respondents recognized the role of treasury in ensuring that public funds allocated to various departments are properly spent and accounted for, there is, however, serious doubt that the manner in which this is done is adding value to the department’s processes. Some of the views articulated in this regard, for instance, seem to suggest that whilst the role of provincial treasury is acknowledged with regard to its support to various departments on financial management issues, some of their processes in undertaking this role border on ‘interference’ in the running of departments. This scepticism is captured in the statement that:

They prescribe to us as departments in terms of how to go about formulating our strategic plans. They, for instance, require all departments to follow a certain prescribed format in respect of developing departmental strategic plans. This approach is very rigid and, more often than not, puts extra emphasis on compliance by departments than on innovation and improvement of the strategy planning process with the view to adding value to the work of the departments.

This view sits in contrast with what Treasury believes to be its role in terms of assisting various departments. In articulating this role, for instance, Treasury, in its strategic plan (2004: 1) maintains that theirs “is to establish a strong centre of excellence that works together with the office of the Premier and our sister department of Economic Development as the heart of governance in the first instance and with other departments where the value of coordination and integrated development will be achieved.” It would seem on the basis of this expression that Treasury does not view its role as that of ‘interference’ as articulated in the above-statement.

It also became clear during interviews that the statism and rigidity inherent in the strategy planning process of the department could potentially be attributed to the over-emphasis by Treasury on developing departmental operational plans that must be submitted to provincial treasury before the beginning of every financial year which, are in turn used to monitor departmental progress on whether or not budget allocations given to departments were used as per their operational plans. This view is further confirmed in Treasury’s strategic plan’s (2004: 1) assertion that the department is cognizant of the importance of the major tool at its disposal in the form of the provincial budget, which it views as an “instrument that we wish to influence government activity towards creating work and fighting poverty.”

This approach in itself might not necessarily be a bad thing, but potentially, given the nature of the legislative powers of Treasury, the culture that is created around this process is that of compliance more than creativity and innovation on the part of departments. It is highly likely that such over-emphasis, whether perceived or real, on rigidity and compliance is not what is intended by provincial treasury. Despite Treasury’s intentions however, it is a known fact that history is littered with extremely good intentions that

produce unintended negative and unwanted consequences. It would seem based on the responses of most of the respondents that this might be among those history lessons.

A closer comparative analysis of what departments would commit to doing in their strategic and operational plans to secure funds from Treasury, and what they actually end up doing, presents a disturbing picture of the state of affairs. This is a clear indication that planning to do something and actually doing it are two different things. These may obviously represent two aspects of the same process. But the point made here is that these are different things that should not, at any stage, be confused. This point is alluded to in the department's *Draft Strategic Plan Document* (2007: 8) wherein it is stated that the department's focus on community arts and culture has not had the desired outcome because the department has not been able to reach women in deep rural areas, even though, in their strategic plan, this formed part of the priority population group for departmental intervention.

The statement extracted from the draft strategic plan, outlined above, is indeed not surprising. It, in fact, is a representation of reality in many organizations. The fact of the matter is, no matter how brilliant, innovative and progressive ideas encapsulated in strategic plan documents may be, the process of conceptualizing such ideas is not the same as that of actualizing them. It is therefore delusional to think that coming up with a deliberate and precise plan of execution intended to actualize that which has been conceptualized will necessarily create a replica of the conceptualization in the actualization. This is clearly not deliberately and consciously possible, particularly because, for this to happen, organizations need to be able to know everything that it is possible to know about the future they are planning for. As Stacey (2003: 52) correctly points out, managers cannot possibly plan unless they can also make reasonably reliable forecasts of the future time period they are planning for. He goes on to argue that the future must not be knowable, but it must be sufficiently well known in advance of required performance to allow the time span and the level of detail to be that which produces the required performance.

On the issue of whether strategy development and implementation are deliberate and planned in advance or emerge in the course of the organization's on-going operations, the majority of respondents are convinced that it is a deliberate process where planning must precede implementation. This view could be deduced from statements such as, "You cannot run an organization as big as a provincial department if you are not able to plan properly." One respondent, for instance, remarked that if you are unable to plan in terms of what you want to achieve as a department, how is it "possible that you can go to Treasury and request the budget if you do not have a plan detailing what you intend doing with that budget." As far as this issue is concerned, there was clearly no dissenting view.

The position taken by most respondents is that strategy is a deliberate process. Most respondents, however, mentioned that from time to time there will indeed be a need to change the strategy as and when conditions dictate: hence the need to engage in annual strategic reviews. The strategy view expressed here, which emphasizes deliberateness, corresponds with the department's strategy making cycle outlined in this dissertation, starting with the national government pronouncement on what the priorities are and that only on the basis of such pronounced priorities must provincial departments develop their strategies. Indeed, it depicts a strategy process driven from the top where those in positions of authority higher up in their organizational hierarchies believe they have an inherent right, know-how and capacity to dictate the direction and pace of strategy and strategic change, and therefore the life of organizations.

This observation is in line with the finding in the CASE report in Torres (2000: 124) depicting a view held by some powerful decision-making structures within some departments that "while community participation is important, it is desirable only at certain stages in the delivery process. For example, communities should not play a role in needs assessment or the creation of a priority list because of their narrow view. As one official expressed thus "we are committed to working with communities but not when it comes to assessing what are the priorities because...everyone thinks that their priority is the greatest"

The point has already been made above that this kind of mentality and approach to dealing with challenges facing organizations, particularly public institutions, do not accord with reality. Life in organizations reflects a much more complex dynamic interaction of issues and variables requiring complex, sophisticated and responsive solutions. Any attempt at confronting such complexity and dynamism with half-hearted, static and simplistic solutions as the one outlined in the strategy making process of the department is more likely to yield unsuccessful results. Discontent with simplistic solutions to complex strategy problems is probably the main concern of Hayes et al (2005: 55) in arguing that:

The transition from the relatively static positioning-based approach to strategy to the dynamic capabilities-based approach not only encourages the operations function to consider a much richer set of alternatives and opportunities, it alters in a fundamental way one's whole approach to strategic planning. Rather than formulating a grand plan in a remote executive suite, and then assigning its implementation to various functional groups, strategy formulation and implementation become much more interactive.

What remains and continues to be clear, and should therefore be borne in mind, is that issues of planning in advance and deliberateness do indeed have a place in matters of strategy development and implementation. As Quinn (1980: 16) maintains that synthesis of various behavioural, power-dynamic and formal analytical approaches more closely approximates the processes major organizations use in changing their strategies where managers purposely blend processes together to improve both the quality of the decisions and the effectiveness of their implementation. Equally important though, is the recognition that the notion of emergence and co-creation also has a significant role to play that ordinarily will continue to impact on the strategy process. Over-emphasis on the notion of deliberateness and the prescriptive nature of the strategic process at the expense of emergence and co-creation is likely to impact negatively on the capacity of the strategy process to deliver on its goals.

On the question of planning ahead into the future, all respondents' responses converge around three to five years. Almost all respondents indicated that their long-term strategic planning is five years which corresponds to national and provincial election cycles. The

mid-term planning, which is three years, is in terms of the mid-term expenditure framework. On the basis of the outlined planning cycle, the department is required to submit at the beginning of each and every term of office a strategic plan which, theoretically, has to have three components to it. One component has to contain 'strategic goals' which in terms of the plan must be delivered over a period of five years. The second component has to contain 'strategic objectives', which in terms of the plan must be realized over a period of three years. The third component in terms of the overall plan contains 'performance objectives' that must be achieved on an annual basis.

The theory behind this arrangement is that on a yearly basis, the department must engage in a strategic review exercise in order to assess progress in respect of whether what they set out to achieve in any one particular year was indeed achieved. Should there be any changes that ought to be introduced into the plan either on a yearly or over an MTEF period, this should be done during such reviews.

The thinking contained here is not far removed from the belief that people have not only the capacity, but the capability to anticipate and know what is likely to happen over, for instance, a five-year period. Such thinking indicates, as alluded to earlier, the importance of planning in advance. However, such importance ought to be located in its proper context. Within this context, this study contends, it is not possible to anticipate and know everything in advance, or be able to plan in precise detail, with respect to how the envisioned future will unfold and therefore be achieved.

Accompanying this thinking is the view that for strategy to be successfully implemented, it requires that control measures be put in place to ensure that its execution is per the strategic plan. This, by implication, signifies that such long-term strategies must be accompanied by measures of control of a longer duration to ensure alignment between strategy implementation and such control measures. However, when one considers control measures used to track progress and control strategy implementation, most of these are short-term focused. Based on the responses provided by the respondents, it would seem that the budget is, in the main, touted as the major tool used by government, particularly Treasury, to assess the performance of various departments.

Such obsession with the utilization of the budget as the ‘major’ tool of control could probably be traced to section 216 (1) and (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which states that national legislation must establish a national treasury and prescribe measures to ensure both transparency and expenditure control in each sphere of government by introducing generally recognized accounting practice, uniform expenditure classifications and uniform treasury norms and standards, and further enforce compliance via established measures. Given this reality, the issue of effective control of strategy implementation will continue to haunt this and other provincial departments, as it appears that this constitutional provision has potentially reduced government service delivery priorities to mere figures.

As Stacey (2003: 63) correctly points out, the budget is a short-term instrument and represents only the first step in the implementation of strategy. Similarly, Hurst (1982) (cited in Stacey 2003: 63) points out that “strategic control requires more data from more sources, particularly external sources, and the data must be oriented to a longer term future.” In view of this observation, it is reasonable to argue that any attempt at controlling strategy implementation will inevitably be less precise and less formal.

This denotes that instead of relying heavily on rigid and regularized time periods for reporting on strategic progress, more work should be done exploring whether variable time periods of reporting may not serve a better purpose. However, the status quo requires that strategy implementation be held to depend upon an effective budgeting system, and that strategy control entails comparing what the department does with what is outlined in the budget.

This approach, it could be argued, subjects and subordinates everything happening in organizations to the management of the budget. It does not require any deep consideration to realize that this kind of thinking is flawed. Life in organizations is largely about people and their ongoing, interactive relationships. Behaviours and the relationship of human beings in a work setting, or any other human setting for that matter, cannot realistically be reduced to the budget. It is therefore, an unrealistic

assumption to optimistically think that strategic impact can be successfully managed using budget as a tool.

The issue of employee involvement in strategy development and implementation was also raised in the study, and the responses on this matter were ambiguous. General managers, generally, held the view that there is participation by all employees in the process. This view is based on the process that is followed in developing a departmental strategy. This process was not disputed by other respondents at levels below the executive level.

In fact, the process followed was corroborated by other respondents who were part of the interviews. The ambiguity was found to be on the extent of such participation. According to the executive, all employees are involved in strategy development through their various functional components. Inputs derived from these sessions are then consolidated into divisional strategic inputs which, in turn, are presented to the executive for consideration during their strategic sessions. On this issue, for instance, the Chief Financial Officer of the provincial Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism states:

“Employee involvement and participation is through people they report to. Before strategic sessions with top management take place, various directorates are afforded time and space to consider issues they believe should be brought to the table for consideration when issues of strategy are discussed by top management. This information is collated by the head of the directorate and at a chief directorate level various inputs from various directorates are then consolidated into a chief directorate position”.

From this viewpoint, it seems, participation at the level of employees is proper and adequate. However, there is another view held within the department which does not necessarily sit comfortably with the one expressed by the Chief Financial Officer. This alternative view, whilst acknowledging the fact that, various directorates are indeed called upon to discuss and submit their inputs to strategy development sessions, indicates that all is not well with the consultative process. A view expressed by one of the Regional Cluster Managers probably points to this deficiency because he cited a gap between strategy development and strategy implementation. He pointed out that:

There are certain issues that get dealt with at head office in which we are not necessarily involved. However, when those issues have to be implemented, we are then required to come on board and implement, and sometimes head office does not even provide us with policies that will serve as guides for implementation. This is clearly one area that needs significant improvement.

The citation above clearly points to the frustration and dissatisfaction of some managers within the department in respect of the process of strategy making and implementation. At one level, such frustration could be pointing to the low degree with which managers at Executive level regards input and contribution of employees at lower levels on certain matters regarding the running of the department. At another, this could be indicative of the divergence of views at different managerial levels with respect to the strategy making process, hence incoherence and less integration in application.

The view expressed above, alluding to non-integration and incoherence in the process of strategy making and implementation, is probably best captured in the assertion by Cressey, Eldridge and McInnes, (cited in Mintzberg et al 1998: 239) that there are “dangers of attributing the idea of managerial strategy to management as a collectivity...the internal cohesion of management is itself a matter for investigation...[and] may shift from issue to issue...”

This gap identified by the study around managerial collectivity, organizational coherence and employee participation and involvement raises another serious issue. This is the issue of leadership in organizations in general and in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism in particular. Such observation is based on the understanding that the role of leadership in organizations should primarily be that of rallying all the troops toward a common cause and part of this entails building and sustaining collective thought and coherent action.

A similar view is clearly articulated in Mbeki's (2008: 8) assertion that “improvement of performance in the public service also depends on the quality of leadership provided by the executive and senior management.” He further asserts that this is critical to enhance the commitment of public employees to their duties, a task he believes “belongs to the

leadership, the public servants themselves and the trade union movement.” For such to happen, it becomes central for an organization to tap into the knowledge, experience and expertise of all individuals and groups. For instance, Denton (2001: 14), in his analysis of the changing nature of the business environment, says:

The factors we consider include the shift in the relative importance of the factors of production away from capital towards labour, particularly intellectual labour; the increasing acceptance of knowledge as prime source of competitive advantage; the increasing rapid pace of change in the business environment; increasing dissatisfaction among managers and employees with the traditional, command and control management paradigm.

The criticality of labour, particularly intellectual labour, in building innovative and highly successful organizations brings into question the continued validity and applicability of traditional mentality and practice of command and control in the context of contemporary organizations. As Gorz (1973: 33) asserts, “we need to control as to counteract the power of management to burden us with more exhausting work and with deteriorating working conditions in exchange for some meager increases”.

This statement by Gorz highlights the holistic nature of change as seen by employees in organizations, which clearly points to the desire by employees to be both co-creators and co- controllers of the decision-making process and not leave this important aspect of organizational life to management as is normally the case. This view further, points to the fundamental question of leadership approach and style of command and control in organizations. Organizations have always worked from the premise that, among the many prerogatives management has, dictating and directing what employees do, and directing and pacing organizational change, remains one of their key prerogatives. As organizational operating environments change, the core of this belief is approaching disintegration.

Overwhelming evidence is beginning to show that employees are asserting themselves much more vigorously and amongst other things are, demanding the right and the opportunity to influence the direction that organizations embark upon. This is probably

the same attribute of contemporary organizations observed by Von Holdt (1993: 313) that:

Workers have responded to their exclusion and oppression under apartheid with a vision of substantial participation and democracy as an alternative. They see workplace regime as still very much shaped by apartheid. Management is authoritarian, real decision making lies in the hands of few White managers, and workers only have access to information, management believes they should have. Even when consultation or 'worker participation' is introduced, it is usually done in a paternalistic and limited way. The result is that workers do not consent to the workplace regime.

A similar conclusion is reached in the Harvard Business School Press (2005) in the argument that:

...in this age of flatter organizational structures and localized decision making, ordering people around doesn't work the way it used to. Sure, people may comply with your demands, but they'll be going through motions. Despite their obedient behavior, they won't be giving you their genuine commitment. Moreover, acting like a dictator only stifles a workforce's ability to think creatively - something that's essential for today's organizations as they compete.

In view of the finding by this study that there exist some differences between various levels of management on the one hand and between management and ordinary employees on the other on the extent to which employees are meaningfully engaged to contribute to the process of strategy development and implementation, it is reasonable to argue that this remains an area that needs to be treated with great caution. It may indeed be that, as part of a formal process, executive managers are required to genuinely and meaningfully consult other levels of management and general employees to ensure incorporation of their input and contributions in strategy deliberations.

However, it is also true that this formal requirement on its own does not guarantee that this happens. On the basis of this, it is probably not sufficient to work only on the premise that because the process formally requires that such consultation be sought, consultation therefore is taking place and that such consultation is meaningful and proper.

The question relating to who are regarded as the department's primary customers and competitors and, in the context of that understanding, how the departmental strategy seek

to ensure its service delivery success, elicited interesting views. In the main, it must be said that the majority of respondents identified the general public, artists, tourists, SMMEs, and cultural practitioners as the department's primary customers. On the issue of competitors, responses were rather ambiguous. It certainly would not be unfair and unreasonable to the respondents and objectives of this project respectively to argue that generally, respondents were of the view that the department does not have any competitors.

The interesting part here, as it will be shown in the discussion, is the relation and linkage between this response and the extent to which the department is able to engage seriously in the process of considering both the supply and demand sides of the strategy process. It has, for instance, been shown in this same study, particularly around the issue of the strategy process, that in strategy development, major emphasis is placed on the supply side of the strategy process, at the expense of the demand side. The Financial Services Manager of the provincial Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism's assertion, for instance, that "critical in this whole process is the State of the Nation address by the State President, the State of the Province address by the Premier, Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, Spatial Development Plan, ASGISA and JIPSA", makes it clear that the supply side of the strategy process takes centre stage in this process.

This failure to consider the demand side of the strategy process seriously could probably help explain the reason why government departments' communication units, in the main, convey messages which, more often than not, are contrary to what community members experience on the ground. In fact, it is difficult to understand how it is possible that the department would consider its strategy development processes complete without a clear understanding of what the needs of its identified customers are. Such finding, in respect of the department's non-consultation at worst, or inadequate consultation at best, of the customers whose interests, its strategy is meant to address finds resonance with a finding in the CASE report in Torres (2000: 123) stating that:

In government, the dilemma over community involvement is acute and different departments interpret participation in different ways. Whilst some interviewees felt that

delivery could be improved by ensuring increased participation, backing and ownership by communities, others feel that this only serves to slow the process down. Varying degree of understanding around what consultation should encompass were manifested around the issues of who should play a role and at what phase of the project this consultation should be sought?

These findings raise serious doubts about the government in general and Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism's commitment, in particular, to listen and consider honestly and seriously with a view to bringing on board those issues that are central to its various stakeholders. This approach to governance seems contrary to forms of governance more relevant and appropriate to modern organizations in response to modern societal challenges. In today's environment what is encouraged are multi-stakeholder dialogues based on reciprocal stakeholder engagement, rather than on unilateral impulses for organizational and societal control.

Acknowledgement and acceptance of the existence of messy systemic problems can no longer be postponed but must be taken on board in order to draw attention to possibilities for a reciprocal sense-making process that can encompass plural perspectives. The multi-stakeholder perspective grounded on mutual respect and reciprocal stakeholder engagement partly reflects post-modern macro and micro environments in which most organizations find themselves having to negotiate their continued and sustained existence. Advocacy of this multi-stakeholder approach is unambiguously captured in the National Development Agency report (2007: 4) in its assertion that the NDA, recognizing that poverty was multidimensional, partnered with the South African Human Rights Commission and the United Nations Development Programme in hosting the conference precisely because of the two organizations' excellent track records at grassroots level.

Owing to this complex and extremely dynamic environment, multi-stakeholder dialogues are suggested as being probably the best route to be pursued by organizations as they progressively negotiate the path ahead. In the context of this continually evolving complex and dynamic environment, the contention of this study remains that government departments should, among other priorities, ensure that the needs and aspirations of their targeted beneficiaries are brought on board and accommodated in their strategic and

policy articulations. For instance, on the issue of strategy and policy, van der Heijden (1997: 14) observes thus:

Strategy in organizations can be effective only if it is shared among people. This means that it needs to be articulated, discussed and negotiated. As we saw the notion of strategy is fundamentally tied with uncertainty, and therefore involves more than one alternative. In conversation, comparison of the relative value of each view can only lead to a conclusion through a process of reasoning, linking each alternative strategic identity proposed with the shared world view of growth/survival.

Despite this observation by van der Heijden, it is however, noted that more often than not, some politicians and government officials view alternative views and dissent with the conventional view and wisdom propagated by various government departments in a rather negative light. Testimony to this is found in the following assertion by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable, Sydney Mufamadi, in the department's policy statement on the abolition of municipality boundaries (2006) that:

Whatever may be the immediate interest and concerns of the various parties to the debate, the tenor of the debate has brought under spotlight, dissenting normative views about the role of the state in society. One can hardly fail to notice that some of the critics are giving voice to their own worldviews on this matter, albeit concealed as criticism of government's failure to consult "affected" communities. Their agenda projects government as a behemoth whose innate anti-democratic tendencies must be held in check by the civil sphere.

The above citation by Mufamadi suggests a particular conception of what the role of the state in a democratic society should be. It must be acknowledged, though, that the view held by Mufamadi on the role of the State in a democratic society may not necessarily be compatible with the view held by those he appears to be criticizing. The contesting of views is indeed the essence of a democratic society. It is therefore inadequate for the State or State operatives to execute their duties and obligations without or with very little regard to the views of those for whose benefit they purport to be working. The widely held expectation would therefore be for the state to be inclusive in its operations.

In line with the view advocating inclusivity in government operations in order to ensure the broadening and taking on board of views of other stakeholders, an observation is made in the *Witness* (2007) that organizations do not depend for their lives and activities on the actions of people “at the top”. In fact, the statement goes further to assert that organizations carry on their lives in spite of, or indeed at times oblivious of, the actions and words of those who purport to “lead” them. It is therefore critical that the state or its operatives is seen to genuinely and meaningfully engage interested and relevant stakeholders on board if its activities is to give meaning to those targeted for such activities.

Mufamadi’s criticism cited above and his further statement (2006) that the African National Congress (ANC), the government, the national and provincial legislatures, and the elected local government leadership of the country decided to roll back the spatial barriers which stand in the way of the national drive for a more even pattern of socio-economic development borders on extreme arrogance. The most plausible deduction that could be made from such utterances is that because both the ANC and leadership in the three spheres of government had decided, any view contrary to such decision should not be afforded space for consideration. The observation that such statement was arrogant must be located and therefore understood in the context that the decision in question relates to the extent to which ordinary people most likely to be affected by this roll-out were consulted.

Resulting from or related to this kind of mentality, participants in the study fail or at the very least find it difficult either to acknowledge or recognize the existence of other role players potentially poised to add value to its strategy making process. Coupled with this failure is their inability to see potential competition of the department in terms of the service offerings it purports to offer. This failure or inability to adequately comprehend the possibility of the existence of other possibly critical stakeholders to partner or potential competitors for the departments’ service offerings could be attributed to a dangerous mentality that treats the department’s customers as a given. In this view, the

state is regarded as a monopoly in terms of the kind of service provided by the department and therefore viewed as having no competition.

This monopolistic view of the state and its role in society calls for a serious consideration of what the concept of strategy meant in its original sense. Without being contradictory, this study contends that strategy in its original sense was meant to deal with organization-wide and all-encompassing issues in order to enable the organization to reign over its rivals. Such an understanding of strategy denotes some kind of competition. As Erasmus, Van Wyk, and Schenk (1998: 208) point out, strategy relates to the primary concern of the top management of an organization to survive or be successful in an environment of competition.

Having observed the inequitable attention given to the supply and demand sides of the department's strategy making process, this study further notes another limitation to this process. The supply side of the strategy making process, emerging as a central point of attention for most of the respondents, this study contends, was not adequately dealt with in the responses provided. Greater emphasis was given to the external environmental input. Very little, if any, consideration was given to the role of internal resources in the strategy making process. It is possible that the minor role given to employees in the strategy making process is a consequent of this limitation.

This gap, could in a sense help explain the discrepancy between what top managers believe to be an adequate process of employee participation and the contrary view held by some respondents not in the executive that employee involvement is inadequate and sometimes without substance. Consequent to the over-emphasis on the external environmental input at the expense of internal environmental issues, the strategy making process of the department misses the criticality and significance of a major component of its intellectual capital resources. Some commentators and strategy theoreticians have consistently argued that critical to any organization's operational advantage and therefore sustained success, are the organization's unique capabilities and competencies derived, in the main, from organizational resources, particularly human resources.

As Saint-Onge (in Zack, 2003: 224) points out, the speed of change in this knowledge era requires that we place greater importance in the system renewal on the tacit knowledge for the sustainability of the firm. In the same vein, Grant (in Zack, 2003: 133) asserts that if the strategically most important resources of a firm is knowledge, and if knowledge resides in specialized form among individual organizational members, then the essence of organizational capability is the integration of individual's specialized knowledge.

If it is accepted that knowledge forms a requisite basis upon which organizational strategies for contemporary organizations is dependent, paying lip service to the process of knowledge generation and dissemination would be suicidal for the organization. This view is based on a well established and widely accepted fact that knowledge can only be generated and disseminated by and through people interaction. This, by implication, means that every organizational process is people-dependent because organizations by their very nature are inherently people relationships. Any organizational process that seeks either to exclude or alienate people from its very essence and/or existence is, therefore, more likely to yield below standard, unwanted outcomes.

The managerial tendency and practice of involving employees only in issues management believe are worth engaging them in is closely correlated to the idea that management have the capacity and moral duty to think, and for employees to do as they are told. This view is based on the assumption that organizations are homogenous and are therefore not difficult to plan for and control. This notion of homogenous organizations has however, proven to be extremely inadequate and, as such, fails to capture the reality and totality of life in organizations.

In fact, it bases its conclusions on the assumptions grounding the strategic choice approach to organizational strategy. The fact of the matter is that organizations are complex entities with heterogeneous entities in interaction, all acting in terms of their own world-view based on the paths they have travelled and experienced.

This view is also articulated by Stacey (2007: 237) when he asserts that a complex adaptive system consists of a large number of agents, each of which behaves according to

some set of rules. This argument by Stacey, which appears more plausible, can be located within the context of organizations as complex adaptive systems that are open-ended and comprise heterogeneous agents who interact non-linearly over time with one another and their environment, and who are capable of adapting their behaviour based on their experience and interaction with other agents. This form of an organization is theoretically much closer to what is commonly referred to as open systems. According to Stacey, (2003: 130), these organizations are open systems because, they consist of a number of component subsystems that are interrelated and interdependent. Their openness derives from their very existence and interconnectedness to their external environments of which they are a part. Fundamental to this approach to strategy making process is acknowledgement that not all decisions that human beings make are a consequence of logical and rational thinking.

The point is made, and quite convincingly so, that more often than not decisions reached by human beings are influenced as much by their consciousness as they are informed by their unconscious part of their minds. This is even more pronounced in political environments, similar to the one within which the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism is operating. Most of the decisions taken in this environment are influenced more by what is happening in politics than by rational and logical thinking. The view, therefore, that it is possible for managers to stand outside of the daily interactive happenings of their organizations, detached from the emotions and the human affairs of their organizations, able to deliberate and make organizational decisions based on logic and rationality, is surely fallacious. Such proposition undoubtedly places the role of management at the centre of organizational success and sustainability.

As a result of such management-elevating views, it is reasonable to advance the argument that in response to such pressure for managers to adapt and respond to such theoretical propositions, workers, according to Hersey and Blanchard (1994: 96) had to adjust to the management and not the management to the workers. It is undoubtedly this emphasis on employees' having to adjust to management and not the other way around that effectively introduced the concept of management control and hegemony in the employer-employee relationship in a manner never experienced before. It is without a doubt this obsession

with predictability and control over the future that is referred to by Kurtz and Snowden (2003: 462) in the argument that:

There are underlying relationships between cause and effect in human interactions and markets, which are capable of discovery and empirical verification. In consequence, it is possible to produce prescriptive and predictive models and design interventions that allow us to achieve goals. This implies that an understanding of the causal links in past behaviour allows us to define “best practice” for future behaviour. It also implies that there must be a right or ideal way of doing things.

Without any shred of doubt, managers have an indisputably critical and significant role to play in organizations. But to elevate this role and its general obsession with control and predictability above anything else that happens in organizations is taking it rather too far. The fact of the matter remains that managers, like other employees in organizations, are not a homogenous group and therefore are not in any way acting in terms of any form of homogeneity. Rather, like all other individuals within organizations, they play their role in the context of their interaction with other members of management and the employees reporting to them.

During this on-going interaction of many interrelated parties, a complex set of interwoven and intertwined network of behavioural relationships emerges. It is in the context of this complex network of relationships that the role of management ought to be understood.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, and based on the findings of this study, it is worth noting that the concept of strategy is complex, messy and multi-dimensional. Strategic theoretical approaches discussed in this dissertation were meant only for conceptual clarity and simplicity in order to unravel what is rather a complicated process of strategy making. It is also accepted that delineating and categorizing the highly complex process of strategy-making into differentiated strategic approaches such as the strategic choice, learning organization and open systems theoretical perspectives, as discussed in this research, does not positively facilitate a better grasp of what actually happens in organizations in practice.

In fact, such categorization could potentially oversimplify the complex process of strategy making to the extent that grappling with, and adequately grasping the actual workings of organizations in the midst of their pursuit of strategic objectives, is rendered unattainable.

Coupled with this complexity, this study has further shown that in their day-to-day engagement with organizational issues as demonstrated here, by the actions of managers in the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism, managers generally, do not consciously engage or necessarily think in terms of the above-discussed theoretical perspectives. Instead, they engage in these activities on the basis of what they view as important in the context of challenges they deem critical at any point in time. The point can therefore be made that managers engage in strategy making process informed by that which they deem important given their circumstances.

The point made above talks to the issue of decision making process. This process according to what was found in the study could be broadly categorized into what Crous, cited in Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk (1998: 216) describes as an “unavoidable rational process by which a specific plan is chosen to solve a particular problem or save a situation, taking the potential effect on enterprise activities into account, on the one hand, and established enterprise principles, on the other”.

This assertion by Crous, depicts a decision-making process that is purely logical and rational, detached from emotions, values and culture that might potentially constitute part of the organization's internal and environmental contexts. In this context, strategic decision-making takes a more rational and factually thought out process before any strategic option is chosen. This clearly represents a view advanced by strategic choice theorists and proponents. However, other theorists are taking a slightly different view on this matter.

The second categorization manifests itself in the counter-expression which seeks to locate itself in a rather qualitatively different pedestal. It posits and advances the notion that managers, like any member of society, are integral components of the socio-economic, political and cultural contexts in which they operate. Any endeavour at understanding and explaining their existence, behaviour and attitudes must therefore be framed within the appropriate context. The argument is made that managers are also socialized into certain cultural and value systems. Whether consciously or otherwise, these cultural and value systems significantly affect and influence their thinking process. As a result of this, it becomes questionable to talk of a rational and logical decision-making process divorced from environmentally-borne, value-laden influences.

This is probably the notion observed by Erasmus et al (1998: 217) in their assertion that beliefs, value systems and ideologies influence the way managers tend to think about things and will therefore influence how they perceive 'reality' making any rational decision-making inherently subjective and in that sense not entirely rational. In the light of this alternative view of decision-making, it is not unreasonable to advance the argument that strategic decisions opted for by various managers and organizations are part of and inextricably bound up with the social, economic, political and cultural fabric and network of which the organizational decision-makers are an integral part.

The other critical observation made in the study is the possibility that strategy making is not necessarily a logical and rational decision-making engaged upon in the best interests of the organization to benefit those served by it. Such observation is supported by recent

empirical evidence in management studies, particularly around the question of decision-making.

In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that this globally painted, long-standing picture of managers making decisions in the “best interests” of organizations is not necessarily an accurate one. Overwhelming evidence is progressively beginning to demonstrate, more often than not, that decision-making is informed and influenced by forces operating beyond the accessibility of the conscious mind, hence the difficulty to always be in control of the strategic decision making process. The argument is made that such forces are located in the unconscious, a level at which decision-makers have absolutely no control.

This is probably what Stacey (2003: 136) was reiterating in his observation that “more careful reflection, however, suggests that unconscious processes are so deeply embedded in human behaviour that it is only some completely inhuman, and therefore non-existent, decision-making process that can occur in the absence of unconscious processes or with those processes occupying a position of only peripheral importance”. Stacey’s paragraph serves as cautionary advice not to fall into self-constructed delusional trap of believing that strategy is an objective, rational and value-free process deployed only to serve the interests of those identified in strategic documents as targeted beneficiaries.

The fact of the matter remains that as with all other social processes susceptible to contestation by various key groups and stakeholders in organizations and society, decision making including strategic decision-making is riddled with and greatly influenced by human history, emotions, individual and collective past, current and future interests, and aspirations. Given the fact that the purpose of this study is to determine whether the Department of Arts, Culture and Tourism uses its strategy process as a mechanism for enhancing service delivery, or as just a compliance imperative of the regulatory framework, consideration of the above might shed some light on this question and provide a basis for some kind of determination to be made in respect of the question the study seeks to address. However, the importance of locating such determination within its appropriate context cannot be over-emphasized. Arriving at a pure

determination, free from contestation, arising from its perceived value contamination, might not be possible. This is indeed consequent to the nature of the issues the study is meant to deal with which, in all probability, do not lend themselves to 'objective' filtering and mediation, hence their susceptibility to contestation.

However, on the basis of data gathered during the investigation process, particularly in relation to interview responses by various respondents, reasonable inferences and/or deductions, and therefore plausible conclusions may be advanced in this regard. To this end, the study has sought to consider, among others, the following critical issues. Key among these is the extent to which service delivery provided to the department's key stakeholders has improved resulting from its service delivery efforts. Inextricably linked to this, is the extent to which such improvements, if any, can directly be attributable to its strategic planning process. To be able to do this effectively, it is worth considering the following key areas considered by the study.

Among others, is the extent to which the department engages and involves targeted stakeholders in its strategy making processes. Such consideration is meant to establish to what extent does, either the department's engagement or otherwise of its key stakeholders create conditions for the factoring in of their interests among those issues deemed strategic priorities by the department. Conversely, as part of this examination, the study considers the department's strategy making process' emphasis on the incorporation of issues emanating from highly placed authority in the government hierarchy.

Parallel to this issue is the question of whether or not, in its strategy implementation, the department endeavours to focus its service delivery machinery on addressing the expressed concerns and interests of its key stakeholders. Conversely, the interrogation seeks to understand the extent to which the department's strategy implementation continuously responds to the department's reporting obligation to Treasury.

This research further explores whether the department's strategy making approach creates sufficient space and meaningful opportunity for targeted beneficiaries to inform and influence the department's strategy process, thereby pushing back the frontiers of

alienation and marginalization. Conversely, the study examines whether such strategy making process contains the potential to shut down such space and opportunity thereby increasing stakeholder's alienation and marginalization. It is on the basis of these and other inextricably intertwined areas of interest that a conclusion on this study has been made.

A close examination of whether or not service delivery targeting the department's identified stakeholders has improved over the years points to inconclusive evidence. There is however, evidence suggesting that in some areas the government has done reasonably well in terms of its service delivery effort. This observation is supported by Thusi's (2007: 1) assertion that it is great honour and pleasure once again to witness delivery on the promise of the government for a better life for all. She further states, "the Department has invested R2.3 million in this library, this includes construction and material." The view of government successfully delivering on its promises is further articulated in Ndebele's (2008: 11) assertion that:

The project involves a multi-billion rand investment on the Northern side of uThukela River in the Macambini area. The project will be implemented in phases and will create tens of thousands of permanent jobs. This will be the fifth project of its kind in the world based on the concept of a "City within a City".

Similarly Manuel (2008: 2) points out that the "...expansion of the child support grant, which mainly goes to mothers or women as caregivers, and has been the fastest growing part of our social security system, has been highly effective and well-targeted poverty reduction programme, focused also on our Constitutional obligation to give priority to meeting the needs of children." This and other statements cited above indicate some element of positivity and progress in respect of the government's service delivery efforts. However, the picture painted by such statements does not represent the whole picture of developments taking place across the nation, KwaZulu-Natal included.

There is indeed evidence suggesting that instead of going forward, the nation is either standing still or going backward when it comes to service delivery. For instance, on this same issue, the Presidency (2008: 1) in its press statement state:

However, there is still much that needs to be done. Certain groups in our society continue to find themselves in poverty. These groups include for example, women, particularly those who are single parents, children, the youth, the aged and families where one or more family member has a disability. Trends also show that there is growing inequality between the poor and rich members of society, associated with race gender and location.

Similarly, the National Economic Development and Labour Council report's (1999: 1) assertion that high levels of unemployment, low household incomes for the majority of the population and inequitable distribution of public services mean that many households live in poverty. It goes further to argue that "in this context, the delivery of services and infrastructure to South Africa's people remains one of the essential mechanisms for ensuring the eradication of poverty and inequality."

Given the inconclusiveness of the impact of the government's service delivery efforts, on the lives of people, it may be necessary, for the purposes of this study, to locate such efforts within the context of the department's strategy making process contributing to such service delivery efforts. To be able to do this, the study now turns to some of the critical questions raised above.

Among other questions, is the taking on board of issues deemed critical by stakeholders targeted to benefit from the department's strategy-making process. Evidence gathered during the research seems to point to the fact that this is not necessarily an issue of primary importance to the department. The research study could not clearly establish the reason for such neglect. What became clear though was that there was no visible and/or sustainable effort made by the department to solicit the views of its targeted stakeholders in its strategy making process. This observation is supported by the fact that during interviews, most respondents could not show that this is an area of concern to the department.

In fact, the position that was consistently communicated during interviews is that the department considers, primarily, the strategic imperatives contained in the State of the Nation address of the President, the State of the Province address by the Premier, and the budget speech by the MEC for finance, among other important issues. It also emerged in the evidence provided that these supply-side factors of the strategy making process are the ones serving as key performance indicators against which the department assesses its performance.

Such over-emphasis on the supply-side variables at the expense of the demand-side variables render the department's strategy making process one-sided and inadequate. Consequent to this one sided-process sits yet another inadequate system of performance measuring and evaluating based primarily on the supply-side input variables. This is clearly one great limitation inherent in the department's strategy making process observed during the course of this study. Based on its findings, this study could only deduce that the primary reason for such one-sidedness arises from the government's revenue allocating processes supported and reinforced by among others various pieces of legislation and provincial Treasury's interpretation and understanding of their role, responsibilities and accountabilities in the context of such processes. For instance provincial Treasury's (2004: 5) strategic plan states:

The mandate of the department is clearly defined in the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Treasury Regulations which directly influences the financial management operating environment in the public sector. Additional legislation leads to a further understanding of the roles and responsibilities of provincial treasuries in government. Given the oversight role treasury plays in government, changes in legislation have a ripple effect on the mandate of the department.

Evidence gathered in this research appears to suggest that this over-emphasis by the department on the supply-side aspects of its strategy making process, particularly those issues deemed critical by authorities at the upper-level of the government hierarchy, is informed and heavily influenced by Treasury's reporting requirements. As the saying goes "what gets measured gets done", and it seems that the department focuses more on that which 'gets measured' by Treasury, at the expense of the demand-side variable of the

strategy process. Part of this development could be found in the provincial Treasury's strategic plan's (2004: 20) assertion that:

The function of the Budget Management component is process driven and is largely determined by statutory deadlines as stipulated in the PFMA and MFMA. Monthly, quarterly and annual reporting is required on both the provincial and municipal expenditure budgets, and the provincial Adjustments Estimate has to be tabled within a month after the national Adjustments Estimate is tabled. Hence the Budget Management component is compelled in terms of PFMA and MFMA to meet rigorous reporting and financial deadlines.

Such an expectation may not necessarily be a bad thing in terms of attempting to inculcate within government departments a culture of sound governance. However, as is a well-established fact, history is greatly littered with bad and negative consequences and outcomes that were never intended when actions and initiatives that produced them were originally mooted and implemented. It would seem, based on the observation of this study that the situation in the department of Arts, Culture and Tourism represents one of those cases if viewed in the context of what takes priority between satisfying Treasury and its targeted stakeholders.

This situation could be either that the department wants to be seen to focus their delivery efforts on that which it has promised to deliver which, in turn is, more likely to unbundle further opportunities for a bigger slice of the budget when Treasury does its next round of budgetary allocations. Alternatively the department does not consider the filtering of the demand-side input variables of the strategy process, to be of critical necessity. Without a systematic and clear indication of the department's endeavour to filter in and accordingly accommodate demand-side issues into its strategy making process, the glaringly observed outcome is a 'one size fits all' approach. This approach seems deeply embedded in government operations and does not appear to work very well in contemporary business and social contexts.

Despite this observation, many strategy theorists and proponents appear trapped within the 'one size fits all' mode of thinking. As Norman (2004: 5) observes, even today,

management literature sometimes seems obsessed with the tradition of proposing the optimal solutions as “the one best way”. It would, on the basis of the evidence gathered in this study, seem that the supply-side input variables of the department’s strategy process takes precedence over the demand-side input variables. This clearly constitutes a condition not sufficiently justifiable for the department to open up necessary opportunities for the creation of value-add to its service delivery imperative. Even if the department were able to deliver to its maximum potential in terms of those strategic objectives set in its strategy document - but to the extent that such goals might not necessarily be in alignment with that which is in the ‘best interest’ of targeted stakeholders - such delivery might not necessarily be adding the kind of value that matters the most in terms of the department’s constitutional mandate.

In making this observation, this study is guided by the fact that the department’s legislative and constitutional mandate is mainly about delivering value to the various communities and departmental stakeholders located out there in society. The other issue relates to the actual implementation of strategy. As outlined above, the department appears to place greater emphasis on the supply-side variables in its strategy making process.

This, by its very nature, signifies the priorities, and therefore the attention given to such priorities. By implication, this means that the resources at the disposal of the department are utilized to focus on such priorities. As this study has managed to show above, in the main, such priorities do not emanate from the demand-side of the strategy making process. This suggests, at least in theory, that community and other stakeholders’ concerns and interests are not being taken into account. If they are, it seems, not serious enough to warrant prioritization. The operational implication of this remains that, in its execution, such a strategy will not be directed at those issues that matters most to the targeted stakeholders of the department.

This observation is not markedly different from one of the findings in the CASE report in Torres (2000: 123) that in government the dilemma over community involvement is acute

and different. The report goes further to assert that “while some interviewees felt that delivery can be improved by ensuring increased participation, backing and “ownership” by communities, others feel that this only serves to slow the process down” Considering sentiments expressed in the findings of the CASE report and the findings of this study, it seems that the department of Arts, Culture and Tourism falls on the latter category.

In this context, it is reasonable to posit the view that where a department is able to meet its strategic objectives in respect of its capacity to deliver, such delivery, continues to raise doubts as to its capacity to add value where it matters most. It may indeed be possible that in a case where the department manages to deliver according to its strategic plan, such delivery potentially carries the possibility for value creation for those in the government hierarchy. However, to the extent that such strategic delivery is potentially misaligned with the needs and interests of its stakeholders, the possibility of it adding value to these needs and interests is minimal if any at all.

The other question requiring consideration is the strategic approach followed by the department and its potential capacity to create space and opportunity for critical departmental stakeholders to inform and influence the department’s strategy. The study has undoubtedly demonstrated that the major portion of its strategic approach is grounded in the strategic choice perspective with its attributes of deliberateness, prescriptiveness and control. On the other hand, evidence emerging from the study further indicates that the very strategic approach adopted by the department, contains within it elements, of both organizational learning and open-systems approaches. Consequently, any endeavour labeling the department’s strategic approach as belonging to any particular theoretical camp would appear overly-simplistic thus undermining the complex and dynamic truth of its nature. Despite this conclusion, it would not be unreasonable for the purposes of simplicity and conceptual clarity to categorize this approach as mainly strategic choice.

Various elements of the strategy making process discussed above have been, for the purposes of conceptual clarity and simplicity, theoretically ring-fenced and considered to belong to one or other of the strategic theoretical positions, hence the conclusion made. Despite the demonstrated complexity and interconnectedness of the department’s strategy

making process, it is, however, still possible to make reasonable inferences as to the extent to which it manages to create space and opens up opportunities for influence by relevant stakeholders other than those holding positions of authority in the hierarchy of government.

Arising partly from its pre-occupation with devising long-term strategic plans based on mandates and priorities pre-conceived by the ruling elite without due regard for the interests, views and concerns of targeted stakeholders, and the delivery of service offerings, intimately linked with the benefit of such stakeholders, becomes evident. This remains one of the greatest limitations of the strategic approach pursued by the department. As Mintzberg (1994: 270) correctly points out, strategic learning is an inductive process that cannot take place in the absence of detailed, intimate knowledge of the situation. He goes further to assert that “strategic vision depends on an ability to see and to feel; it cannot be developed by people who deal with little more than words and numbers on pieces of paper.”

Similarly Langley (1988) (cited in Mintzberg 1994:271) maintains thus:

Because strategic planning is universally viewed primarily as a means of making strategic decisions, people imagine that a mere formal process can generate a strategy.... But this is the wrong solution to the problem. Strategic planning cannot provide this strategic vision on its own, and is totally useless without it.

It is in view of these and other related issues raised in this study that it is contended here that the strategy making process of the department does not necessarily deliver value-add to those the department exists to serve.

On the basis of the above observation, the study recommends a significant overhaul of the department's strategy making process with a view to ensuring that it responds both theoretically and practically to the changing dynamics of the contemporary world in which the department operates. This could be achieved by, among other things, taking into serious account in its strategy-making process the demand-side of the strategy, particularly those issues that are closest to the heart of the stakeholders the department

seeks to serve. This view is unambiguously articulated in Norman's (2004: 20) argument that the analysis of a company ought to start from the interface between customer and company, and not from the production of the product.

Although this argument by Norman (2004: 20) talks probably more to private enterprises than it does to government institutions, this study contends that such observation is as much relevant to government institutions as it is to private enterprises. Government institutions are now, more than ever before, required to consider the views and interests of those they purport to represent and serve. A further reiteration of this is found in Birchall and Tovstiga's (2005: 44) observation that the relative importance of any single business process is determined by its potential for contributing to the value implied by the firms value proposition.

Given the study's purpose of determining the extent to which the department's strategy planning process enhances its service delivery, it is contended in this study, based on its findings primarily on the issues examined and discussed above that the department's strategy-planning process does not effectively enhance its service delivery capability for the benefit of those that should matter the most to the department. In actual fact, it would seem, given the over-emphasis placed on the need to comply with Treasury's budgeting processes and reporting requisites, that the strategic planning process of the department is conceived and executed firstly as a tool to access funds and secondly as performance measurement tool for reporting purposes to Treasury. Such a conclusion is arrived at fully cognizant that the process is much more complex and messy than its seemingly simplistic derivation.

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