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Sustainability in arts and culture funding : a retrospective exploration of Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre as a case study, 1998-2008.

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I.

INTRODUCTION

Culture starts with the people as creators of themselves and transformers of their environment. Culture is essentially dynamic: in other words, it is both rooted in the people and oriented towards the future.

Pan African Cultural Manifesto, 1969

1.1 BACKGROUND and AIM of STUDY

Democracy in South Africa is almost two decades old. The formulation of the national cultural policy through the *White Paper on Arts, Culture, and Heritage (1996)* enabled the creation of the National Arts Council (NAC), and a range of other mechanisms to support and develop the Arts, Culture, and Heritage (ACH) sector of the country. The kinds of debates within the arts circles continue to focus on the fundamental relationship and tensions between policy and practice, where the cultural policy framework is often criticized for not creating realistic structures from which cultural practitioners can continue to engage in the process of making art. There is an increasing demand by local artists across the different industries to have access to the scarce national resources allocated for the sector. In her chapter titled "Sustainable Systems", Waterman (2009) observes,

> "Many a time attending the theatre, public performance events, Arts forums, and participating in street chatter, one hears of the difficulties of sustainability for Dance organizations." Waterman (2009, 18)

Funding of arts and culture companies has been, for the most part, tasked to national institutions, for example, the NAC and the National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) and/or partnerships between alternate sources such as private companies. Institutions similar to the NAC are struggling with the high demand for funding within their limited resources. As Gaylard (2009) highlights, the NAC is a national funding institute which is constantly overextended. He explains it has created,

> "Unreasonable strain on the funding base of the NAC and frustrate(s) the ability of the Council to make a rational funding decision in the face of a pool of potentially unlimited and undifferentiated demand." Gaylard (2009, 1)

National institutions should not bear the responsibility of funding this "undifferentiated demand" (*ibid*) alone. Although the provision for cultural affairs is under Schedule 4 of the Constitution (1996), which makes both national and provincial structures responsible, research and evaluations in South Africa tend to focus on national structures for funding in the arts, and less analytic attention is directed to the role of provincial government in addressing these complex issues. This is evidenced through the higher volume of primary sources, for example, reports, discussion documents and commissioned evaluations on the NAC, Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), NLDTF, or even Business Arts South Africa (BASA). Yet, the "minimum standards" to guide provinces in facilitating their arts and culture programs is set out in the second principle in the *White Paper(1996).* The mandate for provinces as stated in the "Principles" in Chapter 3 of the *White Paper (1996)* reads,

> "The prime role of national and provincial governments is to develop policies which ensure the survival and development of all art forms and genres."

Further clauses 3 to 6 stipulate that provincial expenditure must ensure that arts and culture activities are promoted, the industry is developed, and that greater access to cultural activities is achieved.

Changes within our cultural environment occur with such subtlety that the cultural policy framework seems rigid, congested, and slow in adopting, as well as adapting, policies that reflect a healthy relationship between policy implementation and delivery of feasible aims. Artists have their expectations about what the policy *is meant to achieve.* However, there is a disjoint between these expectations and the deliverables: *what actually happens*. This study will locate cultural policy within existing public policy debates. This will serve as a springboard to engage with the cultural policy framework in South Africa. According to Miller and Yudice (2002, 1) policy is:

> "Bureaucratic rather than creative or organic: organizations solicit, train, distribute, finance, describe, and reject actors and activities that go under the signs of artist or artwork, through the implementation of policies."

The inherent contradictions and tensions between 'bureaucracy' versus 'creativity' and 'policy process' versus 'artistic process' are another key area that will be unpacked in the subsequent chapter of this study.

This paper aims to review the KwaZulu Natal Department of Arts and Culture (KZNDAC) through the lens of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre (SSDT),* a contemporary dance company based in Durban. This will serve to illustrate how artists[1] and performing arts organizations digested cultural policy on the ground; and how this inevitably

[1] The word artists is used to refer primarily to contemporary dancers, but also broadly to artists in different disciplines

influences the manner in which they become self-sustaining. This study will begin to engage with key issues in achieving sustainability and the capacity that Province can fulfil through their policy.

The complexity in which companies navigate the legislation and particularly the function that provincial government has played in creating access and support through funding is central to understanding the dynamic nature of our policy environment. These issues and processes are easily overlooked, and are important in terms of understanding and shaping South African policy models that reflect our development, transformation, and sustainability within the ACH sector. This study is an attempt to contribute a small portion to the ongoing debates on the issue of sustainability in the sector by questioning the impact of our funding structures on artists, and the implication for performing arts organizations. Effectively, the study is an effort to apply a single case study and add value to the study of dance, and to contribute discussion on local cultural policy debates.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

South Africa's democratic policies developed in a specific historical and political context. Its meta-structure was a democratic transition, which had many inherent overt and covert challenges. Similarly the cultural policy framework also had to undergo transformation so that the proposed policy goals and objectives were implemented.

The transition from Apartheid to a democratic dispensation has been the focus of various political theorists particularly from the mid-1990s[2]. These theorists deal with a transitional perspective that enables us to understand the political circumstances and incentives in post-Apartheid South Africa and the duality in the relationship between policy process and the anticipation that people had of what liberation would deliver. The Arts, Culture and Heritage sector, similar to all sectors, was optimistic about the speed with which transformation would take place. This was evidenced by the disappointments voiced by stakeholders through various formal and informal settings about the pace of transformation. For example, organized forums such as the Performing Arts Network of South Africa (PANSA), provided constant feedback and would engage government through policy response and consultation in an attempt to highlight areas that needed redress.

The complex nature of creating democratic policies *de facto* contrasted with the expectations within various disciplines in the ACH sector. For example, the notion of 'equality' as espoused in the Constitution of 1996 did not directly mean that all sectors would receive equal monies from Treasury. In the ACH sector, contemporary dance, (a multicultural art form) has been developing in post-Apartheid South Africa. As O'Connell (2008, 5) notes, "It appears that the popularity of contemporary dance is growing, it also seems to receive less funding than other genres". In her thesis on contemporary dance choreographers' experience of dance funding in South Africa, O'Connell (2008) observes that geographical location plays a significant role in the manner in which public funds are distributed by the NAC. This affects the manner in

[2] Ginsburg (1996) and Hauss (2003) provide sound critiques of this political transition. Kharam (1997) offers an understanding of the effects of transformation in the arts sector by examining the process of the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG).

which dance companies interpret the funding environment and how they approach their applications for grants. Dance companies are aware of the limited and competitive nature of funding, and often tailor their applications to suit the funding criteria rather than supporting their artistic visions. Essentially, national arts funding institutions are highly pressured with the demand for funding. This study begins by attempting to answer the question: In what way do dance companies feel Province can help alleviate what Waterman (2009, 17) terms the "inherent anxieties of survival"? The key issue in this instance is sustainability.

In his published pamphlet *'Capturing Cultural Value: how culture has become a tool of government policy'* Holden (2004) argues that the public funding of culture has to be redesigned to serve the needs of cultural practitioners to fulfil the expectations of the public for whom it is serving. One of his central critiques is that cultural organizations are focused on justifying the impact of their work and measuring this impact with statistical data as a means to justify public spending within the cultural sector. This focus on economic and social benefits undermines the value and experiences of culture for both cultural practitioners and the public.

The funding criterion need to be examined as these may be creating a discord between policy expectations from the different spheres of government, and the realities and expectations of cultural practitioners. In essence, Holden (2004) advocates that what cultural organizations do, creatively, is important and needs to be recognized within funding structures. In this way, cultural practitioners would feel included in cultural policy decisions and find new ways to identify what is important for their own continued

existence. Holden's critique will serve as the analytic paradigm for interpreting the case study and by extension the lens through which to provide comment on KZNDAC.

Additionally, Hill (1997) asserts that the state structure affects all levels and sectors within public policy, particularly the kinds of policies that are formulated: who gets to create them, who is represented and appointed as well as the criteria set. It is important that policy objectives are clear to measure their effectiveness and enable the public officials tasked with carrying them, to do so effectively. The theoretical framework will provide a means to interpret whether *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* had their own expectations of what provincial policy is mandated to accomplish, which may or may not differ from those set out in the policy.

Cultural policy is a field within public policy studies, and theorists such as Andres *et al (2004)* add essential definitions to the understanding of what cultural policy is and how it has developed and become an increasingly important aspect of public policy[3]. They argue that cultural policy deals not only with administrative and state functions, but also more importantly with the interaction of people with culture. The South African cultural policy environment is meant to achieve sustainability for the sector and encourage development of all arts forms. This study looks at sustainability within contemporary dance in KwaZulu Natal. Section 3 clause 9 of the *White Paper (1996)* explains sustainability as,

[3] Works that deal with the emergent focus on cultural industries as challenging definitions of cultural policy are applicable for understanding the shifts and challenges of cultural policy. For example, see the paper delivered in 2004 by Andy C Pratt titled Cultural *Industries and Public Policy: an Oxymoron?*

> "Sustainability; shall encourage self-sufficiency, sustainability, and viability in the arts and culture (sector)."

For the purposes of this study, sustainability refers to the innate ability of art companies to create and survive. Inherent in this is the assumption that arts organizations have sound management practices and are registered entities that can source and apply for public funds, which would assist with their administrative costs, salaries and productions. When addressing the issue of sustainability, this study will fundamentally explore the experiences of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* to ask whether the arts policy framework in KZN has benefited its contemporary dance constituency. As such, this paper begins to explore a controlled cultural policy perspective of how an arts organization perceives the KZNDAC and the extent to which Province is seen to facilitate an enabling environment for sustaining their artistic endeavours.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This study will focus on *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* as an illustration of how arts companies have managed to survive within the provincial cultural policy framework. This contemporary dance company is based in Durban and has been in existence for over fifteen years and in this time, they have gained local and international recognition. This made them appealing as a case study focus. The *White Paper* was formulated in 1996 and the period of this research is the decade from 1998 to 2008. In this time, *SSDT* received funding from the NAC, the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) and some funding from NLDTF. The manner in which *SSDT* developed artistically through this

support is important when looking at the issue of sustainability in the sector.

Funding affects the ability of arts organizations to achieve sustainability. *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre's* journey can contribute to the discourse around creative development and sustainability of ACH in KwaZulu Natal. Hence, the approach of this paper is a single case study focusing on *SSDT*. Simons (2001) distinguishes between the different types of case study approaches and this research will be an 'instrumental' case study where it is

> "Chosen to explore an issue or research question determined on some other ground that is the case is chosen to gain insight or understanding into something else." Simons (2001, 164)

In this instance, *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* enables an exploration of what it takes to maintain a dance company in the sector, to look at the KZNDAC through their lens and to engage the issue of creating viable cultural policy framework for the arts constituency. The particularity of *SSDT's* journey and how they have developed relates to the policy processes and how these have adapted, or not, in the decade of the study focus. Simply, the *SSDT* is a means to investigate the characteristics of being viable in a particular organization juxtaposed to the broader policy processes of KZNDAC. In addition, it is an attempt to explore *SSDT's* perceptions on the role of provincial government in funding contemporary dance in KwaZulu Natal[4].

It is acknowledged that there is a gap in research and particularly literature (that is not primary sources) that deals with South African cultural policy at provincial level. By

[4] This study does not naively claim to present a comprehensive picture of KZNDAC, as that falls outside the scope and time frame of this research report

focusing on a single case study, this research report limits the policy perspective allowing the possibility to comment on the broader policy issues. Effectively, by 'zooming in' on one Dance Company, their experience can aid in understanding the larger policy structures in the Province by looking at how they respond to policy.

As Hamel *et al* (1993) caution, the limitation of the case study approach is the ability to "validate the general applicability" of one case to other cases. The implication for the research is that in-depth focus on *SSDT* would only be sufficient to make comment on and draw strong conclusions about *SSDT* and to infer about the role of provincial government in arts and culture funding in KZN through their experience. This is an important limitation in that the research has the potential to oversimplify the policy issue because it is case specific, and thus subjective. However limiting, subjectivity is needed to generate knowledge and build academic discourse around policy issues in South Africa. To this effect, it is acknowledged that inherent biases will arise from the case study. Simons (2001, 162) observes that 'eliminating subjectivity is not achievable" as case studies by their nature explore the experiences of a particular unit, in this case *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre,* which is made up of individuals and their lived experiences. *SSDT* is the lens through which the KZN Department of Arts and Culture will be explored.

The research topic, which deals with local cultural policy evaluation, lends itself to qualitative data collection (Neuman, 2000). In this manner, the study focuses on the experiences of *SSDT's* management through interpretative social science methods. Essentially the methodology begins from the premise that changes within the cultural policy environment may not always be tangible or apparent even though shifts have been

occurring in the last seventeen years of the existence of the *White Paper (1996).* These shifts relate to the needs of the dance companies (artistic and financial), which contribute to the ability of their survival. Even though the way each arts company experiences change is relative, it is still a noteworthy contributor to cultural policy processes. This study uses interviews to get a better understanding of how *SSDT* has navigated the cultural policy environment and what issues have affected their ability to continue to create artistic work. The aims of the research are to discover perceptions of KZNDAC from the lived experience of *SSDT.* Furthermore to consider whether the policy environment has evolved with the needs of arts companies as Pillay (1999, 239) states, "policies are the result or outcome of some need".

The strength of this case study is the ability to focus on a single dance company, unpack their particular situation, and examine their *modus operandi* in navigating the cultural policy environment. The management capacity of arts organization has a crucial impact on how that organization relates to and mediates the challenges of maintaining a company. Issues such as how to acquire funds and how projects are planned are some of the issues that affect the running of their organizations. The way in which *SSDT* is managed affects their longevity, and in this regard, the interviews focused on their management style and how it has evolved with the company's needs over the years.

Semi-structured, open interviews with management of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* form the core of the data collection. Although the management of *SSDT* are also dancers, the company has resident dancers who have been with the company for several years, as well as part-time dancers employed on a 'per project basis'. These dancers do not participate in administrative duties nor do they have influence in management decisions.

Subsequently they were excluded from participating in the interviews. The management of *SSDT* is currently a three-person structure with two members managing the company from Durban and the Artistic Director is based in Cape Town.[5] A schedule of interview question gave the structure and general direction for all questions; however, the questions were flexible enough to extract as much information as possible. For example, the conversations were allowed to divert from the structured questions by using follow up questions in instances where the participants needed to be encouraged to elaborate on their information. Because of the geographical challenges with all participants being in different cities, two of the interviews were face-to-face and one was via Skype. Overall, the management team was interested in participating in the interviews often volunteering information about the structure and challenges of the company over the years.

The management team of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* comprises of three members: the Artistic Director, Company Manager, and Head of Community Development. IsiZulu was the dominant interview language for two of the three Managers and English was used as a secondary language with one interview conducted solely in English. The Artistic Director of *SSDT* granted full support of the research, which enabled greater access to data and archival resources of the company. This meant greater ease with cross-referencing interview information through document analysis: annual reports, memos, strategic plans and newspaper sources. This study further relies on strategic plans, mission statements, and international debates on cultural policy to provide perspectives on arguments relating to the issue of sustainability and the importance of funding structures for the survival of arts organizations.

[5] Eric Tshabalala was a founder member of *SSDT* (dancer, choreographer) and part of the management team until 2008. He passed away in 2011.

Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre is an appealing case study because they have history in navigating the cultural policy framework within KwaZulu Natal. This study hopes to make constructive contributions to understanding the relationship between sustainability and cultural policy.

1.4 STRUCTURE of CHAPTERS

This paper is arranged into four Chapters. *Chapter 1* provides a background to this study and grounds the theoretical framework through the *Introduction*. *Chapter 2* focuses attention on issues of public policy and situates cultural policy within this meta-structure. This chapter also contextualizes democratization as a social and political process which defined the operational parameters and policy agenda for South Africa. *Chapter 3* draws attention to the single case study, *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre*, and issues of sustainability for contemporary dancers in the Province. *Chapter 4* provides reflection through concluding remarks for this study and discusses possibilities or opportunities that may exist for our cultural policy framework.

II.

CONTEXTUALIZING CULTURAL POLICY

The policy process involves not simply the pursuit of shared goals but the more difficult task of constructing a basis for collective action among participants who may have quite diverse views on the nature of the task

Hal Colebatch

2.1. CONTEXTUALIZING POLICY

This chapter will begin by engaging with public policy as a means to contextualize the meta-structure within which cultural policy issues exist. The aim here is to provide background by highlighting the fundamental principles of cultural policy. The historical developments that have taken place over the last century (shifts from governance studies to public administration and then public policy), and the different schools of public policy (pluralists, structuralists, corporatists and others), are not critical in understanding the overarching principles of public policy. As such, this study provides a general overview of the central issues in policy. Thereafter, the process of transitioning from an Apartheid regime into democracy will be explored broadly as democratization set the tone for South Africa's cultural policy framework.

Contributions by prominent public policy theorists primarily define policy as a means by which governments organize society and create guidelines and resources to manage the different sections of public society [Colebatch (2002), Dunn (2004), Hill (1997), Hughes

(2003), Parsons (1995), and others]. Public policy is about the manner in which diverse aspects of society are structured, how the boundaries are set and who is tasked to ensure that these decisions are implemented accordingly. Pollitt *et al* (2009) hold a different perspective by asserting that it is easier to define what policy is not, rather than locate specific definitions of what it is and what it is meant to achieve. They argue that one should not assume that policy outcomes match what the policy is intended to achieve. Policy makers do not all have consensus on how policy should be implemented and as they stipulate, policies then "come out as uneasy compromises as often as they do as clear visions" Pollitt *et al* (2009, 3). However, whether defining policy by what it is or not, what is common is that regardless of the policy intentions, public policies exist in the public domain, and they are steered with government resources.

Public policies exist in society and they can become "vehicles for contesting the existing order or asserting a right to participate" Dye (2002, 2). In this manner, policies are not cemented in a specific period as they are active and can change or be used to redefine other existing policies. As long as societal issues need to be structured and resourced by governments, policies intrinsically live, and enable alternate means of transforming society.

Since policies are written, there can be the assumption that they are static and used only as a reference. However, policies change as the needs of those it is meant to serve change. This is an integral part of policy in that it is not inert; policy changes as it is propelled by the lived realities of those it benefits. This makes policies relevant in the present and policies inherently possess a flexibility that laws do not [Parsons (1994), Hill (1997a), and Dye (2002)]. Unlike law, policies have the power to be more speedily

effective as they are not weighed down by jurisprudence. This also enables them to be potentially ambiguous and vague. The questions that arise regarding policy have to do with ways to maximise their relevance in contemporary society, their effectiveness and ability to deal with issues *de facto*.

Colebatch (2002) discusses two policy perspectives: the vertical and horizontal perspective. Both these highlight an important issue that policy is not static; that the more people engage with policy, the more likely that policy will be robust. The vertical perspective assumes that hierarchical structures determine the course of policy and that resources are utilized according to commands trickling down from the highest ranks. The power to make decisions remains at the top and there is distant engagement with policy matters at the bottom. Colebatch (2002, 53) explains that "implementation means that authorized decisions at the top coincide exactly in outcomes at the bottom: it is a question of securing compliance". In the horizontal perspective, policy is seen as a process influenced by both internal and external factors. This perspective takes into consideration that people's needs and agendas can shift the nature of policy and over time influence how it is implemented. The horizontal dimension is shaped by a unified course of action. The implication for public policy is that governments are no longer seen as the dominant actors in policy.

> "Citizen participation is the cornerstone of the democratic political process. The case for democracy derives its basic normative rationale from the principle that government decisions should reflect the consent of the governed. Citizens in a democracy have the right – even obligation – to participate meaningfully in public decision-making and to be informed about the bases of government policies." Fischer (2003, 205)

Participation by the public or stakeholders with varying interests can offer alternate perspectives on policy issues that arise and this as Fischer (2003) argues, contributes to a more accurate assessment of what is required for policy. Governments then become the custodians of policy providing the infrastructure and means for policy to evolve. Citizens should not be excluded from participating in policy processes; however, their involvement cannot derail the policy trajectory. Fisher (2003) cautions that the involvement of the public means that the policy process is "imperfect" and hence the level of input by society should not be inflated. This appears to be a limitation on the effectiveness of the public as they are confined within bureaucratic parameters. Necessarily governments set the bureaucratic framework within which policies exist. This indicates the need for democratic states to balance between public input and the continuation of the policy process.

Policy practice has 'intended' and 'unintended' outcomes. When policy is created, it is hoped that it will achieve certain goals and follow a reasonably predictable course. Yet, the reality is that the ever-changing nature of policy often means that there are unanticipated outcomes that appear because policies are multifaceted and include multiple actors such as analysts, researchers, lobbyists, consultants and legislators. The policy process is characterised by different stakeholders all of whom have legitimate interests in how the policy is created, implemented, and evaluated. The inherent challenge of policy is for this "collective action" to reach consensus so that policy decisions are not delayed [Fisher (2003), Hill (1997a)]. Each delay in the process has accumulative effect on the overall policy target and deadlines.

In democratic states, governments do not single-handedly make policy decisions, unless it threatens national security and requires immediate action. They engage in widespread consultations, which makes it challenging to reach "collective" agreement as all policy actors need to be heard. This is both the benefits and challenge of policy. Arguably, the more people involved, the harder it is to reach consensus. When policy issues are pressing or need immediate attention, action can be delayed or the policies may be vague and seemingly contradictory because they need to factor in all the input and suggestions from the "collective". Cloete *et al (*2000, 40) clearly articulate this issue when they emphasize that public policy scholars are becoming increasingly aware of the many decision-makers engaged and that policy decisions are "frequently the outcome of negotiations between networks of policy stakeholders in different policy communities" Cloete *et al* (2000, 43). This dynamism is a defining feature of policy in that policy is not static because it is born out of negotiations.

People are continuous contributors to the dynamic nature of policy whether it is internal workings of civil servants and elected officials or external input from interested stakeholders. Seminal contribution by Lipsky (2010) highlights that in contemporary politics civil servants also have greater independence in carrying out the aims of policy. This implies that although there is protocol, bureaucrats have a higher probability to influence the workings of policy. In 1980, Lipsky introduced the idea that though there are hierarchical structures within governments, "street-level bureaucrats" interact with policies on a daily basis and thus have greater reach in shaping how the public encounters policy. His point was that civil servants exercise incredible discretion and they are the first point of contact for society when engaging with public programs. This places responsibility on 'street-level bureaucrats' to follow protocol and deliver on mandates as

the quality of service they render affects the public's relationship to that policy, as well as how government is perceived.

> "Decisions made by overburdened workers translate into ad-hoc policy adaptations that impact peoples' lives and opportunity. (T)he cumulative effect of their decisions can reroute the intended direction of policy." Lipsky (2010, vii)

The point is that internal to the policy process are the "discretions" made by civil servants who are key actors and part of the menagerie that shapes policy. The manner in which they manage policy, resolve structural challenges and the systems they choose to facilitate their tasks, affects the public. This is fundamentally a governance issue. The states' obligation is to oversee and ensure that policies remain within legitimate legal parameters through the employ of bureaucrats. However, it is not only public officials who are responsible for policies; different stakeholders have the obligation to participate directly or indirectly in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Essentially, because policies "shape public life", the public explicitly or implicitly interacts daily with decisions made by 'street-level bureaucrats' Colebatch (2002).

Society is continuously engaging with public policies. The more removed citizens are from policy programs, the more they are likely to see policy as a purely bureaucratic and exclusionary course. It is unrealistic to expect governments to prevent society from reacting openly or privately to policies. Similarly, government cannot monitor the day-to-day management of policy and hence they rely on elected officials. Government drives public policy; however, public officials influence policy outcomes. Policies change because people interact with them, apply or reject what is relevant to their contexts.

2.2 CULTURAL POLICY

Cultural policy is a subset of public policy, in the same way that there are different policies that exist to guide each public sector; what Colebatch (2002) terms "adjectival policy". These are, for example, health, education, and environmental policies. All these are subsets of public policies. Cultural policy is also about, though not limited to, the manner in which cultural matters are structured, shaped, and regulated by government. It is difficult to separate management theory from cultural policy, as the sector is also designed so that leadership, financial management, strategy and planning are key elements of the organizational make-up of the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector.

Cultural policy in the democratic South Africa is in its infant stage. The cultural policy framework is based on the *White Paper (1996)* which came out of the recommendations of the *Arts and Culture Task Group* (*ACTAG)* in 1995 to investigate the parameters within which arts and culture policy would be made. These recommendations then enabled the formulation of the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage* in 1996. White Papers come from a process that begins with collating suggestions into a discussion document open for public comment, which is called a Green Paper. For instance, in South Africa the ACTAG recommendations were the Green Paper document tabled from the recommendations of all the disciplines in the ACH sector. Green Papers are placed under review and due procedure of being refined through government and civic contributions, which results in a White Paper. Through parliamentary procedure, White Papers that receive majority approval can become Bills. Hegemonic political

ideology shapes the drafting of White Papers, as they are governments' official policy (Venter *et al*, 2006). The *White Paper* (1996) has provided the parameters within which artistic and cultural affairs are to be implemented. The continuously evolving nature of culture requires constant evaluation as it affects cultural policy-making and advocacy (Hogwood *et al*, 1981). It affects the development of the cultural sector, that is, the way in which culture is seen as evolving determines the kinds of policy frameworks that need to be implemented.

Culture is linked to policy in terms of the way that "aesthetics challenge the mainstream" McGuigan (1996, 50). Aesthetic taste, such as the preference for art, is subjective. What McGuigan (1996) refers to here is the issues of 'power' in government systems as espoused by Foucault[6]. Foucault sees power as pervasive and unstructured. The implication for policy is that citizens who participate more actively in social and cultural matters have more information (power) at their disposal and hence a better chance to shape the course of policy. Swartz (1997) offers a different understanding of power through Bourdieu[7]. Bourdieu sees power as being constructed through social and cultural norms. Daily actions become habits and long-term patterns ingrained into society. In addition, power is utilized to affect social change. What this implies for cultural policy is that when artists unite and learn to be more actively involved in the policy process they develop healthy means of interacting with cultural policies. The amalgamated efforts

[6] McGuigan's central argument uses Foucauldian ideas on "Culture and Governmentality" which are in the collection of letters in *College de France*. Foucault discusses a meeting point between critical analysis and policy orientation where the notion of state power extends to how society is managed and how knowledge is regulated or filtered.

[7] Swartz argues that in "Habitus" Bourdieu makes the point that people unconsciously decide what it possible and impossible for their contexts and respond to challenges with this knowledge. Swartz explains this as "not all worlds are equally available to everyone". This implies that power as a social construct is different to how individuals internalize and utilize their power of agency.

have greater power than each artist or organization approaching it alone, because the power of policies lies in being protected with 'red tape'. Simultaneously, that power is limited because policies can be challenged and then altered, as policies are a tool of public administration.

Cultural policy is usually associated with public administration of cultural and artistic affairs with public funding of the arts being the most notable cultural policy regulation. The implication for this study is that one may then assume that central to public discourse within the sector is an ongoing conversation about how the ACH sector sustains itself with the limited resources. It is common to associate cultural policy with administrative functions, especially to do with public administration of funds. It is an issue that seems to bear weight on the continued survival of Arts and Culture because it is assumed that cultural policies are about how monies are distributed and who benefits from that aid.

Spending of public coffers has to be monitored, justified, and accounted for. These measures are to ensure accountability and transparency that in turn minimize corruption and unfair patronage. The cultural sector is no exception. Though it seems burdensome for artist to keep accounting for their spending, it is necessary, and artists have a responsibility to ensure that they seek assistance in fulfilling that criterion even if it is overwhelming. However, more artistic-friendly ways of accounting for public funds can be explored so that the financial management of arts companies does not discourage artists from making art.

This issue is quite evident in the way in which a number of artists feel intimidated and isolated from funding processes, as evidenced in O'Connell (2008) research into funding

of contemporary dance in South Africa. Artists are familiar with public funding institutions that can assist them to get funds for their projects, however, in the process of applying for these grants, their artistic visions are compromised in their efforts ensure that their chances of acquiring funding is increased. For example, professional contemporary dance companies in KZN felt pressure to have training programs in townships or with disadvantaged communities as that seemed to be a favourable quality with funders. The perception is that development is a national policy mandate and companies that comply attract donors. In this way, the art was being negotiated around funding assumptions.

Public funds need be accounted for and this is a standard requirement that is aimed at preventing corruption. In his message in the *White Paper (1996)*, Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Dr Ben Ngubane, acknowledges the predicament of accounting for public funds. It reads as follows,

> "All funding from the public purse carries certain obligations with it and these obligations of accountability must be applied with due responsibility and creativity."

Newcomers in the sector often feel this structure of justification is set against them as artists, because it asks them to quantify their artistic worth against measurables that seem ill fit for creative processes. In his introduction, Holden (2004) offers a solution by asking that we re-look at the assumptions underlying the public funding of culture. That is, instead of looking at existing institutional models, we re-examine the language used as that determines the values used in funding applications.

Perceptions of cultural policy carry currency in how they are used to explain the disillusionment and frustration artists feel with funding processes. Ideally, public funding of arts companies should be allocated based on merit and the mission statement of an organization. Funders would ideally support this rather than impose their own idea of what cultural organizations should be doing to gain access to public resources. In this way, cultural organizations would feel a greater sense of confidence in a sector that values culture, rather than trying to defend why art and culture is an integral part of society and why it deserves to be publicly funded. Cultural practitioners would preferably go about the business of producing art rather than defending it. Furthermore, funders would shift their focus from project-based funding to long-term funding where sustainability is attainable.

What this means is that formulating, implementing or contesting cultural policy requires an understanding of both creative and artistic processes along with a grasp of current socio-political systems. This means that to understand issues around sustainability in the ACH sector one needs knowledge of the creative culture, apply management principles as well as the status quo of public systems [Bennett (2000), Holden (2004), Miller *et al* (2002), Rentscheller (2002), Throsby (2010)].

Bereson (2004) offers an alternate theoretical perspective to the above policy-centred position. She cautions against the overemphasis on the policy process. She asserts that since artists 'outlast' bureaucracy they should be the starting point when dealing with cultural matters. Simply, without artists, there is no cultural sector to manage and thus the artist, not policy, should be the core consideration. For example, when artists need costumes or rehearsal space it should be as important as in any profession that requires

materials as part of executing their expertise. In this way Bereson (*2004*), similar to the canon of cultural policy theorists, encourages cultural policy to serve its artists and make the provisions for that art to thrive. Policies are not the same as works of art. Art has the power to be remembered over time increasing its worth and value in society. Policies change often and this does not increase their value because their purpose is functional. Hence, Bereson (2004) advocates for art to be the central focus because it 'outlasts' systems of administration.

Holden (2004) on the other hand acknowledges people as important players in determining the worth of culture in funding frameworks. His reoccurring argument is that there is a need to "see the source of legitimacy for public funding as being the public itself". His position is that the value of culture cannot be seen in conservative ways defined by policy experts who use statistics to measure its worth.

> "Cultural value challenges policy makers, cultural organizations and practitioners to adopt a new concordat between funders, funded and the public. Cultural Value gains legitimacy from public support and from the exercise of professional expertise; each part of the settlement is given due weight within an overarching framework that seeks to maximize public good and to promote the vitality of culture." Holden (2004, 11)

His argument is that the public is not excluded from determining what it sees as essential in cultural production. What this implies is that cultural policy would need to factor in the public's preferences and support of art as a way of legitimizing the creative process. For example, public funds would be distributed to artistic work where there is sufficient public engagement with that work. This presents an inherent struggle for artists to predict audience attendance and preferences, which would be an exercise in accounting.

Ironically, the very basis of Holden's critique is that quantifying the arts is counterproductive to the agenda of making art. This is especially true of new productions where audience attendance does not determine the success of a production[8]. There needs to be room for artists to experiment within their disciplines without the burden of audience quotas. This would mean that "cultural value" would recognize that the public's response and experience of culture is just as important as justifying the amounts that need to be spent in creating artistic products. In this regard, arts and culture would be seen as an essential part of society, as opposed to its subsidiary status.

Determining what defines sufficient public engagement is subjective and with unlimited criterion. The interesting point is that the relationship is not a binary one between artists and civil servants; it is also about the public, who consume Arts and Culture. This supports the earlier statement that the challenge of the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector is getting civil servants who understand the sector from both an institutional and creative level because the civil servant signs off public funds to artists and cultural practitioners. Engaging with issues affecting cultural policy is a complex task that requires consistent effort and redrafting.

Nonetheless, Holden's emphasis on the 'public' in creating cultural value is really only relevant if the artwork or institution relies on them. Not all artists produce work for major public consumption. For some, their target market is small and does not mean they are less deserving of public funds if they do not meet the demographic requirements of

[8] It is common for new work to play to a handful of people and after some years, that dance performance or theatre production becomes part of the cultural landscape. Greg Coezee's *White Men with Weapons* premièred in 1998 to an audience of less than 10 people, and to date it is toured extensively and bears relevance nationally and abroad. One can cautiously assume that there are dance works that also started on the fringes as experimental pieces without the certainty of success, but became noteworthy performances. Public attendance does not mean *inter alia* achievement.

being ‘public’ enough. Holden’s (2004) notion also puts pressure on artists to cater to the needs/tastes of the public. This tripartite focus (bureaucracy, artistic, public) makes managing cultural policy an even more complex task. Artists are placed under tremendous pressure to achieve ‘greater audience development and greater income security” Rentscheller (2002, 3). Rentscheller (2002) further cautions that critics may claim that income should come from audiences, however, artists or organizations have a different income structure that often relies on sponsorship, public funds as well as audience attendance.

The challenge of Holden’s (2004) notion of ‘cultural value’ is that the public (audience) is the centre of the debate, and this adds another variable to the sum total of pressure artists must address. For example, artists are under pressure to honour their vision and be true to the creative process; apply integrity in their performance; be economical with their budgets; be accommodating with funders amongst other things. Placing the public in the centre implies pleasing the public or catering to their needs/tastes in the same way that artists attend to the fiscal responsibilities that come with public grants. It is yet another dimension that distracts artists from their creative process. This is not to say that artists are incapable of handling this added pressure. The point is that it is unnecessary to overburden artists who are already pressured to juggle many parts.

Similar to Bereson (2004), Holden asks for a reinterpretation of the value of culture so that the intangible benefits that inspire, challenge and motivate audiences are given due diligence and elevation. For these theorists, art, and the public who consumes it, are important actors. Unlike Bereson (2004), Holden's (2004) idea of making people central to policy seems to suggest that artists should compromise their art whereas Bereson

(2004) advocates for art to move to the centre of discourse. In his book on "Reframing public policy", Fischer (2003) offers a contesting position: he cautions that the public's role in matters of policy should not be exaggerated, as regulations and laws curtail their influence in the public domain.

Bereson (2004), Holden (2004) and Fischer (2003) are engaging in political and philosophical questions about the boundaries between control (state) and liberties (artists/public). This raises questions about where individual (artist) power begins and ends, and when the state surrenders or regains control of public life. These are more complex in democracies because in autocratic societies the state generally has autonomy to make decisions. In the same way that policies are dynamic, by extension it can be assumed that the relationship between the state, culture and the public is unfixed; and the role of people and state is malleable. For Andres *et al* (2004) there is 'interdependence' between the state, culture and people where each is interchangeably dependent on the other.

This paper is looking at cultural policy from the 'bottom up' through the lens of one contemporary dance company. Thus, the issue of "cultural value" will not be discussed from the vantage point of cultural bureaucrats, but rather how members of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* (SSDT) perceive them. For example, through qualitative observation, it would need to be ascertained what relationship the company has with public funding institutions. It is naïve to disassociate the administrative functioning of managing policy from the mandate to establish creative environment where arts and culture thrives.

> "The rhetoric associated with cultural policy sees the arts as industries, which can be classified and output measured. This change in focus has not occurred without tension in the cultural policy community between increased focus on economic values over intrinsic artistic values." Rentscheller (2002, 27)

Rentscheller (2002) and Holden (2004) discuss the importance of harnessing cultural production on its intrinsic value**.** Culture is often valued for its social impact and economic benefit rather than for the artistic and creative value. Moreover, they acknowledge that the difficulty with intrinsic value is that the cultural experience is assumed to be homogeneous. Therefore, trying to define the various emotional and intellectual experiences that audiences undergo cannot be prescribed because they are subjective. This subjectivity is seldom reflected in the way cultural policy is implemented.

The concept of cultural policy, the public and what constitutes art are not fixed. Cultural policy frameworks are constantly evolving and requiring evaluation, the public has varying tastes and preferences and in art, creativity thrives on fresh ideas. Knowing that the cultural policy trajectory is not linear means that issues of sustainability cannot be pinned down to any specific cultural, administrative tasks or audience development. The implication for sustainability is that all these unfixed terms need to be relevant and under continuous evaluation where each feeds into and inspires the other. This would mean that Provincial governments would engage their Arts and Culture practitioners, be open to suggestions and feedback from their constituencies, and establish a horizontal relationship of reciprocity that grows the sector as a whole. Although theoretically it is a sound argument, the reality is that policies are purposefully vague, to cover as many eventualities as possible. If cultural policy was framed to cater for subjective experience,

it would need large human and capital resources, and the sector is, and has always been, competing for the limited resources. The challenge of managing cultural policy is getting public officials who understand that cultural production is about the creative process first, and then balancing that with their need to follow protocol.

2.3 DEMOCRATIZATION: The effects on Arts and Culture

In the interest of keeping a general overview of the political transition, an in-depth critical analysis of transitional policies is not within the scope of the research. Instead, an overview of the impact of the political transition on cultural policymaking will be explored. As such, the potential or limitations of democratization shall not be addressed, nor will this paper engage in the dichotomy of structuralist or functionalist literature. Rather, it will serve to continue to demonstrate that the issues within the cultural sector took place amidst a broader background of transformation and that the South African cultural policy framework was not created in isolation, but in a context that aimed for reform and promotion of the ideals of equality. When the *White Paper (1996)* was formulated, Apartheid had been the hegemonic discourse and the new South Africa was confronted with changing this paradigm.

> "Apartheid is much more than a system of intense racial discrimination. (I)t is a system of economic, social and political relations designed to produce cheap and controlled black labour, and so generate high rates of profit. It serves both the dominant capitalist classes (and) certain other priviledged classes." Davies *et al* (1998, 2)

Political economists primarily focus on the political and economic impact of Apartheid and how black oppression served minority white interests while simultaneously maintaining their disenfranchisement. The legislative exclusion of the black majority had an impact far greater than limiting social and economic progress. It permeated into the psyche of people and this is one of the reasons why South Africa's liberation was watched with keen interest worldwide as the resilience of the majority, and willingness to compromise ensured that unlike other liberation processes, South Africa experienced a relatively peaceful political transition into democracy.[9] Ginsburg (1996) saw the transition as akin to a post-authoritarian regime where Apartheid rule was likened to the repressive systems commonly found in military regimes. The way in which reconciliation was finalized, transformed the legislation and made it constitutionally inclusive of all peoples of the country. Thus, each sector underwent policy reform. South African transition did not follow a violent path, it was a relatively smooth transition compared to the anarchy that has often typified political transitions and regime change.

> "South Africa was seen to provide the evidence for what reasonable, compromising, and adept leadership could generate. (M)uch of the coverage in the popular media overly simplified a transition rich and complex in character. Much of the scholarly writing and propaganda material of political organizations attempted to pigeon-hole the transition into one or the other historical trend." Habib (1995, 50)

The process of democratization was exemplary in merging racially segregated societies and opposing political and economic ideologies. Transition theorists often believe that

[9] Habib (1995) says that transition can arise as a process of 1) decolonization: retreat of ruling colonial power, 2) neoliberalism: the economy is driven by foreign capital and 3) post-authoritarian rule: revolution sparks change of military regime.

political transition is not the result of fear of a revolution or anarchy, but that it is reached when contesting sides engage in 'elite pacting' (Bond 2000). This is when two opposing sides negotiate a settlement that best favours their ideas, and create interim structures to facilitate this transition. Theorists frequently term the constitutional reforms, which lead to democracy in South Africa, as a 'negotiated settlement' [Friedman (1993), Bond (2000), Spitz & Chaskalson (2000) and others]. Elite pacts pave the way for democracy *de jure* before people can exercise their liberty to vote through elections. In South Africa, the transition from the Convention of a Democratic South Africa (*CODESA) 1* (1991) and *CODESA 2 (1992)*[10] to the Reconstruction and Development Program (*RDP)*[11] can be seen as examples where policy was newly formulated and the country was trying to come to terms with the realities of democracy. For example, the CODESA talks reached boiling point between the Nationalist Parties (oppressors who were proposed a five year plan that would continue their political dominance) and Black leaders (united from different political parties seeking the permanent eradication of Apartheid politics). A negotiated settlement was reached which paved the way for South Africa's transition.

In the end, democracy meant comprising and accommodating contesting viewpoints and reaching consensus on high priority issues. The criticism against these elite pacts is that democracy is based on whatever is negotiated, and this is determined by the subject position of negotiators and the context of the settlement (Maguire, 1999). The ramification for policy is that it too is moulded around the provisions of a negotiated

[10] Political parties that opposed Apartheid united at the CODESA negotiations in efforts to discuss a resolution that would facilitate democracy and the drafting a new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

[11] The RDP was a key national policy in drafting of the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996)* and guiding reform in the ACH sector. Issues of redress, access and equitable redistribution of resources in urban and rural areas were key policy aims of RDP.

settlement. What this means is that from the outset, policy does not arise from a neutral place, and it is born out of a mediated political space. Knowing that policies are not neutral enables us to understand that they are written with a certain level of bias and inclination to favour one position above another.

The canon in transition theory typically focuses on the classical political science areas of politics and the economy. This is either through regime structure, labour movements or social impacts. In South Africa, it is common to hear public commentary criticizing the façade of democracy as maintaining white fiscal dominance and the elevation of a small black *nouveau riche* class. The effects of transition on culture are alluded to or one has to make inferences through cross-referencing political and economic transformations. Bond's (2000) assessment of the transition investigates whether the majority of South Africans participated and meaningfully benefit from it. Essentially, democratization is typically articulated from a political or economic point of view, where certain sections of society are prioritized above others. For example, the issue of redressing housing, employment, and health disparities inherited from Apartheid is seen as urgent compared to artistic and recreational reform. In developed countries, the arts are viewed as important contributors in creating a healthy and balanced society. This prioritizing bears weight when looking at how the different sectors can create sustainability as national priorities will always take precedence.

The challenge for sustaining Arts and Culture is that many compete for a limited resource pool. When cultural affairs are seen as less important than other sectors such as welfare and security, one could argue the ACH sector was not well favoured in the elite pacting. Ironically, even within the cultural sector certain European classic arts such as ballet and

the Opera held elevated status over South African classical art forms. Part of the transformation of the sector meant an inclusion of historically marginalized art forms into the mainstream as the focus of redress. South Africa's transition from Apartheid into democracy was multifarious. It not only required a political transition guided by policy reform, but also cultural, ideological, and psychological adjustments. What Wolpe (1995, p88) calls a "revolution of the social order".

Culture is an integral part of any society, and similarly, the ACH sector experienced a remodelling of its policies, structural reform through organizational improvements and an overhaul of the *modus operandi* so that the sector reflected democratic ideals. Zegeye *et al* (1998) explain how this impetus came through the recommendations of the *Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG)*, which was pre-empted by the *National Arts Initiative* (*NAI*) and the *National Arts Coalition* in 1991 and 1993 respectively, to lobby for new policies. Twenty-three people from *ACTAG* represented all the art disciplines and their recommendations for policy were drafted into the *White Paper* in 1996, which was to be the national cultural policy framework of a democratic South Africa.

The *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage* recommendations, Act no. 56 of 1997 of parliament created the *National Arts Council (NAC)*, which would distribute public grants to all disciplines throughout the country. The *White Paper (1996)* recommended that the Performing Arts Councils be transformed into Playhouses (Chapter 4, Clause 11-13). It also provided the framework on how provincial government would administer the Arts and Culture sector (Chapter 3, Clause 5-6).

Prior to 1996, the PACs were production houses and recipients of large proportion of arts funding. Similar to other institutions at the time, they served the dominant discourse of advancing white supremacy under Apartheid. Each of the four provinces had their own PACs: the Cape Performing Arts Council (CAPAC), Performing Arts Council of Orange Free State (PACOFS), Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT) and the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC). The consultative nature of the ACTAG process affected the national landscape of cultural policy and a change in the administration of the arts and culture sector.

Transformation of the sector did not occur with anticipated speed. There were administrative delays, crises in human resource management and unforeseen challenges that typify a change of systems. Zegeye *et al* (1998) argue that the slow process of setting up the governmental machinery to manage the new cultural policy mandate diluted the enthusiasm and momentum of the ACTAG process. The NAC was to absorb the funding shortfall created through transforming the PACs and then affiliated companies would gradually diversify their funding pool. The NAC and provincial governments were tasked with a responsibility to manage this transformation without the resources or budget to see it through. Once again, the implication is that provincial government would experience undue pressure, and the cultural sector would experience increased frustration at having a dysfunctional provincial government. Zegeye *et al* (1998) observe:

> "(T)he theory of the *White Paper* - that orchestras, ballet and opera companies could apply to the National Arts Council and its provincial equivalents like any other creative project - is not matched by the reality characterised by an absence of such mechanisms and a dire lack of funding."

According to the above statement, the NAC was, from the outset, overburdened with funding applications that exceeded their budgets. This infers that unless they were able to catch up the disparity, many artists and companies would be disappointed at not having their funding needs met. The effects of that is disillusionment and impatience with government systems. This frustration trickles down to the artists who then feel that 'red tape' stands in the way of the sector running smoothly. Yet, this is one of the realities of policy implementation: policies operate within jurisdiction; they should be transparent and simultaneously deliver on the needs of the people. Dialogue between the custodians of policy and the practitioners on the ground can foster greater sympathy for reciprocated understanding of each other's pressures and realities, ultimately benefiting the sector as a whole.

The responsibility for the ACH sector does not rest with Department of Arts and Culture or with the National Arts Council. In post-Apartheid South Africa, provincial government has constitutionally derived powers and responsibilities to fulfil their mandates as stipulated in the *White Paper* (1996). In his discussion of provincial government, Besdziek (2006) makes important observations that set the landscape for a discussion on sustainability from the perspective of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre*. Under Schedule 4 of the Constitution[12], Provinces are mandated to implement regional policy and they have the power to develop and influence it. However, through a process of review, national government can intervene on provincial matters where the Province is unable to achieve its responsibilities.

[12] The joint function of national and provincial legislature that deals with cultural matters falls under Schedule 4 of the Constitution.

> "In exercising the legislative powers that are accorded it by the Constitution, a provincial legislature may consider, amend, reject or pass any Bill before it. It may also initiate or prepare legislation." Besdziek (2006, 108)

This is crucial information as it indicates that provinces have the power to address the needs of its constituents, and to propose Bills before the Legislature. Thus, should the ACH sector unify and be organized behind a change of policy; Province can follow due process; make recommendations to their provincial departments and address the issues raised. Provinces are not impotent in the political landscape as their functions are guided by the Constitution of 1996. Citizens have the right to present suggestions as well as engage provincial government in issues that affect them[13]. This assumes that due policy process has to be followed, and as discussed earlier, the machinations of government administration do not always work in tandem with peoples' expectations. The public policy machine is not static, it needs constant feedback to remain relevant, and yet protocol makes its operations slow. The questions that would need further investigation are: How often has the ACH sector exercised this right? Are they aware it exists? Have companies in the Province amalgamated in their need to have certain policy directives changed or are they disgruntled voices screaming foul at the slow government machine?

Besdziek (2006) makes a fundamental caution regarding the responsibility of legislative power; that it should be accessible to all people and not only dominated by stakeholders with the capacity and resources to access and interpret its processes. Legislation should always remain available and inclusive of the broader public through use of the vernacular. This would enable civil society to actively engage with policy without

[13] Section 115(d) of the Constitutions states, "A provincial legislature or any of its committees may receive petitions, representations or submissions from any interested persons or institutions".

feeling intimidated by the jargon, and thus hopefully feel included and encouraged to participate in issues that affect them. The relevance is understanding how companies similar to *SSDT* achieve sustainability. The level of engagement and ease of access that *SSDT* feels with the provincial cultural policy of KwaZulu Natal is equally important in understanding the issue of sustainability. In this way, this study aims to answer the following questions in the interviews: Does *SSDT* know the purpose of the provincial Department of Arts and Culture? How often have KZNDAC engaged in conversation with matters affecting them as a company?

The national and provincial cultural policy framework is there to serve artists and relevant stakeholders so that the aims of growing the sector, encouraging participation in the arts and affecting redress, as espoused in the *White Paper (1996)*, can be a reality through reciprocated interaction between arts companies and their provincial governments.

III.

CASE STUDY: *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre*

"Politics is the art of the possible, creativity the art of the impossible"

Ben Okri

3.1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

This chapter will begin with a historical overview by looking at the conception of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* under the *Natal Playhouse Company*. From 1994 to 1997, members of the company were in training. Over the years, the company grew and adapting to the demands and challenges of working in Arts and Culture in KwaZulu Natal. These developments will be contextualized from the perspective of members of *SSDT*. Furthermore, this chapter will unpack issues of managing an arts organization in Durban, the structure of the company and the functions of the board. This chapter will also look at issues affecting access to funding and sustainability as well as the ways in which *SSDT* perceives the provincial Department of Arts and Culture.

Siwela Sonke means "we are crossing over to a new place together" and it is a fitting name as politically and artistically South Africa was exploring new ways of being and living in the new South Africa. *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre (SSDT)* was formed in 1994

as part of the Natal Performing Arts Council's[14] (NAPAC) outreach program. NAPAC had a resident ballet company and in 1994, the NAPAC held auditions for the development of a contemporary dance company that would be trained in various dance forms and serve as an alternative platform to the Eurocentric aligned ballet company. This was in line with the broader policy aims of transforming communities in order for new ideas and alternate spaces to emerge.

Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre became that alternative platform as well as a vehicle for redressing an imbalanced artistic structure within the dance program of NAPAC. *SSDT* started their training as a development program under the directorship of Alfred Hinkel, and Jay Pather joined the company in 1997 as a Director. In 1998, they were launched as a professional contemporary dance company of The Natal Playhouse. In our interview, Gasa (2012) and Rushualang (2012) describe their training process as following a rigorous and structured program of various dance forms from classical dance to popular and mainstream dance with the focus on styles commonly practised in the Province. For example, Gasa (2012) explains:

> "We would do about four classes of two hours per class. We would always start with contemporary dance, then maybe Spanish and *Indlamu*[15]. Different types of *indlamu*: *isizingili*, *isishayameni*, *isgekle* and then Indian dance."

A year later, *SSDT* was retrenched, as it was mandatory that the National Performing Arts Councils (PACs) transform. This was a response to the ACTAG recommendations regarding the transformation of the previously white/Afrikaans dominated PACs in the

[14] NAPAC became the *Natal Playhouse*, and to date *Playhouse Company*
[15] Classical or traditional Zulu dance which has various forms that are classified under the umbrella of *Indlamu*.

country, which according to the *White Paper (1996)* usurped about 46% of the national budget for arts and culture (Chapter 4, clause 13). As Pather (2013) notes, it was "a re-imagining of the arts structures" into inclusive and accessible centres in an effort to redirect public resources to neglected areas within the sector. It was part of the directive within the *White Paper of 1996,* Chapter 4 clause 11, which reads:

> "At present, the largest portion of public funds for the arts goes directly to four Performing Arts Councils. There are few opportunities for artists, other than those employed by these state-subsidised institutions, to access public funds to support the creation and dissemination of their work. The activities of these institutions, their continued access to State monies, and their putative transformation, have created more controversy than any other issue facing the Ministry. But their transformation has already begun, with the appointment of representative Boards, the right-sizing of their infrastructure and opening of their facilities to a broader spectrum of arts practitioners."

The Natal Performing Arts Council was also subject to this mandate. Importantly, the transformation of the PACs was to facilitate structured development, which would support the national agenda of redress and redistribution. Chapter 4 clause 16 of the *White Paper (1996)* outlines this,

> "Infrastructure and skills built up over decades are not lost, but are redirected to serving the artistic and cultural priorities established by the NAC. At base, their activities must align with the general objectives of the Government."

National government would subsidise essential staff, infrastructure and activities of the PACs. This meant that provincial and municipal structures had to be included in taking strategic responsibility for the maintenance of arts facilities as well as the functioning of artistic programs. Owing to the direct benefits experienced by local communities, the

weight of funding PACs would be shared down the three spheres of government: national, provincial and municipal. Resident companies from these PACs would compete for the allocated funding from the National Arts Council. Additionally, the PACs would charge hiring fees for their venues and find solutions to raising box office sales. This shift is tabled in the *White Paper (1996)* under Chapter 4 clause 21,

> "Companies associated with performing arts councils, like all other performing arts organisations, will be able to apply to the National Arts Council for grants-in-aid. This shift in funding signals the transformation of the PACs from virtually free-standing production houses to becoming infrastructure accessible to all."

The *White Paper (1996)* stipulated that PACs should undergo managerial, structural and financial transformation by the year 2000. This overhaul was set in motion as a means to counter the Apartheid preference of a white artistic paradigm at the exclusion of heterogeneous and experimental platforms. The irony of this overhaul is that The Natal Playhouse had begun to address this bias in their dance programming by forming *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre*. Under the new directive, they had to sever ties with *SSDT* because of budgetary constraints.

> "This is an interesting quirk to how the adoption of policy sometimes gets lost in translation. This company (*SSDT*) was formed under strong developmental imperatives and we were the victims of this new policy. Instead of being part and parcel of a new dispensation we were retrenched." Pather (2013)

The policy 'quirk' which Pather refers to is a fitting example of the ongoing binary of policy *de jure* versus policy *de facto*. This binary is inherent in policy and unsurprisingly it highlights the contradictions of what is anticipated against the reality of what is. This

dichotomy can be minimized when there is constant evaluation and monitoring of the policy process. However, it usurps time, capital and human resources and yet evaluations can assist in managing stakeholder expectations about the realities of transformation. The intentions of policy can be explained and the expectation of stakeholders can be mitigated. *SSDT* was negatively affected by the policy through The Natal Playhouse's actions.

> "The entire company was retrenched and I had to try and fend for it. I needed to develop a business plan of some sort and try to fundraise for it. It really was madness. We went through a lot of madness until the Netherlands funding and the National Arts Council funding which came much later on." Pather (2013)

One can deduce from this statement that *SSDT* had different expectation about how the change would be handled. Applying Colebatch's (2002) perspective of a *horizontal* and *vertical* policy process, as discussed in Chapter Two, the manner in which *SSDT* became an independent company was perhaps an "unintended" horizontal policy outcome. Horizontal outcomes are a result of compliance to policy objectives directed down the hierarchy. In this instance, the *White Paper of 1996* mandates transformation, and The Natal Playhouse responded. Vertical outcome on the other hand is when government facilitates consultation resulting in an inclusive policy environment. For example, PACs could review their level of conversion and a vertical outcome would be that each one would respond accordingly to their institutions' needs rather than effect change imposed from the top. The Natal Playhouse may have been given the room to adjust its already existing development programs within the parameters of the *White Paper (1996)*. Regardless, *SSDT* was cut loose in midst of complying with the transformation policies. Ironically, by forming a resident contemporary dance company, The Natal Playhouse was

already indicating its foresight with the transformation agenda as advocated through the *RDP*. However, the reality of the situation for *SSDT* is thus;

> "We tried a few things but it was a struggle. I think it was also because the cut was drastic unlike in, for example Cape Town with JazzArt, where their funds were reduced but they were not kicked out of the building. They still had offices, they still had a home. We did not have anything. They just literally kicked us out." Pather (2013)

What *SSDT* needed when policy shifted was a better-managed transition so they could prepare for the change, as their expectation was that The Natal Playhouse would use their "discretion" (Lipsky, 2010)[16] in handling the matter. Focusing on expectation of the dance company means focusing direct attention to the intangible and often illusive dimension of policy. One of the aims of this study was to look at how *SSDT* perceives the bureaucratic boundaries within the Province. This refers often to the perceptions as well as expectations of the dance company as those can be side-lined in the mainstream focus of what government, through policy, is or is not doing. It is not only about managing perceptions, it is also important to understand how cultural policy decisions made at the top can affect artists who operate within that framework. Thus, *SSDT*'s experience is a relevant reflection of the effects of policy.

The burden of time means that total inclusive consultation of policy issues usurp resources and delays the actual implementation of policy, as there are many perspectives to consider. That is the reason why industries and stakeholders often elect representatives

[16] As examined in previous chapter, Lipsky's notion that street-level bureaucrats play an important role in shaping how policy is managed and disseminated on the ground. Those who deal with policy daily can, as he puts it, "reroute the direction of intended policy" (2010, pVII-XII). Hence, discretion becomes a powerful means of driving policy outcomes.

to participate in the policy formulation on their behalf. For example, it may not have been practical for the DAC to dictate how each PAC should adopt the *White Paper (1996)* recommendations. What was feasible was to provide the framework and then each PAC had to interpret the national mandate and manage their own terms of their transformation within these guidelines. Unlike JazzArt, who according to Pather (2013) had physical space for training and were phased out of CAPAB with reasonable terms. *SSDT* was retrenched and had to seek administrative and training facilities, time did not favour SSDT as the transformation agenda was expedited leaving the in a critical state.

To maintain their training, *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* would hire rehearsal space from numerous studios or use public areas around Durban to ease the financial burden of paying venue costs. Rushualang (2012), who is Company Manager at *SSDT* attests to when she notes:

> "He (Pather) would make sure we perform in an open space where no one would have arguments about us renting the place. For example, we would perform outside the City Hall and he would speak to the City Council."

Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre's determination to minimise costs by performing site-specific work moulded their signature on the cultural landscape. Circumstance made *SSDT's* work site-specific and over time it became their distinguishing feature in the contemporary dance community.

The contemporary dance community in Durban recognizes *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* as being among the first to pioneer contemporary dance programs in disadvantaged communities. This however did not guarantee that their funding applications would be

approved. Though the company predominantly worked on a project-to-project basis with little funding, they gradually created signature work that garnered awards and acclaim in the dance community. *SSDT's* identity was shaped by the people in the company:

> "I think (it was) a certain level of tenacity on the part of people involved. I think the idea behind *Siwela* is a company of innovation rather than a company of dancers just trying to survive is something that has always been quite strong. I think the company is identified as a company of innovative ideas which remain afloat despite the funding situation." Pather (2013)

In the decade between 1998 and 2008, *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* was touring their productions both locally and internationally. The *Royal Netherlands Embassy* provided sliding-scale funding for five year period from 2002 to 2006 for their Dance Education programs. This meant that their funding would gradually decrease to none over the period of five years. The funding was utilized for the company, venue costs, transport and feeding the children who would participate. Rushualang (2012) says having consistent funding meant they were salaried and that gave them a sense of security and the opportunity to plan both personally and artistically. Aside from being contracted for a few corporate performances, *SSDT* was typically similar to other prominent contemporary dance companies is Durban who were motivated by their art and longed for viable options to become sustainable.

3.2 MANAGEMENT

Funding and management issues are interlinked and not easy to divorce. They exist in symbiosis and the health of one affects the other. However, without leadership money can be misdirected, depleting the resources of an organization. Thus, it is imperative that arts

companies be registered entities, with boards (where applicable) and internal systems to ensure the organization is structurally and administratively designed for longevity.

By 1999, *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* had become an independent contemporary dance company. They registered as a Section 21 (not-for-profit) organization whose offices, until 2004, were administered at the Artistic Directors' home. Their mission statement read as follows

> "(*SSDT*) seek(s) to make cultural products available to a wide range of the public by actively promoting works in public spaces where there is free access or when the work is commissioned by a Public Services organization where the motive is not one of profit."

Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre has a board whose role "has been to largely approve the management and artistic program" (Pather, 2013). Members of the Board of *SSDT* reside in KwaZulu Natal and they meet once a year. However, in the period between 1998 and 2008 there have been sporadic lapses in duties because of clashing schedules and other commitments by board members. Boards are effective when they participate and commit themselves to their functions of leading their designated organizations. Pather (2012) illustrates the point that when *SSDT* experienced uncertainty with their funding, the board members were inconsistent in their tasks:

> "I was hoping for funding and development funding but that has not really panned out. I think there is a lot of fatigue around that kind of thing (applying for development funding). We dipped and dived with regards to the National Arts Council (funding). We were hot and then we were not. And so I think

> there was not a clear sense from board members that they had to be at it all the time."

The 'fatigue' described in board members is typically symptomatic of a need for an overhaul. Complacency settles in Board of Directors when they no longer fulfil their fiduciary duty and honour the mission statement of a company. According to Robinson (2001) a not-for-profit board has, amongst other things, the responsibility to carry out fundraising, manage the resources and programs of the company, be the company's public ambassador, ensure ethical and legal accountability, and also recruit and orientate new board members. *SSDT's* board has not been changed since its inception and thus 'fatigue' is expected. Inasmuch as policies need review, organizations too have a duty to continuously reassess and transform accordingly. This case illustrates that what is needed is a healthy and proactive board to help alleviate funding pressures from a dance company through strategic fundraising goals. In this way, the Artistic Director and Company Managers would have the liberty to redirect their energy to making their art. The Board of Directors are essential leadership of a company and their level of energy and ability to provide oversight affect how a company is steered. In order for companies to achieve sustainability, active Boards are essential. Boards should consult their arts organizations, offer advice while maintaining distance on the daily management of their companies.

Although it is part of the constitution of a not-for-profit organization to serve the interests of the public, it can appear that to have access to a wider pool of funding, dance companies need to have a developmental program as part of their company profile. The number of contemporary dance companies who have development programs is evidence of this. This is not to say it is unnecessary as the socio-political legacy meant that

communities were on the periphery of governmental support during Apartheid. One of the ways of addressing this is by having developmental projects where knowledge is disseminated to marginalised spaces. Developmental programs in and of themselves are essential, but should not be used as advantage to access funds. This perpetuates the gap so that those with privilege remain apart from those without.

Holden (2004) argues that the public funding of culture has to be redesigned to serve the needs of cultural practitioners to fulfil the expectations of the public for whom it is serving. One of his central critiques is that the language used in the cultural funding process is inadequate and does not capture the full experiences of cultural practitioners. Cultural organizations are focused on justifying the impact of their work and measuring this impact with statistical data as a means to justify public spending within the cultural sector.

> "Many artists feel that they are made to jump through hoops and that they create art in spite of the funding system. Their ability to 'play the game' and write highly articulate funding proposals is more important than the work that they make or facilitate." Holden (2004, 14)

The above quote identifies the problem: cultural organizations are focused on justifying the impact of their work and measuring this impact with statistical data to validate receiving public funding. Focussing on the economic and social benefits undermines the experience and 'value of culture'. Artists should be focusing more on the business of making art and producing work, and not more on justifying the need to receive public grants and write eloquent proposals. With the literacy disparities in South Africa, this would prejudice the targeted individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is

general literacy needed when writing proposals and those who are not conversant in English cannot benefit. There is also the likelihood that they would be disqualified if they were unable to present coherent proposals, which is ironic considering that the artists in question are more equipped to express themselves through their artistic practices: painters 'speak' with their brushes, dancers with their bodies. On the other hand, governments are often concerned about expenditure and the need to be accountable. The very public they serve is critical about where governments invests money.

Holden's (2004) solution is that the public needs to have a greater say in matters of public funding in the arts. The problem with this is that it further delays the decision-making process, and renders funding bodies redundant. To create work, artists often need a 'down payment' so they can hire equipment, buy materials or rent rehearsal space. Delaying the funding process by including public commentary works against the needs of artists. Audiences (the public) can be easily swayed. Furthermore, bringing the public to make comment on policy issues that affect the livelihoods of artists implies that artists are incapable of making decisions on their own, they need public intervention. It undermines the sector and treats each industry as juvenile. Holden's (2004) analysis of organizations being distracted by writing proposals and having to justify public expenditure in the arts is relevant, the above-mentioned recommendation works in opposition to the freedom in the artistic process.

Until mid-2007, management decisions were primarily steered by the Artistic Director who would then consult the company choreographers. Changes in management saw Tshabalala resigning in 2008 to manage his own dance company, which led to the core members taking on more leadership within the company. Tshabalala continued to work

and contribute to *SSDT* at a managerial level. When he passed away in 2011, the company reassessed and made adjustments to their running of the company. When asked what changes have taken place over the years as Gasa (2012) notes:

> "I think we do things that are needed, we do not indulge. I think we have never indulged before because we have never had more than what we needed. But we have never compromised our work just because we did not have sufficient funding. The work is challenging and it is expanding because now it is not just one person who decides what happens."

From Gasa (2012) and Rushualang's (2012) discussion , over the years *SSDT* gradually shifted from what Tannenbaum (2001) terms a "paternalistic" to a "permissive" style of management. For example, the Artistic Director did not single-handedly make considerations about the company; rather, everyone owns the final decision-making. As Gasa (2012) note above, this is attributed to their ability to honour their art and not compromise it to secure funding.

As *SSDT* evolved, their responsibilities were distributed democratically. Tshabalala became the company manager attending to the proposal writing and executive decisions of the company, while Gasa and Rushualang choreographed and taught the Outreach Programmes. To date, Gasa and Rushualang continue to choreograph and perform as well as hold the position of Director and Company Manager respectively. As part of her undertaking, Gasa ensures the company adheres to the constitution and mission of the company, which is "to provide holistic dance education and stimulate innovative directions of performance in the region"[17].

[17] The mission statement as outlined in http://www.siwelasonke.co.za/company_description.htm

The changes in management style were a learning curve for the Artistic Director who acknowledges that he initially carried the bulk of the decision-making because the company members were inexperienced at the time. In addition, he narrowed the responsibilities of an administrator in an attempt to cut overheads as they carefully struggled to keep the company running during periods of funding crises. In our interview Pather (2013) reflects:

> "A few years ago I recognized that as a major flaw. That was a big flaw in the company's development …And then we would make some attempt to bring in administration…We should have pushed it high on the agenda. I think we discovered that about 4/5 years ago. It was in the middle of the period you're writing about that we began to bulk up the administration; because the administration is what gave the company continuity…If there is one lesson I would always give people is do not underestimate the power of administration."

Interestingly the Artist Director explains that for him, *SSDT* was initially 'democratic', but as the company began to make changes, the management style became 'realistic'. This is an important distinguishing factor as it speaks of a move away from being accommodating of all viewpoints to focusing on what works best for the company. As discussed earlier, democracy delays decision-making. However, there is also a danger in 'realistic' decisions if they offer short-term solutions. Sustainability is a long-term principle that outlasts immediate challenges.

When Pather accepted a professorship in Cape Town, *SSDT* restructured again. Three members of the full time company became part of the core management team. The company employed a full time administrator. The ability to adapt to change enables managers to keep their company's relevant. The management became more responsible for the success and survival of the company.

3.3 SUSTAINABILITY in KWAZULU NATAL

While a couple of contemporary dance companies were shutting down in Durban (namely *Phenduka Dance Theatre* and *Fantastic Flying Fish Dance Company*) Pather (2013) explains in conversation that *SSDT* also went through periods of uncertainty, but managed to keep afloat. The management of *SSDT* all describe the company as "family". To this, both Gasa (2012) and Rushualang (2012) attribute the daily survival of the company and their ability to endure because from the outset they would openly discuss issues with each other. This meant that when they experienced numerous funding shortages, they would discuss coping mechanism which were manageable and within their scope. Transparency in management decisions is a key element to achieving sustainability. For Pather (2013) the challenges of making a living under the funding pressures influenced his decisions about the company, and inevitably the decision to relocate rather than dissolving the company. The work the company created and performed made it worthwhile to adapt by restructuring the way the company operated.

> "What had happened was our funding was drying up quite rapidly. The Netherlands (funding) had fallen away; the National Arts Council had cut its funding for us; so the funding scenario was looking very bad and it was

> becoming very difficult for me to draw a salary from *Siwela*. It was about a year and a half that I knew that a change was going to be necessary for the company to survive and for me to get out of the situation physically and earn my own salary somewhere else. It also became quite apparent that Ntombi, Nellie and Eric had to develop something for themselves. They started a full year training program. The following year I then did leave Durban and came to Cape Town on the provision that I was going to keep supporting the company. And we found some subsistence money for the trainees". Pather (2013)

The above quote indicates the manner in which funding can alter the possibilities of a company. Sustainability is affected when there is a disruption in revenue and a company's ability to adapt their artistic program dictates its survival against financial realities. Pather (2013) explains that an important challenge for artists is the need to constantly reinvent or change as a means to survive. Often this entails finding administrative and artistic ways of keeping above water in an environment where artists continuously struggle for grants.

The above quote also supports Bereson's (2004) theory that 'art' outlasts 'bureaucracy'. In her paper, she argues, "a country's culture is judged by outcomes not by the many written statements of its bureaucrats" Bereson (2004, 7). Contemporary dance companies' closings are a resounding alarm for the cultural landscape of KZN and are indicative of a policy framework that needs resuscitation. The survival of arts organizations is not separate and distinct from the health of the cultural policy framework. For *SSDT*, their survival is a result of their tenacity in seeing possibilities for their art, and taking the necessary risk. The following is a response about what has contributed to *SSDT's* survival in the period between 1998 and 2008,

> "It is taking risk, artistic risk where the financial rewards may not be that big. I think that kind of ethos has interestingly made the company survive. Instead of giving in to making work that would be more commercially viable." Pather (2013)

Rushualang (2012) attests to their discipline as motivating them to continue to work and thus add to their tenacity to survive:

> "Even when there is no funding we are working because we need our bodies to be strong. This tool (body) needs to be constantly serviced (through training). We did not stop doing our Outreach programs even though we did not have money. Who will go back to these kids, who will support/nurture/take care of them? So we would continue teaching even when we did not have funding."

Although the company had periods where they had no money coming into the company, their training and technique, class would continue. Moreover, *SSDT* would fulfil their mission statement by continuing to teach children from their Outreach programmes. The mission statement of the company gave SSDT a *raison d'être* to remain artistically acute.

3.4 PERCEPTION OF KZNDAC

Between 1998 and 2008, Arts and Culture was under the provincial portfolio of the KwaZulu Natal Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation. Unlike art, sports had tangible measures of success because sports have winners and scores are tallied. However, in this time, contemporary dance was garnering popularity as it could fuse different dance

languages and disciplines into performances. The changing landscape of dance needed a policy environment in touch with its challenges and possibilities.

The first strategic goal of KZNDAC is to "create awareness of different art forms on the Province and to provide a platform for the development of artistic skill for self-sustainability". Contemporary dance is one such art form that has grown to capture the diversity of societies. South Africa is multicultural society and this cultural diversity is given expression through contemporary dance which fuses different performance and dance genre. Arguably, the popularity of contemporary dance is the ability to merge different art forms and dance styles into a single performance with greater flexibility than, for example, the classical dance forms which are less experimental. Yet gradually, an internationally renowned company like *SSDT* , which accesses different dance genre like Indian and African forms for example, feels disconnected from Province. This is evidenced by Rushualang's (2012) remarks:

> "They do not know anything about us. (The Department of) Arts and culture do not know. Someone will just come up to me and say they want a group of ten (dancers) and they will give us four thousand rand. How can you pay ten professionals (a total of) four thousand rand for an eight minute piece?"

The above quote supports the argument that those in charge of disseminating cultural policy are removed from the realities of artists on the ground. As Gasa (2012) recalls, over the years attempts to make connections, send proposals, request information or meetings proved futile. She says information around funding criteria, programs or opportunities for artists is not easily accessible. Getting accurate information from relevant personnel is a hurdle. Moreover, there is frustration about this estrangement, as

KZNDAC is perceived to not understand dancers' motivation, challenges and needs. Gasa (2012) illustrates this:

> "They do not want to understand that dance is a career to us, it is our life, we refine our skills, it is our daily bread because when we get on stage they must see things of a high standard."

The above relates to the misconception that art is a hobby rather than a profession. There is a sense of frustration with the distance that exists between KZNDAC and the dance company. There is a sense that the management of *SSDT* admitted to not knowing who the representatives within KZNDAC were and what their mission is for arts and culture in the Province. This is both because the provincial structure remains elusive but also because *SSDT* gradually lost interest and found it futile to connect with them.

Arts companies are constantly under pressure to be more self-sustaining through profit and box-office takings. This pressure comes from diminishing grants and budgets allocated to the sector, which inevitably places financial strain on artists. To solve this shortfall, there can be undue pressure to 'break even': the cost of putting on a production covered by box-office takings. The pressure comes from imposing business models and management principles on the arts. However, arts companies are run differently from regular businesses and need to be assessed with arts management principles that account for unpredictability, risk and uncertainty inherent in the artistic process. When asked to respond to the perception that if arts companies were managed properly they would not need government funding, the participants to this study partially agreed. They agreed to the necessity of having a registered company and submitting reports. However, the nature of arts requires funding through donors, sponsorships or grants.

> "It is not true (that arts companies are mismanaged) because it has been proven time and time again that it is not about management of a company it is about the responsibility of government to ensure its population, and I am not talking about the dancers or the artists, its general population is fed: is fed. Is fed with ideas, is fed with art. So no matter how well a company is managed the point is it does not matter if they are not sustained in some kind of way directly by government they cannot do it themselves." Pather (2013)

For Pather (2013) there is a distinction between art and commercially viable productions. Each has a different creative process and impetus. He explains that people can mistake the Broadway shows as "art" when their aesthetic and demographics have not changed over the decades. These types of productions are formulaic and are designed with profit margins as their driving force. In this case, 'art' would be taking inspiration and ideas and investing in the creative process regardless of the 'bottom line'. Making art not only entertains but it is impartial to gross profits. He goes further and separates this in terms of Arts and Culture. For him 'art' is inventing and 'culture' is reproducing what has already been done. By extension, art needs a favourable cultural policy environment to thrive and each Province is mandated through the White *Paper (1996)* to provide such an environment. As discussed in the previous chapter, each Province has its own resources.

> "In South Africa no two provinces preside over the same inherent resources. Wealthier provinces have sizeable potential tax bases, infrastructure and working populations." Besdziek (2006, 117)

For this reason, some provinces need more governmental assistance to achieve the developmental goals espoused in the national policy. As discussed in the previous chapter, Province often shares its mandate with national government who have higher

legislative authority. However, within the provisions of the Constitution of 1996, Province has amendment powers. This means that if Province were dissatisfied with policy framework in KZN, it could amend its cultural matters through proper procedure. Also, as so long as they fall within the guidelines of Schedule 4 of the Constitution. Simply, in theory each province can stipulate the policy priorities in their jurisdiction. This would infer that the relevant stakeholders in KZN are engaged, they understand the limitations as well as the possibilities that are inherent in policy procedures. The implication for this study is that provincial government has the legislative authority to amend it cultural policies to fit the specific needs of the arts and culture sector in KwaZulu Natal.

By examining the manner in which KZNDAC is perceived, gives an indication about expectations of the dance companies. When asked to describe the biggest challenge that *SSDT* faces in the Province, Rushualang (2012) highlighted that as a company they feel invisible and ostracised. This dissipates when there are events that require entertainment because that it when their work is acknowledged. This is illustrated in Rushualang's (2012) following remarks:

> "They (government officials) ignore us. They pretend as if we are not there. But when they want to do their big celebrations, they call us. That is when they realize that we are there...Government does not recognize us artists as artists.

One of the challenges *SSDT* faces in the Province is that money and opportunity for grants is there but civil servants withhold information. In our conversation Gasa (2012) explains that between 2002 and 2007 efforts to get information and establish rapport with KZNDAC was met with suggestions by KZNDAC employees that they can only assist if

dance companies unite. This created undue pressure because it is impractical to suggest that companies combine their artistic vision and share work without the incentivising of the work. Companies have different mission statements, priorities as well as *modus operandi.* Most contemporary dance companies in Durban are aware of each other's existence; however, there is competition for the limited funding and grants. Corporate companies would not be made to merge with their competition, and yet artists are expected to do so.

> "It is easy to talk and say "you must work together" but our interests are not the same. I cannot do substandard work just because I want money. I want to spend my time doing work that is important and that speaks to people so that people will not forget it." Gasa (2012)

SSDT's perception of the structure of the KZNDAC is that they are inwardly focused rather than horizontally at each industry's needs. This has contributed to the contemporary dance community feeling overlooked. The repercussion is that certain industries run the danger not to fully develop. In the programme of the *National Arts Festival* in Grahamstown in 2013, Pather[18] comments on the reality of artists nation-wide,

> "Our country's artists are sought after all over the world in every discipline. We can produce sophistication. We have the potential to lead. Instead of joining us in that vital journey, our funding agencies with mystifying persistence lag behind." Pather (2013, 5)

The above quote explains that artistic potential is not always transformed or manifested into its full potential because of the stress of funding. There is immeasurable skill and

[18] Pather in his capacity as *Grahamstown National Arts Festival Artistic Committee Chairman*

talent in the ACH sector in South Africa and the funding and policy structures need to keep apace if the ideals of achieving sustainability are to become a reality.

Towards the end of the interview, each participant was asked if they possessed the powers to be a fairy Godmother/father for a day what they would wish the KZNDAC to address. Pather (2013) listed three issues in his response. These concerns are 1) about developing communication, 2) obtaining physical space and 3), harnessing financial support:

> "I think the first thing would be that if they could develop some serious conversation. What is a company similar to *Siwela Sonke* able to bring to the people of KwaZulu Natal? The second thing is there is a need for the company to have physical space, so if Province could work with City to find a physical space and be able to give us a lease for a certain number of years. So just to reiterate that the first one is about ideas, the second one is about a physical structure because dancers need a space to come to every day. It is unlike writers or even actors. I think for dancers, because of the body, there is a particular floor etc. And the third thing of course would be around money. And it's not so much about money but if they can understand that it's a budget over a few years a five year plan it would ensure some kind of longevity". Pather (2013)

It is important to look at how policy is perceived from the perspective of people who try to create a living within its framework. Perceptions affect the relationship between things. *SSDT's* perception of KZNDAC is an important commentary of policy because through this single lens, we see an iota of the realities that may or may not be experienced by other companies. Over the years, after failed attempts, *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* felt outside the intended support structures that the provincial Department of Arts and Culture had created. This isolation affects the policy process because the *White Paper*

(1996) outlines the guidelines of encouraging the dissemination of arts and supporting the growth of different industries. The bureaucratic parameters need to be inclusive, visible to the public and its constituents so that pragmatic feedback and input from artists can assist in shaping a better functioning state organ. Cultural policy framework must best serve the Arts and Culture community in their diversity.

When policy is not serving its constituency and the public feels dislocated from the policy, there is a problem. This problem leads to alienation between policy and those it is intended to serve. In order for the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector to thrive companies need long–term commitment, mutually transparent means of communicating that benefits the individual companies and the sector as a whole. It is unacceptable that prominent contemporary dance companies should struggle, and even close because of a lack of visible and open public funding mechanisms in KZN. According to the Artistic Director, *SSDT* continues to survive because they have first and foremost honoured their artistic vision before addressing other arising priorities. He also admits that having a repertoire that includes corporate performances does help with injecting income. These corporate performances extend the repertoire and are not the core business of the organization.

Funding should serve the interests of the artistic process rather that artists feeling intimidated by financial jargon written in proposals. Auditing publicly funded organizations is unavoidable as transparency and accountability are important. Conversely, if unmonitored, money can be grossly mismanaged and unplanned expenditures could dampen the lifespan of a company, as they would struggle to source more funds if they have poor financial management. The experience of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre,* as a registered entity, relying on national and international funding

through the NAC, NLDTF and RNE respectively indicates that the provincial funding structures are out of touch with artist's circumstance. *SSDT's* perception that KZNDAC structures are not approachable with information on available funding avenues is problematic as it paints a picture of a cold policy environment in the province. Contemporary dance in KZN should be encouraged and supported through healthy cultural policies and funding mechanisms.

IV.

CONCLUSION

An artist experiences the urgency of creation. To catch the moment in time. To take the space. To make the mark before inspiration dries up. Before the surge and courage of creating something new, flags, loses momentum and stalls

Jay Pather

4.1 REFLECTIONS on SUSTAINABILITY

The purpose of this paper was to look at sustainability in the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector and the role of Provincial government in alleviating the funding pressure that is placed on national institutions. This is a cultural policy issue that has been explored through the lens of a single case study: how *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* has managed to survive within the policy framework in KZN. Moreover, this paper aimed to use *SSDT's* perspective to begin to engage with issues of how arts organizations digest cultural policy and inevitably create mechanisms to sustain themselves and thrive in the sector. To this end, the case study was used as a starting point to discuss the potential for how Provincial Departments can engage more meaningfully with their art constituents.

What has emerged is that this paper has illuminated issues around accessibility that need to be reassessed for the dance industry in Arts and Culture sector in KwaZulu Natal . Confronting these issues can provide the opportunity for proactive engagement that leads

to mid and long-term policy shifts in the sector. It is important that dialogue with relevant stakeholders is not a façade for transformation. For example, issues such as transparency in KZNDAC's funding programmes, or the best ways of creating communication and feedback with stakeholders are beneficial to the artistic process. This would contribute to an inclusive arts and culture environment where artists in the Province do not feel neglected but rather benefit from a thriving and supported industry.

As noted in the 'Introduction' to this study, the funding criterion is in need of serious review. When the Department of Arts and Culture distributes money to provinces, provinces should do everything in their power to ensure that companies can feel direct benefits from this. Alternatively, that arts organizations see the impact of KZNDAC investing in the arts. This can be done by looking at the funding guidelines of KZNDAC to ascertain and understand the provincial funding priorities. As discussed in Chapter Three, Municipalities can also be looked at as a possible funding or infrastructural ally for the Arts and Culture community in the Province. To begin this review one would need to determine budget allocation for funding Arts, Culture and Heritage and to determine if there is an even distribution of support for the various artistic industries. It is important to clarify that benefits do not only have to be in monetary form, they could be the existence of reductions in hiring equipment, venues or advertising space in billboards. What is important is establishing if these are direct or indirect benefits and whether arts companies have knowledge of these and can obtain them. It is important to see patterns or areas that require improvement at Provincial and local level. If Municipalities endorsed the arts in their jurisdiction, Province may have the possibility to share the responsibility of supporting sustainability in the sector.

In order for companies to be considered for funding, it is essential that they are registered entities with proactive management and Boards where applicable. A major focus of the case study was to determine what makes a dance company viable. The interviews revealed that some of the key elements needed are stamina and training for the artists; having an artistic vision and the tenacity to honour that in each production; strong leadership through management as well as a Board to steer the company; the ability to network for sponsorship and to provide reliable leadership. The case study made it apparent that companies depend on a functioning cultural policy framework where they feel adequately represented and their concerns addressed with due diligence. This was evidenced through the recurring perception by management of *SSDT* that KZNDAC is remote in its proximity to the realities of artists, inaccessible with information and unreachable for a dialogue about prospects for the industry.

From the outset, the paper declared to focus unilaterally on the perceptions of *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* as a springboard to review cultural policy in KZN. It was a bottom-up policy perspective with a design that is limited to the insights of a single case through the exclusion of rebuttals from KZNDAC. To seek a response from KZNDAC would fall outside the capacity of this research report, as it would require statistical resources and wider theoretical agenda. The theoretical premise was that policy shifts are not always thunderous or intrepid; rather, cultural policy is informed by the changing needs of artists, which are inextricably linked to their financial circumstances. The development of *SSDT* from a training company to a professional organisation in the decade 1998 to 2008, and their struggle for survival show the realities that necessitate a policy framework that is relevant, attuned and flexible enough to cater for the needs of its different industries. Policy cannot serve a single entity or favour certain organisations or

institutions above others. Its purpose is to facilitate the requirements of its constituents. For example, in KZN, the contemporary dance community is a significant industry whose longevity warrants being prioritized by KZNDAC.

The interpretive research indicates that the cultural policy framework in KwaZulu Natal has remained unchanged since South Africa's democratisation. KwaZulu Natal has four regions that fall under the management of KZNDAC: the Eastern, Northern, Western and Southern Region. Although *SSDT* is based in Durban, and this paper explored the particularity of their case, their experiences as a contemporary dance company can add value to discussions about improving the experience of artists and fostering an environment that encourages stability and growth of the industry in the Province. This can contribute to discussions on cultural policy analysis that can highlight the priority areas that need attention.

When this research was conceptualised, national cultural policy reviews had not been made public in the seventeen years since the *White Paper* was drafted. The Department of Arts and Culture undertook a policy review in July 2013, and DAC issued comment on its amendments in a draft document titled "Revised White Paper". This was circulated for public comment. This working document encapsulates the economic policies of the New Growth Path (NGP) whose strategies are about creating decent employment to grow the South African economy. The Arts, Culture and Heritage sector is aligned with NGP goals of addressing the trinity of South Africa's socio-political predicaments, namely 'unemployment, poverty and inequality'. Although the *Revised White Paper (2013)* is based on economic redress, it does not digress from the essence of the policies in the first *White Paper of Arts, Culture and Heritage* of 1996. The revised policy document

distinguishes itself as being a 'developmental approach' to addressing the challenges of the sector. Section 14 of the *Revised White Paper (2013)* stipulates that,

> "The developmental approach will underpin the work of the DAC, its provincial and local government equivalents and the Cultural and Creative Industries as a whole (so that the) capabilities and abilities of the Cultural and Creative Industries will be harnessed and sustained by a conducive enabling environment"

One of the amendments to the policy is the Cultural and Creative Industries Fund (CIF). The *Revised White Paper* acknowledges the funding limitations placed on the ACH sector and the CIF is designed to supplement National Arts Council funding. The Department of Arts and Culture has access to a wider local and international database of the partners, donors and funding agencies, which will be approached to contribute to the CIF. This policy development affords companies who comply with the specifications of CIF the opportunity to access alternate sources of funding. This does not however solve the issue of the role of provincial government in supporting arts in its jurisdiction. Interestingly the CIF appears to duplicate the purpose of existing funding agencies. For example, it will source funding from *NLDTF* and from the remains of the National budget. Moreover, the *Revised White Paper (2013)* seems more weighted on economic redress than artistic needs.

It is important that the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector undergo economic review because for many artists this is their career. However, economic reviews in the sector seldom solve issues of salary and taxation for artists. For example, financial exploitation of artists is a common occurrence where the cost of making art is not reflected in the remuneration. A focus on the economics of the ACH sector needs to address this ongoing problem as it affects artists' livelihood and at worst renders artists in cycles of unemployment. Revising the *White Paper (1996)* is an exercise in meta-structure

adjustment, which is the beginning of policy review. However, it is important that deeper analysis take place by looking at everyday issues affecting artists in their pursuit of economic growth and sustainability. This means applying bottom-up analysis is beneficial in ascertaining the lived experience of the people for whom the policy must serve. Cultural production is multi-dimensional where the lines between the tangible and intangible variables collide and merge frequently. It is the role of policy to facilitate an environment where this can happen symbiotically. The danger of focusing on Cultural Industries as defined in the *Revised White Paper (2013)* is that it appears biased towards what is quantifiable. Yet most art and cultural production has a value, and its' worth needs to be protected by policy and the terms described from the artist's frame of reference.

Culture cannot be seen purely in tangible form. UNESCO[19] defends the idea that culture cannot be reduced to measurable values (in the way that economic growth is understood) but needs to be acknowledged and understood in terms of its "intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual" impact. The taciturn and intangible means of seeing the impact of Arts and Culture on society. This impact is shaped by specific cultural and social norms. For example, in our multilingual and multicultural society, KwaZulu Natal has rich cultural diversity that includes communities from all the previously defined racial groups: Black, Indian, White and Coloured. Within each of these communities, the different disciplines such as dance have their own aesthetic, artistic and performance essence that cannot be captured in quantitative terms. What can be measured comprehensively is the audience number not the impact of the work. Art is one of the most effective means of

[19] *UNESCO: Culture and Development*. "Culture is more than a jewel in the crown of development" http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en

amalgamating people from different communities. As such, it is important to ensure that cultural policy revisions are sensitive to the financial needs of artists as well as artistic freedom. Artistic freedom is important because art is an instrument for unifying society, providing social commentary as well as entertainment.

What is encouraging in the *Revised White Paper* is the recognition that all spheres of government need to take responsibility for development of the sector. That for the performing arts, one of the focuses of the *Revised White Paper (2013)* under Section 24 reads as follows,

> "The funding for theatre should not be a one size fits all approach. Consideration should be made to the different sub sectors and genres as well as the theatre value chain."

One of the ways in which this policy objective can be achieved is through making the provincial and municipal funded infrastructures more available and that each discipline will receive tailor-made funding models. Seeing that this mandate comes from the top of the chain of command, it becomes important that the performance industry at the bottom of this hierarchy hold the respective provincial and local departments accountable for this as it will improve their funding prospects.

The case study showed how governmental structures are inaccessible and riddled with 'red tape'. Artists continue to struggle for sustainability in a cultural policy environment removed from their daily challenges. What the abovementioned mandate means is that the dance community can table their needs and suggestions about how productions should be commissioned and have these addressed through the relevant channels. It is also

important that the tabled issues are coherent and unified, which would require the dance community to prioritise common issues to be addressed by provincial and municipal structures.

It is important to approach the idea of a unified cultural sector with some pragmatism. A unified arts and cultural sector is an ideal and while it is desirable that the sector speaks unanimously on issues, the artistic process is competitive and not uniform.

> "Where, in any corner of the globe, do you find perfect models of creative harmony, completely devoid of friction? We all have our individual artistic temperaments as well as partisanships in creative directions. And we have strong opinions on the merits of the products of our occupation." Achebe (2013)

The above statement typifies the sentiment that creativity can be an individual process and that no artistic endeavour is worthier than the other is. Each has its own value and necessity that should not be disregarded in an effort to get unification. Artists have their own creative process and this makes cultural policies complex and potentially volatile, as their purpose is to ensure that regardless of the spurious nature of art, they remain malleable to allow for different forms of creativity to thrive. The policy should meet the needs of the industry. Similarly, by participating in their evolution the stakeholders within the sector have the equal responsibility to ensure that policies are not dated. Although cultural policies are purposefully vague, the creative value of the performance process can be better represented when artists set the policy agenda and declare what they need to be sustainable.

Commercial productions and Broadway performances will always attract audiences because of their nostalgic and artistic appeal, which is reminiscent of the works produced by the PACs. These works are formulaic and 'safe' and the audience knows the repertoire. In the case of *SSDT*, contemporary dancers create new and experimental work through brainstorming, work-shopping and rigorous rehearsals and their creative process is more vulnerable than the well-established works. *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* found themselves adapting their creative process so that they could keep their doors open and in the process reinvented themselves with original work which became their signature mark. They performed in public spaces, took greater artistic risk with multi-dimensional performances.

> "(This) is what has led to the site-specific work I always believe we cannot bring ourselves to making musicals that bring thousands of people to the theatre. So let us do the kinds of work that we do and let us do it in the kind of spaces that people have access to. So we do expect government or sponsors to see that (and) to support us in that initiative and to recognize that that is what we are doing" Pather (2013)

Chief among the reasons for two prominent KZN contemporary dance companies to close (namely *Phenduka Dance Theatre* and *Fantastic Flying Fish Dance Company*), is due to a lack of funding. Both these companies were registered, had a repertoire and development training that added to the diversity of contemporary dance in the Province. However, their closure is an indication of the perilous nature of inconsistent funding. Sustainability in the ACH sector cannot be achieved without the support of grants and funding. Providing transparent ways of accessing funding is the cornerstone of achieving sustainability.

A healthy cultural policy environment exists when the relevant state agencies use resources at their disposal to improve the sector. This process involves the participation by different stakeholders who operate internally or externally to government. Healthy cultural policies exist within continuous dialogue that remains relevant to artists. To maintain this health, changes experienced by artists or motivated by government need to be injected into the funding process as and when they occur.

The idea of change, as discussed by Pollitt *et al* (2009), is important for this study. They observe that change is a daily phenomenon and that when things or systems change they continue to operate in their changed form and they survive because they endured change. For example, *SSDT* was a training company under the Natal Playhouse who changed into an independent professional organization. In essence, to continue to achieve sustainability in the sector means accepting the inevitability of change, and preparing accordingly for it. This study has dealt with the change of political systems in South Africa from Apartheid to a democratically representative state. Change has also been discussed in terms of the shifts in cultural policy drafted through the recent *White Paper* revisions of 2013.

Policies change as they are propelled by the lived realities of those who benefit from them and therefore need to be continually relevant in the present. In this way, by applying Pollitt *et al* (2009) it can be argued that arts companies can be sustainable when they plan and position themselves within the changes that take place in the sector. For example, knowing the volatility of the industry, companies can have contingency plans in place that enable them to weather the storms of periods where they do not receive grants. If contingency measures are factored into the management of art companies, when

change takes place, they are prepared and can endure that shift. This does not mean art companies are immunised from closure or having their funding proposals rejected. In order for this contingency to work, a company would need relief periods where their financial resources are adequately replenished so that the contingency can exist again. Change is a deceptively easy concept, however, it is practically complex and intricate.

Another possibility for change is shifting the standard of public relations and communication in state departments. In KZN, the provincial department could amend its public relations to be visibly representative of the needs of the arts community and the specificity of their requirements. This increases the prospects for mutual benefit. It also affords Province the opportunity to become visible and thus elevate the awareness that they too are bound by protocol. KZNDAC is a state organ with clear guidelines and regulations that cannot be compromised just to appease individual constituents. Artists easily forget this when they perceive KZNDAC as ostracising them. Ironically, to be expedient with change artists would need to amalgamate and prioritize the challenges that would require immediate policy review. As evidenced in the interviews, often artists do not fully comprehend what it is expected of them within the cultural policy framework because there are no accessible channels to the Provincial Department of Arts and Culture. This leads to disillusionment. Change would need to happen at policy level as well as horizontally where artists are made aware of the trajectory of policy as well as the responsibilities that prioritized.

Artists understandably focus on the creative process without considering the policy process, which takes time. That is not to say that artists should be constrained by state function nor should the state surrender its due process. As *SSDT* has shown, there should

be enough ‘good will’, communication and understanding to accommodate each other’s priorities. The greater the understanding of both, the easier it is to work in a favourable and supportive artistic environment.

A policy perspective can often eclipse an important discussion about how policy is mediated in the daily operations of artists. The case study has enabled a closer look at one aspect of policy in the hope of encouraging further academic discourse and research. The specificity of *SSDT’s* case allows for general comment on issues affecting funding and sustainability of arts organizations and especially contemporary dance in KZN. It identifies a recurring issue about the gaps in the South African cultural policy framework concerning provincial funding structures, which can be further analysed. The qualitative focus has allowed an exploration of the complexities of sustainability for arts companies. Policies paint a different picture to how companies actually mediate bureaucracy. Thus to expand the research one would need a rebuttal from KZNDAC and to explore more cases of contemporary dance companies in KZN.

Research of this nature would have budgetary and resource limitations. It takes time and money to affect policy change because of the depth of consultation required. However, if the dance community does not unanimously insist on change, policies remain unaltered. It is important to initiate dialogue that is inclusive and does not create a façade of transforming the sector. This would mean artists feel equally empowered to address issues of sustainability with their provincial departments and that dialogue should not remain academic, but should be driven through attainable goals.

In effect, this would set clear guidelines at provincial level and help to eliminate the ambiguities in cultural policies. Often the aims of the provincial government are articulated in broad and vague terms without stipulating *how* they will be fulfilled. For example, one of the strategic objectives of KZNDAC is to

> "Create awareness of different art forms on the Province. Provide a platform for the development of artistic skills for sustainability"

The above statement becomes a grand gesture without stipulating how Province will achieve this and onto whom responsibility for implementation will be placed. Those persons or entities are the ones artists can hold accountable when these objectives are not fulfilled. It would give the bureaucratic machine a human face with whom the arts community can liaise.

Although this study has limitations, the opportunities to engage the sector at a deeper level exists. This can be done through broadening the scope and including a rebuttal from KZNDAC, which would problematize the issue and make the subject more holistic. Also, there is the possibility to identify relevant representatives in the dance community throughout KZN, to table their recommendations and input. There are different ways to interpret the realities that people undergo and drawing attention to the problem from different avenues enables these issues to enter into the public domain, be scrutinized and for government to respond. In order for democracy to function at its optimum citizens and government need to participate in appropriate ways with policies.

Participation by the public can offer alternate perspectives on issues that arise. Citizens should not be excluded from contributing to policy processes. Nevertheless, their role has

to be put into perspective and a balance reached so that public input does not digress too far from the policy trajectory. Citizen participation can to be most effective when structured through advocacy groups. In this way policy advocacy can be steered from the bottom with artists having a platform to present their challenges to Province and offering coherent and practical solutions that do not compromise their artistic integrity; nor jeopardise the mandate of the KZNDAC. Provincial and municipal structures are mandated to provide infrastructural support to theatres and advocacy organizations such as PANSA and ARTerial Network, examples of organizations that can be approached to lobby more fully on behalf of artists.

Issues raised by artists and stakeholders need to be assembled because the hope of a sustainable and thriving sector is an ideal that would alleviate the pressures of many practicing artists. When the interviewees were asked to describe what this ideal world would be in the ACH sector, initially they expressed a need to have the resources to create work that impacts positively in people's lives, as well as having a sector that is supported. The respective comments illustrate this:

> "I do not even know if I want an ideal world. I just want a proper structure that works because if it's an ideal world no one would be creative enough to work hard...I want to work in a way that is going to allow me to be challenged by the situation, by the way in which we live" Gasa (2012)

> "We would perform for people who have the means to attend theatres and even people who do not know there is such a thing as theatre. Schools would be a priority, develop the community so that when people return to their rural homes you know dance is there." Rushualang (2012)

> "In a perfect world people would be earning enough money to pay for the true costs of something. A perfect world that is developing needs to be made up by its government. We are doing work that holds on to the integrity of us not as artists, but the integrity of us as a nation, the integrity of the person on the street. That that is the integrity that we are wanting to address at all times. Sometimes people can forget that, but that's what we're trying to preserve." Pather (2013)

An ideal arts and cultural environment treats its artists with dignity, recognizes that they too are building their livelihoods. Earlier in this study, the complexities of the policy process were presented as so intricately nuanced that artists could misinterpret them. However, the case study made clear that it is misconceived that artists misunderstand the undercurrents that drive the policy environment. For example, the management of *SSDT*, who are performing artists, displayed acute and varying understanding of the necessity of KZNDAC to be transparent and accountable. This demonstrates that the challenge is not that policy processes are misunderstood. Policy can be grasped but civil servants misunderstand the intricacies of the creative process. Sustainability is attainable when the multifaceted nature of the artistic process is represented in the policy process.

4.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is no longer sufficient to accept the status quo of the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector where artists feel policy makers are unapproachable. There is the opportunity to transgress this dilemma and find balance where artists and policy makers engage sufficiently enough to honour both the creative process and policy mandates. Engagement should not be allowed to result in "talk shops" where dialogue occurs, promises are made,

action plans drafted and no one is liable for implementation. Additionally, it is necessary to shift the discourse from theorizing this issue to proactive engagement with different strategies that aim to overcome this impasse. Dance companies are affected as their sustainability is jeopardised, and in turn, the ACH sector is adversely affected.

Academic discussions are necessary to define and understand why events occur. Similarly, applying theories to the lived experience of artists is also important because it enables a better understanding of what takes place through mapping the artist's journeys and experiences with funding. As Holden (2004) suggests, at some point it is relevant and very necessary to problematize the issue of funding through research. However, there also needs to be a budget to follow through in the research and discovering the solutions, otherwise it ends up being an academic discussion, which does not translate on the ground, where artists work and make their livelihoods.

Inevitably, some companies survive better than others survive because they plan, manage challenges, network and keep themselves artistically relevant. The limited resources and funding structures make the industry highly competitive. The cultural policy framework is not single-handedly responsible for the survival of companies as there are other mitigating factors to consider in the internal make-up of arts organizations such as management structure of the organization and their artistic appeal. The policy framework sets the tone and parameters for creativity and creates the boundaries within which stakeholders in the sector operate; as well as the ease with which artists can make a living.

Robust cultural policies contribute significantly in encouraging and supporting artists and art institutions. It is crucial that there is artistic vision and sound leadership as this contributes to the success and sustainability of companies. For example, for a company such as *SSDT* it is in having proactive board members who can diversify the funding sources, network alternatives and create contingencies that ensure their companies are profitable and sustainable.

The ideal of having a sustainable arts and culture sector means that artists have clear channels of support and that their industries are not under threat of closure because of diminishing resources. They can make a living because their organizations are profitable and there is surplus. The ideal for arts organisations is to feel included in cultural policy decisions, have a reciprocated relationship with state organs in charge of policy, as well as clear channels of communication.

Cultural policy is an instrument that artists have at their disposal to effect change. Change is equally their responsibility as it is for government to effect. To be relevant, cultural policies need to strengthen the environment where art is created, practised and consumed. The way dance companies interpret these parameters is vital in understanding the best ways in which policy can serve its arts constituency.

Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre is as Pather (2013) described a "company of ideas" whose concepts have shaped the dance landscape in KwaZulu Natal and abroad. In order for dance companies to continue to produce their best work, they need access to better avenues of funding. Creating a flourishing sector cannot be the responsibility of a few national funding agencies. Provinces and Municipalities can create structures wherein

cultural industries can prosper. Achieving a thriving Arts, Culture and Heritage sector that is productive is possible when there is feedback and consistent review of policies and expectations. Arts industries need to be better funded because it is through this restructuring that sustainability in the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector is attainable.

APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT

STUDY TITLE	:	*Sustainability in arts and culture funding: retrospective exploration of Siwela Sonke Dance Theater, as a case study, 1998 – 2008.*
INVESTIGATOR	:	Welile K Tembe
INSTITUTION	:	Wits School of Arts, Wits University
TELE (day/night)	:	082 720 4085

INFORMED CONSENT

i) I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the investigator, *Welile K Tembe* about the nature and conduct of the research
ii) I have also understood the information regarding the research and interview process.
iii) I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth and initials will be anonymously processed into a study report.
iv) I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
v) I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

PARTICIPANT:

Printed Name **Signature** **Date and Time**

I, *Welile K Tembe*, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

INVESTIGATOR:

Printed Name **Signature** **Date and Time**

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