Supporting Learning Cities: A Case Study of the Cities Alliance

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1. Introduction

Support for knowledge sharing between cities is a prominent trend in current urban development cooperation (UN-Habitat and World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination [WACLAC], 2003). Sharing the experiences of successful initiatives in urban poverty alleviation in one city is perceived to strengthen governance capacity in another city facing similar challenges (UN, 1992; UN-Habitat and WACLAC, 2003). Effective local governance capacity is herein described as the ability to promote intervention strategies that address locally-specific dynamics of urban poverty (Johnson and Wilson, 2009; Satterthwaite, 2001; UN, 1992; Wegelin & Borgman, 1995). Therefore, knowledge sharing can strengthen government capacity in so far as the relevancy of foreign policy practices for local contexts is deciphered.

Scholarly literature distinguishes between rationalist and post-rationalist approaches to knowledge sharing (Ferguson et al., 2010; McFarlane, 2006; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). Knowledge sharing activities in the rationalist approach focus on identifying and disseminating successful practices across time and space (McFarlane, 2006; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). In the post-rationalist approach, knowledge sharing activities facilitate spaces to examine underpinning assumptions and theories of a particular policy exemplar, to see how it was shaped by its local context and whether (or how) it could be adapted elsewhere (Jakimow, 2008; Johnson and Wilson, 2009). Therefore, the post-rationalist approach to knowledge sharing could strengthen local governance capacity in promoting effective poverty alleviation strategies.

There is limited understanding of the types of knowledge sharing practices that have gained currency in urban development cooperation. Partly, this is because the literature that examines city-to-city (C2C) learning processes is only recent (Bontenbal, 2009; Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; McFarlane, 2011; Stren, 2008). Examining knowledge sharing practice in urban development cooperation could contribute to a better understanding of whether and how they correspond to the realities of policymaking as a space where ideas compete to inform practice (Bulkeley, 2006; Soroka, 2007; Stone, 1988). A particular policy approach provides justifiable, but nonetheless contestable ideas of the nature of a policy problem and its causal factors (Ibid). Therefore, policy ideas should be critically examined. A post-rationalist approach to knowledge

sharing could enable policy learners to contest policy ideas, whereas a rationalist approach could constrain such an opportunity.

This study attempts to contribute to literature on C2C learning by answering one question, that is, to what extent do C2C learning processes supported by the Cities Alliance (CA) use rationalist or post-rationalist approaches to knowledge sharing? The CA is a global urban development network of international development agencies, national and local governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (CA, 2011b). The study investigates knowledge sharing practices in four modalities of C2C learning supported by the CA. The first initiative is the Johannesburg and Lilongwe mentorship programme, a bilateral municipal partnership. The second initiative is the Peer Experience and Reflective Learning (PEARL) network in India. The third modality of support promotes replication of CA-supported slum upgrading and city development strategy (CDS) projects. The fourth and final modality of support is CA's strategy to disseminate best practices in slum upgrading and CDS.

The structure of this paper contains five sections after this introduction. Section two outlines the research design and methods used to generate and analyze data. Section three describes the nature of urban governance challenges in developing countries, and the potential of knowledge sharing as a capacity-building tool for local governance. It goes on to develop a conceptual framework that distinguishes between the rationalist and post-rationalist knowledge sharing approaches. Section four presents empirical evidence of knowledge sharing practice in the four C2C learning modalities supported by the CA. Section five characterizes the nature of knowledge sharing practice by their rationalist and/or post-rationalist orientation. The final section proposes measures from the post-rationalist approach to enhance the impact of C2C learning supported by the CA.

2. Methodology

This study was designed as a qualitative case-study. Data sources were identified through 'desk research'. They consisted of annual reports, policy documents, brochures, electronic newsletters (e-newsletters), and project evaluation reports and presentation material. Data analysis entailed identifying the typology and objectives of knowledge sharing activities used in the four modalities of support to C2C learning. Characterization of the typology and objectives

of knowledge sharing activities was distinguished between the rationalist and post-rationalist lesson-drawing approaches, which are presented in subsequent sections.

The most significant limitation to the empirical evidence presented herein is that it is not triangulated with interviews and direct observation (Yin, 2003). Some practitioner data sources contained interviews. While using interview data from those sources is not an ideal approach to triangulate data, it provided a more direct account of C2C learning processes supported by the CA.

3. Urban Governance Capacity and Policy-oriented Learning

3.1 Capacity-building for Urban Poverty Alleviation

Urbanization in developing countries is characterized by increasing levels of poverty (Bontenbal, 2009; Cohen, 2006; Wegelin & Borgman, 1995). According to estimates by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), cities in developing countries grew at a rate of 58 million people per year between the years of 2000 to 2010 (UN-Habitat, 2010a p. xiv). More significantly, slum populations increased by 61 million over the same period, from 767 million people to an estimated 828 million people (UN-Habitat, 2010a p. 33). The proliferation of slums during this period offers a clear picture of general levels of poverty because slum development is linked to multiple types of deprivation associated with urban poverty (UN-Habitat, 2006, 2010a; Satterthwaite, 2001; Wegelin & Borgman, 1995). They include inadequate income; shelter; material and non-material assets; access to public infrastructure such as piped water and solid waste disposal systems; provision of basic services such as health and education; income safety nets; legal protection; and political power (Ibid).

Effective urban poverty alleviation requires local authorities to identify and tackle the complex relationships between economic, social, and environmental factors that affect the welfare of low-income communities (Bontenbal, 2009; Satterthwaite, 2001; UN, 1992; UN-Habitat and WACLAC, 2003; Wegelin & Borgman, 1995). However, most local governments in developing countries lack the capacity to mitigate dynamics that contribute to urban poverty (Satterthwaite, 2001; UN-Habitat, 2006). Inadequate governance capacity is partly the result of high demand for affordable basic services and infrastructure from a rapidly growing poor urban population (Cohen, 2006). In response, the international development community has identified

strategic areas of capacity-building for effective urban management. They are articulated in the Local Agenda 21 and Habitat Agenda 21, key outcomes of two global United Nations conferences in the 1990s (Ewijk and Baud, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; Satterthwaite, 2001; UN-Habitat and WACLAC, 2003).

The Local Agenda 21 was adopted following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) of 1992 (Johnson and Wilson, 2009). It defined 'effective capacity' as "…the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options, based on an understanding of environmental potentials and limits and of needs as perceived by the people of the country concerned" (UN, 1992 section IV, para. 37.1). The Habitat Agenda was adopted following the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements of 1996 (UN-Habitat and WACLAC, 2003). It conceptualized capacity-building around decentralized and participatory urban management processes (UN-Habitat, 1996 para. 177). Decentralized urban management refers to the ability of local government authorities to set priorities for sustainable urban development, and monitor and coordinate activities by international, national, and local actors to respond to those priorities (Bontenbal, 2009; Wegelin & Borgman, 1995). To ensure that intervention strategies reflect the priorities of low-income communities, effective local government capacity also requires mechanisms for participatory decision-making and collaborative implementation (Bontenbal, 2009; UN-Habitat, 1996).

Both the Local Agenda 21 and Habitat Agenda promote knowledge sharing between cities as a capacity-building tool for local governance (Bontenbal, 2009; Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; UN-Habitat and WACLAC, 2003; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). To understand the potentials and limitations of knowledge sharing practices as tools to improve local governance, the next section develops a conceptual framework of rationalist and post-rationalist approaches to knowledge sharing. The framework draws from literatures on public policy analysis, development theory, and organizational studies to present two competing views on the nature of knowledge, and the outcomes of knowledge sharing. Therefore, it allows for systematic examination of knowledge sharing practices, and their potential impact on local governance capacity for poverty alleviation.

3.2 A Conceptual Framework on Policy-oriented Learning

Lesson-drawing is a popular concept in literature on comparative public policy and international relations (Evans, 2009; Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Dolowitz and Medearis, 2009; Grin and Loeber, 2007; Hulme, 2005; James and Lodge, 2003; Stone, 1999, 2004). It refers to the use of policy experience across time and space to inform policy development (Stone, 2004; Rose, 1991). Key agents in lesson-drawing include elected officials, civil servants, interest group representatives, policy entrepreneurs, experts, consultants, think tanks, transnational corporations, international organizations, and transnational policy networks (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Rose, 1991; Stone, 2004). Traditionally, lesson-drawing studies focus on demand by domestic policy makers for evidence of successful practice by their counterparts at home or abroad (Stone, 2004; Rose, 1991). However, contemporary studies demonstrate growing interest in the promotion of lesson-drawing by transnational and international agents (Benson and Jordan, 2011; Reinicke et al., 2000; Stone, 2004). Transnational agents are non-state actors whose activities permeate and transcend nation-state boundaries (Stone, 2004); while international agents operate within state-to-state relationships (Evans and Davies, 1999). Transnational and international agents can jointly promote lesson-drawing within quasi-state structures known as global public policy networks (Stone, 2004), such as the CA.

Lessons that can be drawn from policy experience include policy (goals, contents, and instruments), institutions, ideologies, attitudes and cultural values (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Dolowitz and Medearis, 2009). The literature on international relations, development theory, and organizational studies distinguishes between rationalist and post-rationalist knowledge sharing models (Ferguson et al., 2010; McFarlane, 2006; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). These models offer competing views on how lessons are derived from policy experience. On the one hand, rationalist lesson-drawing focuses on accurately capturing similarities and differences between the importing and exporting contexts to determine the transferability of policy knowledge and practice (Page and Mark-Lawson, 2007; Meseguer, 2005; Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Rose, 1991, 2005). On the other hand, the post-rationalist model envisages lesson-drawing as a process of producing new knowledge through critical examination of different bodies of knowledge from both the importing and exporting contexts (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Jakimow, 2008; Johnson and Wilson, 2009). As discussed in subsequent sections, the rationalist and post-rationalist models

arrive at their distinct conclusions on lesson-drawing from the different views they hold on the nature of policy knowledge, and by extension the principles and means by which to share policy knowledge and experience.

3.2.1 Rationalist lesson-drawing model

Rationalist lesson-drawing characterizes knowledge as a dominantly explicit entity that can be codified in conceptual and systematized forms (Ellerman, 1999; Nonaka et al., 2000; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). Conceptual knowledge is expressed as images, symbols, and language; and systematized knowledge is expressed in documents, manuals, and databases (McFarlane, 2006; Nonaka et al., 2000; Johnson and Wilson, 2009). From the rationalist view, both conceptual and systematized forms of knowledge do not change in their nature when shared between lesson-drawing agents (Ferguson et al., 2010; McFarlane, 2006), and should therefore be universally intelligible and applicable. Learning is therefore fostered by effectively capturing and disseminating codified knowledge, particularly using information and communication technology (ICT) (Ferguson et al., 2010; McFarlane, 2006; McGarth and King, 2004; Weber and Khademian, 2008). ICT-based tools such as telephone-conferencing systems, e-mail, and virtual discussion boards enable lesson-drawing agents to collaborate across time and space (Velden, 2002). Other ICT-based tools such as databases, portals, intranets, and extranets enable agents to share conceptual and systematized knowledge (Ibid).

The rationalist epistemological view underpins conceptions of prospective evaluation in lesson-drawing studies (Dolowitz and Medearis, 2009; Meseguer, 2005; Mossberger and Wolman, 2003). Popularized by Richard Rose, prospective evaluation is the process by which "…policymakers assess the effects of a proposed policy or program before it is put into place" (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003 p. 428). The objective is to identify the implementation process of a policy or programme in its original context, and to determine if the conditions necessary for successful outcomes can be achieved in a foreign context (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Rose, 1991). A conceptual model of the policy or programme exemplar is developed to identify intended objectives, implementation processes, and achieved outcomes (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996; Evans, 2009; Page and Mark-Lawson, 2007; Rose, 1991). It also contextualizes the policy or programme exemplar in its historical, institutional, and normative environment (Rose, 1991). Data generated in the conceptual model are used to design pilot projects "…under different

assumptions to test the sensitivity of outcomes to variations in operating conditions [in the importing context]" (Rose, 1991 p.23). In other words, prospective evaluation is likened to an engineering process whereby key inputs are identified and adjusted in order to replicate successful processes and outcomes in a different context.

The contemporary literature on comparative public policy introduces at least two challenges of Rose's rationalist depiction of prospective evaluation in lesson-drawing processes (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Dolowitz and Medearis, 2009; Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Page and Mark-Lawson, 2007). First, policymakers have limited resources, time, and analytical capabilities to conduct systematic and comprehensive analysis of a policy or programme approach (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Page and Mark-Lawson, 2007). Second, it is not always clear what factors contribute to the success of a policy or programme even after rigorous evaluation and documentation (Page and Mark-Lawson, 2007).

In response to the limitations raised against rationalist prospective evaluation, current lesson-drawing studies propose a bounded-rationality approach to prospective evaluation (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Page and Mark-Lawson, 2007). Advocates of the bounded-rationalist approach suggest that prospective evaluation should focus on producing high quality policy lessons (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003). This can be achieved by diversifying both the range of stakeholders who share their perspectives on a particular policy approach, and the typology of activities used by learners to share knowledge (Ibid). Broadening the range of stakeholders in knowledge sharing processes "…means finding and talking to knowledgeable observers and experts, including social scientists, and not solely to program operators and advocates" (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003 p. 436). As a result, lessons could better reflect the constraints encountered during implementation and shortcomings in achieved outcomes (Ibid). In addition, by including face-to-face contact lesson-drawing agents can share tacit knowledge that is difficult to capture in reports or documents (Dolowitz and Medearis, 2009; Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Rose, 2005). As a result, learners can better understand the implementation processes and outcomes of a policy or programme approach (Ibid).

Bounded-rationality studies also propose that a restriction of lesson-drawing processes to similar contexts can minimize the risk of policy failure (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003). Lesson-drawing can result in policy failure if it based on inappropriate transfer (Dolowitz and

Marsh, 2000). Inappropriate transfer occurs when "insufficient attention [is] paid to the differences between the economic, social, political and ideological contexts in the transferring and borrowing countries" (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000 p. 17). Similar importing and exporting polities share economic, social, political and/or ideological characteristics (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003). Therefore, a bounded search for policy exemplars between similar contexts could minimize the risk of policy failure (Ibid).

While these proposals are an improvement to prospective evaluation, they obscure the subjective nature of policy problem definitions (Soroka, 2007), and cause-effect relationships embodied by a particular policy or programme exemplar (Stone, 1988). The proposal to improve the quality of policy knowledge by exchanging knowledge with multiple policy stakeholders envisages lesson-drawing as a process of 'stacking up' evidence on a policy exemplar (McFarlane, 2006). Moreover, the proposed use of face-to-face knowledge sharing mechanisms is instrumental to generating data for prospective evaluation designs (Dolowitz and Medearis, 2009; Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Rose, 2005). As a result, the bounded-rationality approach to prospective evaluation ignores the more substantial issue of contesting the subjective meanings of social reality advocated by a particular policy or programme approach (Bulkeley, 2006; McFarlane, 2006). It is argued here that the post-rationalist approach to knowledge sharing is a better alternative to policy-oriented learning because it facilitates spaces for lesson-drawing agents to critically examine policy knowledge (Jakimow, 2008; Johnson and Wilson, 2009). The next section elaborates the significance of adopting a post-rationalist lesson-drawing model particularly in the international development sector.

3.2.2 Post-rationalist lesson-drawing model

The post-rationalist model defines knowledge as the meaning ascribed to reality by an individual or organization (Mehta, 2001; Nonaka et al., 2000; Powell, 2006). Meaning is rooted in the beliefs, values, identity, and commitments held by a knower in a particular context (McFarlane, 2006; Powell, 2006). Therefore, a body of knowledge is specific to the knower, and should be justified for its relevancy to shape social processes (Ferguson et al., 2010; McFarlane, 2006). Such is the perspective advanced in post-development theory, which posits that effective poverty alleviation strategies must engage different bodies of knowledge, particularly those

originating from developing countries (Ferguson et al., 2010; Jakimow, 2008; McFarlane, 2006; Sahle, 2009).

Early post-development thinkers criticized international development agencies for marginalizing knowledge originating from developing countries by treating the experiences of Western countries as universal models of social transformation (Cooper and Packard, 2005; Johnson, 2009; Sahle, 2009). In so doing, development agencies failed to identify the limitations and potentials of knowledge external to the diverse poverty contexts across developing regions (Hewitt, 2000; Johnson, 2009). From the post-development perspective, negative outcomes of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1990s are illustrative of the limitations of uncritical knowledge processes in the development sector (Johnson, 2009; Sahle, 2009). SAPs were an attempt by the World Bank and IMF to curb the debt crisis that affected developing economies in the 1970s (Hewitt, 2000). However, the World Bank and IMF deployed SAPs in a blue-print fashion, rather than critically examine the relevancy of their underpinning neo-liberal economic theory for each development context (Ibid). As a result, SAPs are attributed with exacerbating poverty conditions in developing countries following a decade of their implementation (Ibid).

Contemporary post-development scholars commend earlier thinkers for advancing a critical perspective on the application of development knowledge (Johnson, 2009; Nygren, 1999; Sahle, 2009). However, they critique the romantic view of local knowledge in earlier literature, which suggests that local knowledge is sufficient to address poverty challenges in developing countries (Ibid). This inward-looking knowledge process is perceived to be equally ineffective as the universal application of knowledge originating from a different context (Nygren, 1999; Ziai, 2004). More specifically, it fails to perceive that differences in class, gender, and belief systems generate competing ideas at the local level concerning the nature of social reality and appropriate measures to improve human welfare (Nygren, 1999). A better alternative suggested in contemporary literature is to critically examine the assumptions on which development intervention strategies are based by synthesizing bodies of knowledge at the local and global levels (Jakimow, 2008; Ziai, 2004).

Studies on C2C learning suggest that mutuality promotes critical examination of urban development approaches by defining parameters within which to constructively engage different

perspectives on poverty challenges (Bontenbal, 2009; Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; van Ewjik and Baud, 2009). These parameters are defined by four conditions namely, epistemic parity, equal status and influence, trust, and relevant engagement (de Villiers, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; Tjandradewi and Marcotullio, 2009; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). Current literature examines the nature of these conditions within bilateral municipal partnerships (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). However, this paper extends the notion of mutuality to non-partnership C2C learning processes because they should also foster critical examination of policy knowledge shared across time and space.

Epistemic parity refers to recognition of different perspectives in urban development processes (Johnson and Wilson, 2009). Urban development perspectives are posited to differ between organizational sectors, gender identity, and spatial levels (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; UN-Habitat, 2010b). Current urban development discourse highlights the role of public, market and voluntary sectors in tackling urban poverty challenges (UN-Habitat, 2006). Each sector is perceived to have a comparative advantage in urban management processes that can be harnessed through distinct, but complementary roles in intervention strategies (Ibid). Therefore, in fulfilling their roles, actors in the respective sectors arguably gain distinct understandings of urban poverty issues (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009). Promoting epistemic parity between the public, market and voluntary sectors could therefore contribute to a holistic understanding of urban poverty, and inform effective policy responses (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009).

Gender is a significant dimension of epistemic parity in urban development processes because women and girls are impacted in distinct and important ways by urban poverty dynamics (UN-Habitat, 2010b). For example, women and girls face disproportionately higher degrees of depravation in terms of land tenure rights, housing finance, and physical security, all of which indicate that urban poverty is linked to gender inequality (Ibid). Therefore, developing a holistic understanding of the impact of urban development intervention strategies requires engagement with perspectives of female urban residents. However, epistemic parity between gender- and sector-based perspectives is believed to be most significant when it transcends beyond the local level and into regional and international levels (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Johnson and Wilson,

2009). In particular, cultural difference across spatial levels could help identify assumptions shared across gender- and sector-based perspectives that originate from the same spatial level (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009).

Mutuality based on equal status and influence enables importing and exporting agents to identify and contest particular world-views espoused by each other (Johnson and Wilson, 2009). In other words, asymmetrical levels of status and influence act as a blinder to differences in the competency and experience in a particular practice (Wenger, 2000). As a result, world-views rooted in differences in competency and experience remain obscure, and are therefore not critically examined. More significantly, knowledge sharing becomes unidirectional (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009); with the party with a higher level of competency and broader experience believing it is transmitting the 'right' knowledge (Ellerman, 1999; Mehta, 2001).

Trust as a component of mutuality is integral to reflexive lesson-drawing processes because it promotes the transparency needed for lesson-drawing agents to honestly examine their assumptions and adjust them accordingly (Johnson and Wilson, 2009). Trust can be developed through flexibility, appreciation of diversity and openness (van Ewjik and Baud, 2009). Trust can also be built between lesson-drawing agents who identify and develop "…a similar foundation of theoretical knowledge… and discourse of problem definition and problem-solving" (Johnson and Wilson, 2009 p. 212). Moreover, frequent, informal contact could also build trust between lesson-drawing agents (de Villiers, 2009; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009).

Finally, mutuality through relevant engagement provides the shared context necessary for lesson-drawing agents to negotiate meanings underpinning policy knowledge (Johnson and Wilson, 2009; van Ewjik and Baud, 2009). Activities for relevant engagement facilitate spaces for shared experience, reflection, conceptualization and experimentation (Johnson and Wilson, 2009). These spaces require participants to engage as active learners (Ellerman, 1999; Johnson and Wilson, 2009). Therefore, in cases where lesson-drawing agents are limited in their capacity as active learners, the mutual learning perspective focuses on developing tools to help them participate as such (Ellerman, 1999; Jakimow, 2008). Potential tools can target capacity in evaluating and implementing concepts, and interpreting concepts to local contexts (Jakimow, 2008).

Knowledge sharing activities for mutual learning

Activities in the post-rationalist lesson-drawing model enable participants to share both codified and tacit dimensions of knowledge (Brown and Duguid, 2001; McFarlane, 2006). Unlike codified knowledge, which is explicit in nature, tacit knowledge is rooted in experience and routine (Nonaka et al., 2000). Experience-based tacit knowledge emerges as skills and know-how while routine-based tacit knowledge stems from day-to-day operations and organizational culture (Ibid). Some tacit dimensions of knowledge can be codified; however, they are largely implicit and difficult to share (Ellerman, 1999; McFarlane, 2006). The tacit dimension of knowledge situates explicit forms of knowledge in particular social, historical and physical contexts (Brown and Duguid, 2001; Nonaka et al., 2000). Therefore, sharing both tacit and codified dimensions of knowledge situates meaning in the particular contexts it is produced (Ibid).

Tacit and codified dimensions of knowledge are shared using different mechanisms (Brown and Duguid, 2001; Nonaka et al., 2000; Weber and Khademian, 2008). As mentioned earlier, the codified dimension of knowledge can be shared through verbal and written mediums of communication (McFarlane, 2006; Nonaka et al., 2000; Johnson and Wilson, 2009). Tacit knowledge can be shared through face-to-face interaction such as workshops, discussions, and study tours (Ellerman, 1999; Ellerman et al., 2001; McGarth and King, 2004; Velden, 2002). From a post-rationalist perspective, deployment of activities to share both codified and tacit dimensions of knowledge should be informed by a critical perspective of the power-relationships they create between participants (McFarlane, 2006; Powell, 2006). For example, study tours are influenced by a host-guest relationship, which could deter honest dialogue about the challenges and short-comings of a policy or program (Page and Marks-Lawson, 2007). Moreover, ICT-based knowledge sharing tools could marginalize policy stakeholders in developing regions because of limited access to ICT infrastructure (Ferguson et al., 2010; Mawdsley, 2006; McFarlane, 2006). The Internet is particularly exclusionary because while content is dominantly in the English language; majority of populations in developing countries are non-English speakers (Powell, 2006).

3.2.3 Limitations and potentials of rationalist and post-rationalist lesson-drawing processes

Whereas the rationalist model deploys mechanisms to share codified knowledge, the post-rationalist model deploys mechanisms to share both tacit and codified dimensions of knowledge (McFarlane, 2006; Nonaka et al., 2000). Even though contemporary studies in rationalist lesson-drawing adopt a post-rationalist epistemological view, recognition of the tacit and codified dimensions of knowledge is limited to instrumentalist functions (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003; Rose, 2005). A rationalist instrumentalist perspective in prospective evaluation does not explore how meaning is embodied in the interrelationship between tacit and codified dimensions of knowledge (Brown and Duguid, 2001; Nonaka et al., 2000; McFarlane, 2006). Instead, it perceives that sharing both dimensions of knowledge will aid in accurately modelling a policy or programme exemplar, and in turn produce accurate lessons on transferability (Rose, 1991, 2005; Mossberger and Wolman, 2003). In contrast, the post-rationalist lesson-drawing approach aims to identify how tacit and codified dimensions of policy knowledge are shaped by their context, and in turn critically examine the implications they could have in a different context (Brown and Duguid, 2001; Jakimow, 2008; Nonaka et al., 2000; McFarlane, 2006). Therefore, the post-rationalist model has greater potential to strengthen local governance capacity through knowledge sharing. The distinctions highlighted between the rationalist and post-rationalist lesson-drawing models will be later deployed to systematically examine knowledge sharing practices in the four modalities of support to C2C learning presented in the next section.

4. The Cities Alliance and C2C Learning

4.1 History, Membership and Organizational Structure

The CA was established in 1999 by the World Bank and UN-Habitat to improve the quality and impact of urban development cooperation (Cities Alliance [CA], 2008b). Its mandate is to improve donor coordination and to support urban poverty alleviation initiatives identified by cities themselves (CA, 2011b). Donor coordination and client ownership are key tenants in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, to which some of the CA members are signatories (CA, 2008b). The Declaration encourages donors to work together in order to minimize wasted resources such as duplicated projects and programs (OECD, 2011). Moreover, it identifies client ownership as necessary for development aid to respond to priority areas in poverty alleviation

(Ibid). Local government ownership of development cooperation intervention is believed to be centrally important for effective urban poverty alleviation because local government agencies provide public services that impact the quality of life for low-income communities (Satterthwaite, 2001; UN, 1992; Wengelin and Borgman, 1995).

Current membership of the CA consists of multilateral and bilateral donors, local authority organizations, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Multilateral organizations are represented by the European Union, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), World Bank and UN-Habitat (CA, 2010a). There are sixteen bilateral donors represented by governments of both developed and developing countries (Ibid). These countries are Australia, Brazil, Chile, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States of America (Ibid). Local government organizations are represented by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Metropolis (Ibid). Lastly, INGOs are represented by Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) and Slum Dwellers International (SDI) (Ibid).

The CA is organized into four structures. They are the Consultative Group (CG), Executive Committee (EXCO), Policy Advisory Forum (PAF) and Secretariat (CA, 2011b). The CG determines the CA annual work programme, activities and budget (Ibid). It is co-chaired by the World Bank Vice-President for Sustainable Development and UN-Habitat's Executive Director (Ibid). EXCO oversees operationalization of the CA annual work-plan by the Secretariat, and is accountable to the CG (CA, 2010a). PAF is a forum for policy debates between the CG and external stakeholders such as universities, NGOs, and private sector organizations (CA, 2011b). Lastly, the Secretariat provides administrative support to CA members, and is divided into four units that are overseen by the Programme Manager (CA, 2010b). It is located at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C. and has regional staff members in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (CA, n.d.e).

4.1.2 Urban development approaches and C2C learning

The CA supports knowledge sharing of urban development practices in city development strategies (CDSs) and slum upgrading (CA, 2005, 2011a, 2011b). A CDS is a strategic, long-term framework for economic development and poverty alleviation activities (CA, 2003, 2005).

Slum upgrading deals specifically with housing needs in low-income communities, and can include the provision of secure tenure, sewage disposal systems, water, and shelter (Bredenoord and van Lindert, 2010; CA, 1999; UN-Habitat, 2006).

Subsequent sections examine knowledge sharing of urban development practices in four modalities of C2C learning supported by the CA. The first modality is the Johannesburg-Lilongwe Mentorship Programme. The initiative was partly financed by the CA through an initial grant of US $ 72, 375 and a subsequent grant of US $249,000 (CA, n.d.d, CA, n.d.f). The second modality is the PEARL network, which received a 3-year grant from the CA of US $ 500,000 (CA, 2010c). The third modality refers to approaches to promote replication of CA-supported slum upgrading and CDS projects. The fourth modality is the CA dissemination strategy of best practices in slum upgrading and CDS. Descriptive accounts of these modalities are outlined below in four sections, followed by a similar set of sections that discuss the rationalist and post-rationalist orientation of those modalities.

4.2 The Johannesburg (South Africa)-Lilongwe (Malawi) Mentorship Programme

The Johannesburg-Lilongwe mentorship programme began in 2008 and ended in 2010 (Erasmus, 2009; Thorpe, 2011). The main objective of the partnership was to strengthen the capacity of the City of Lilongwe (CoL) in developing a CDS by drawing lessons from the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) (CA, 2009a, 2010e; Davie, 2010; Thorpe, 2011). The CoJ had achieved positive outcomes in two CDSs, giving it a wealth of knowledge to share with the CoL (CA, 2004, 2010e; Davie, 2010; Naidoo, 2009). Key areas of experience that the CoL hoped to learn about included measures to improve delivery in basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and gas (CA, 2002, 2004). In addition, CoL aimed to transform its budgetary position from deficit to surplus operation (CA, 2002).

Although the challenges Lilongwe aspired to tackle and those successfully managed by Johannesburg made the substantive focus of the partnership a suitable match, the partnership was perceived to be problematic by a programme officer of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), based in Malawi (Kitchin, 2009). He argued that "[w]hile Johannesburg has a lot of resources and is better organised to carry out its activities, Lilongwe is much behind in these aspects and the gap is just too wide for the mentorship exercise to work well" (as cited in

Kitchin, 2009 p.7). However, evidence suggests that the mentorship programme was successful in strengthening capacity within the Lilongwe City Assembly (LCA). A key improvement to local governance capacity is the CDS itself, which "… equipped [the LCA] with a tool to manage [its] tasks in an integrated manner, to communicate tasks and needs, to measure performance and to attend to priorities based on local decisions that involved key stakeholders" (UCLG, 2010a p. 2). Other capacity areas strengthened as a result of the mentorship programme include financial reforms that enabled the LCA to achieve budget surplus (Thorpe, 2011). In addition, there are functioning street lights and traffic signals in Lilongwe, and corrupt practices in the city market have decreased (Ibid). Moreover, there is higher staff morale within the LCA because of their capacity to effectively manage development in the CoL (Ibid).

4.2.1 Overview of the Lilongwe CDS Development Process

The Lilongwe CDS was developed in three phases divided into preparation, development and implementation planning (CA, n.d.f; Erasmus, 2009; Naidoo, 2009). In the preparatory phase, an analysis of key challenges in the LCA was conducted (CA, n.d.f; Naidoo, 2009). In the second phase, the vision, goals, objectives, priority areas and action plan of the CDS were developed (Naidoo, 2009). In the third phase, the timeline, anticipated sources of funding, and a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system were identified (Davie, 2010; Naidoo, 2009).

In this paper, analysis of knowledge sharing activities that facilitated the development of Lilongwe's CDS focuses on the nature of contact sessions between participants. In addition, it examines knowledge sharing activities to develop the State of the Lilongwe City (SLC) report and its related Stabilization Strategy. The SLC and Stabilization Strategy were developed in the first and second phase, respectively (Erasmus, 2011). Findings of both foci of the analysis are presented below.

4.2.1.1 Contact sessions: typology of lesson-drawing agents and nature of interaction

The Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams maintained regular contact during the course of the mentorship programme (CA, 2010d; CoJ, 2009; Kitchin, 2009). The Lilongwe task team constituted of both an internal and external group (CA, 2010d). Members of the internal group were officials of the LCA, Malawi Local Government Association (MALGA), UN-Habitat, and JICA (Ibid). Members of the external group were local businesses, non-governmental

organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs), professional institutions, and other related organizations (Ibid). The Johannesburg task team included official and staff members (Ibid).

Initial contact sessions between the CoJ and CoL preceded a political agreement between local officials from the respective municipalities (Thorpe, 2011). The objective of these sessions was for the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams to jointly define key partnership objectives and activities to address capacity challenges specific to the LCA (CA, 2010d; Erasmus, 2009). For example, inclusion of a preparatory phase was designed to improve the poor quality of data on Lilongwe's urban policy and institutional framework (CA, 2010d; UCLG, 2010b). This and other outcomes of pre-agreement contact sessions would latter constitute the verbal agreement between the CoJ and CoL (CA, 2010d).

Participation by both internal and external groups of the Lilongwe task team was facilitated during contact sessions in Lilongwe (CA, 2010d; CoJ, 2009). For example, 80 representatives from public, business and community organizations participated in a workshop held during the preparatory phase (CoJ, 2009). The workshop included presentations and discussions on the situational analysis provided in the SLC report by the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams (CA, 2010d; CoJ, 2009). The objective of the SLC report was to identify the institutional structures, donor projects, and stakeholder groups relevant to developing and implementing Lilongwe's CDS (CA, n.d.c; Naidoo, 2009). Participants confirmed findings in the SLC report (CoJ, 2009). In addition, they stressed the need for measures to re-dress the LCA's decision-making and administrative capacity gaps (CoJ, 2009). This resulted in the production of the Stabilization Strategy discussed later (CA, 2010d; UCLG, n.d.). At the end of the workshop, a survey was conducted that indicated high levels of satisfaction by participants with the activities and outcomes of the mentorship programme at the time (CoJ, 2009).

Contact sessions between the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams brought to light differences in policy language and organizational cultures (CA, 2010d). For example, participants identified differences in land tenure terminology and policy labels that limited understanding between them (Ibid). To clarify meaning in the policy language used during contact sessions, the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams developed a common language over time (Ibid). Another difference that emerged during contact sessions was the function of lunch

break in the municipal governments of Johannesburg and Lilongwe (Ibid). Whereas lunch break is strictly reserved for personal activities in Lilongwe, in Johannesburg it can be used for informal collaboration in official activities (Ibid). In response to this difference, the Johannesburg task team limited CDS-related engagement to official working-hours while in Lilongwe (Ibid).

4.2.1.2 Capacity-building activities

The SLC report and Stabilization Strategy were key capacity-building activities in the mentorship programme between Johannesburg and Lilongwe (CA, n.d.d, 2010d; Erasmus, 2009; Naidoo, 2009). The Lilongwe and Johannesburg task teams jointly produced the SLC report (CA, 2010d). The Johannesburg task team generated the draft report because their counterparts in Lilongwe lacked the skills and technical know-how to carry out the task on their own (Ibid). Data were generated through desk research and intensive interviews that captured embedded knowledge among LCA staff (CA, 2010d; Erasmus, 2009). The Lilongwe task team reviewed the draft to validate its content and provided missing information (CA, 2010d). This peer-review process involved reconciling different understandings of urban development challenges in Lilongwe (CA, 2010d; UCLG, 2010b). For example, different definitions and measurements of sanitation infrastructure used by national and international organizations depicted variable levels of poor sanitation services in Lilongwe (Ibid).

The Stabilization Strategy was formulated by the Johannesburg task team, and confirmed by the Lilongwe task team (CoJ, 2009). Implementation of the strategy included the appointment of a Chief Executive by the LCA to oversee the development and implementation processes of the Lilongwe CDS (CoJ, 2009; Erasmus, 2009; UCLG, n.d.). In addition, the CoJ task force introduced to the LCA administrative and management processes such as minute-taking, agenda-setting, work-planning, and data-collection (Kitchin, 2009). Moreover, a new fleet of vehicles were purchased and updates were made to the LCA's information technology system (CoJ, 2009; Erasmus, 2009; Thorpe, 2011).

4.3 The Peer Experience and Reflective Learning (PEARL) network

The PEARL network was formed in 2007 by the Government of India Ministry of Urban Development (CA, 2010b). It consists of 65 city-members who are organized into clusters (CA, 2010b; GoI, 2011). Each cluster shares similar socio-economic conditions; urban poverty challenges; and demographic features (PEARL, 2011b). There are six city-clusters within PEARL namely, Mega Cities, Industrial Cities; Mixed Economy Cities; Cultural Cities; Cities of Environmental Importance; and North-East Cities (Ibid). Each city-cluster has a convener and knowledge managers to support members in sharing their experience in implementing projects and undertaking reforms in accordance with the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) (CA, 2010b; PEARL, 2009b). JNNURM is India's first comprehensive urban development strategy to realize economically viable and socially equitable cities through strategic investment (GoI, 2011).

Key knowledge sharing activities supported by the PEARL network include workshops, site visits and the PEARL website (www.indiaurbanportal.in). There are two types of workshops namely, national and international. National workshops are designed for individual city-clusters to share their knowledge in JNNURM practices and knowledge-sharing methods (PEARL, 2009d). For example, the national workshop for the Mega Cities cluster in July 2009 brought together local actors from public and market sectors (Ibid). There were also representatives from local and international organizations whose operations explore environmental and governance issues (Ibid). City-members shared their experience in implementing reforms in property tax systems, e-governance, financial management, and municipal service delivery (Ibid). Discussions also explored measures to support knowledge sharing practices through ICT-based tools (Ibid). In addition, participants suggested forming a group that could consist of national and international experts to identify challenges shared between city-cluster members and develop measures for intervention (Ibid).

International workshops facilitate knowledge sharing of peer-to-peer learning methods (CA, 2010b; PEARL, 2009e). For example, in November 2009 the Ministry of Urban Development, India's National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the Administrative Staff College of India hosted a workshop to draw lessons from peer-to-peer learning initiatives at local and regional levels (PEARL, 2009e). The workshop highlighted learning support provided by

the Bangladesh learning program to improve local governance accountability, and working relationships between local and national levels of government (Ibid). Presentations also featured initiatives by individual PEARL city-clusters to improve the quality of and access to information; manage peer-to-peer learning; and establish links with other networks (Ibid). Participants included national government officials, training institutions, and the CA (Ibid).

The PEARL facilitated another international workshop in July 2010 with assistance from the World Bank and the CA (CA, 2010b). Assistance went into "designing the workshop, identifying global good practices and preparing briefs for the presenters" (Ibid). There were an estimated 40 participants representing local and international government agencies, NGOs, IFIs, and professional organizations (CA, 2010b; PEARL, 2010b). The workshop highlighted peer-to-peer learning approaches supported by the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP); the South African Cities Network (SACN); city consortiums in Brazil; and various horizontal learning networks in Bangladesh (PEARL, 2010b). In addition, panel discussions identified measures to improve communication between cities; underpin learning support using long- and short-term goals; and identify and discourage bad practices (Ibid).

The PEARL facilitates study tours to "create manageable networks between JNNURM cities for cross learning and sharing knowledge" (PEARL, n.d.a). Participants learn and share knowledge by closely examining initiatives undertaken by the host city (Ibid). For example, a site visit in November 2011 highlighted initiatives in Ahmedabad, a member of the Mega City cluster (Ibid). Contact sessions between representatives from Ahmedabad, and visiting mayors and councillors consisted of a half-day workshop and 2-day visit to project sites. The objective was for Ahmedabad to "…share and transfer capabilities…" of its successful technological practices (Ibid). The visit also served as a networking opportunity for visiting cities (Ibid). Another site visit in the same month was organized for female councillors to learn of initiatives in Pune, also a member of the Mega City cluster (PEARL, n.d.b). The 2-day visit enabled participants to observe Pune's initiatives in e-governance, sewerage treatment plant, and housing (Ibid).

The PEARL also facilitates knowledge sharing through its website, which it describes as "a knowledge collaborative platform that enhances the availability of quality urban information" (PEARL, 2009a p. 98). Featured information includes documentation of best practices in the

PEARL Update newsletters and PEARL Urban Initiatives best practices reports (www.indiaurbanportal.in). Both newsletters and best practices reports feature initiatives undertaken by local government authorities and grass-roots organizations (PEARL 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2009e, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b). Initiatives are identified by a technical committee, which makes its selection from submissions made by various contributors at state and local levels (PEARL, 2009b, 2009c, 2011a).

Best practices reports offer an in-depth look into JNNURM initiatives than newsletters by depicting the process, outcome, and transferability of documented interventions (PEARL, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b). Accounts of a successful practice include the geographic and issue contexts, and conditions before intervention (Ibid). Descriptions of the practice itself identify the goals, strategy, activities, budgetary provisions, key stakeholders, partners' roles, constraints and measures to overcome them, and outcomes (Ibid). In addition, narratives describe the degree of replication and impact of a particular best practice (Ibid). Initially, PEARL measured the degree of replication in terms of prerequisite conditions for positive outcomes; evidence of successful replication elsewhere; and assistance available to potential importing lesson-drawing agents such as site visits, materials and expertise (PEARL, 2009a). However, its current definition consists only of evidence that a particular practice has been successfully implemented in another context (PEARL, 2009b, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b). Impact refers to any recognition accorded to a practice through dissemination, scientific research, and media reporting (PEARL, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b).

4.4 Approaches to Promote Replication of CA-supported Projects[1]

The CA promotes replication of CDS and slum upgrading projects it supports through financial grants (CA, n.d.g). Project grants are allocated to cities, local authorities, associations of local authorities and national governments (Ibid). Replication of successful projects is promoted through flexible project designs developed by grant-recipients, as required in the CA's grant application guidelines (Ibid). The flexibility of a project design is determined by the adaptability of a project concept to different contexts (Ibid). It can be demonstrated by variations

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[1] This study could not identify if or how approaches to promote replication of slum upgrading and CDS projects impacted learning or practice in specific cities because of limited availability of published material.

in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools to suite different levels of technical skills and resources across cities (CA, 2008a).

The CA encourages replication of its slum upgrading and CDS projects also by promoting activities for grant-recipients to share their experience in both the implementation process and achieved outcomes (CA, n.d.g). Activities can include peer-to-peer exchanges, write-shops, communities of practices, centres of excellence and study tours (Ibid). Replication of CA-supported projects is also promoted through project evaluations that identify lessons on the processes and outcomes of good practices (CA, 2003, 2005, 2008a). The CA Secretariat evaluates projects through desk research and two field visits (CA, 2003, 2004). The evaluation process is supported by an M&E system that is included in each project to systematically document implementation processes and achieved outcomes (CA, 2008a, n.d.f). M&E tools can include indicators and impact assessments (Ibid).

Lessons generated through CA's evaluation process compare achieved and intended outcomes (CA, 2004). They also measure the extent to which slum upgrading and CDS projects adhere to CA's criteria of best practices (Ibid). Best practices in CDSs target five issue-areas namely, job creation; environmentally sustainable and energy efficient practices; spatial planning and infrastructure delivery; financial management; and governance (CA, n.d.a). Slum upgrading projects that are recognized as best practice demonstrate strong political will from all levels of government; community participation in the design and implementation process; partnerships between public and private sector stakeholders; and intervention at a city-wide scale (CA, n.d.b). Although the criteria of best practice in CDSs and slum upgrading defines lessons on good practice, the CA perceives that each project offers unique lessons because of locally-specific challenges and resource capabilities across cities in developing countries(CA, n.d.a., 2003, 2005). These lessons are disseminated through the CA's publication program, which constitutes part of the CA's strategy to disseminate best practices as discussed in the next section.

4.5 Dissemination of Best Practices

The CA disseminates best practices in slum upgrading and CDSs through its publication program and dissemination partnerships (CA, 2003, 2009a).[2] The publication program consists of CA's annual reports, e-newsletters, and CIVIC Notes Series (CA, 2009a). Annual reports highlight CA-supported initiatives across Africa, Asia, and Latin America (CA, 2004). Highlights identify social, economic, and institutional contexts for each project (CA, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009a). In addition, they provide project details such as objectives, M& E tools, sources of financial support, and outputs (Ibid). Annual reports also feature slum upgrading and CDS initiatives undertaken independently by individual CA members (Ibid). Moreover, they include reviews of publications produced by both CA members and external urban development stakeholders whose work focuses on CDS and slum upgrading activities (CA, 2004, 2007, 2010a, 2011a).

The CA's quarterly e-newsletters provide "timely pieces on significant and innovative initiatives in the areas of slum upgrading, municipal finance and CDSs" (CA, 2004 p. 55). Newsletter content includes initiatives by the CA, individual CA members, and CA partners at the local level (CA, 2000, 2001, 2009b, 2011c). Input from CA members and partners is solicited through the CA website (CA, n.d.c). The CIVIS Notes Series disseminate "…practical experiences and successful examples of city development strategies and slum upgrading among policy makers and practitioners, with a focus on what has worked, and why, as well as on wider policy issues" (CA, 2009a p. 106).

Dissemination partnerships develop and disseminate knowledge products to relevant policy makers (CA, 2003, 2004). Potential partners are identified by their capacity to document and disseminate best practices (CA, 2003). So far, such partnerships have involved NGOs and universities. One such partnership has been with the NGO, Institut des Sciences et des Techniques de l'Equipement et de l'Environnement pour le Développement (ISTED) (CA, 2004). The partnership focused on publishing CA's activities in Villes en Développement, a French and English newsletter that is well known to urban development practitioners (Ibid). Another

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[2] This study could not identify if or how CA's dissemination strategy impacted learning or practice in specific cities because of limited availability of published material.

partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) developed an urban upgrading database and interactive website for practitioners to share lessons and experiences (CA, 2009a).

4.6 Summary of Findings

The preceding sections have identified the typology and intended outcomes of knowledge sharing activities deployed in four modalities of C2C learning supported by the CA. The mentorship programme developed Lilongwe's CDS through knowledge sharing between task teams representing the Cities of Johannesburg and Lilongwe. The PEARL network facilitates spaces for both face-to-face and virtual knowledge sharing between city- members, and national and international stakeholders. The CA supports knowledge sharing of its slum upgrading and CDS projects by developing measures that foster replication. In addition, it supports knowledge sharing through its dissemination strategy, which includes its publication program and dissemination partnerships. Subsequent sections will identify if and how knowledge sharing processes in each modality of C2C learning is characterized by the rationalist and post-rationalist lesson drawing models.

5. Discussion of Findings

Knowledge sharing activities in the four modalities of support to C2C learning discussed in the previous section are distinguished between those deployed to generate lessons, and those promoted to facilitate lesson-drawing. Knowledge sharing to generate lessons is evident in the PEARL network, approaches to promote replication of CA-supported slum upgrading and CDS projects, and CA's strategy to disseminate best practices. These modalities of support to C2C learning also promote specific activities for knowledge sharing activities to facilitate lesson-drawing. The Johannesburg-Lilongwe mentorship programme is itself treated as a knowledge sharing activity promoted by the CA to facilitate lesson-drawing by the CoL.

To determine the extent to which knowledge sharing activities used to generate lessons, and those promoted to facilitate lesson-drawing adopt a post-rationalist orientation the analysis identifies two things. First, it identifies if activities enable participants to share both tacit and codified dimensions of knowledge. Second, it examines whether knowledge sharing processes foster conditions of mutual learning between participants. If knowledge sharing activities satisfy both criterions, then they promote post-rationalist lesson-drawing. Alternatively, if knowledge

sharing activities focus on codifying policy lessons without critically examining the assumptions they are derived from, then they promote rationalist lesson-drawing.

5.1 The Johannesburg (South Africa)-Lilongwe (Malawi) Mentorship Programme

The bilateral municipal partnership between Johannesburg and Lilongwe could have been underpinned by a dominantly post-rationalist lesson-drawing orientation. The typology of activities used during the partnership could have enabled participants to share both tacit and codified dimensions of knowledge, thus reflecting a post-rationalist epistemological view. In addition, knowledge sharing activities could have fostered epistemic parity, trust, equal status and influence, and relevant engagement. However, while seemingly post-rationalist, the programme does not seem to always explicitly critique the power relations of the mentorship relationship.

5.1.1 Methods of knowledge sharing

Contact between the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams could have fostered both tacit and codified knowledge sharing. For example, both task teams seemed to have shared tacit knowledge related to organizational structures, as indicated by awareness of differences in assumptions concerning collaboration during lunch break (CA, 2010d). The Johannesburg task team shared experience-based tacit knowledge through the actual drafting process of the SLC report (Ibid). The Lilongwe task team shared tacit knowledge during interviews conducted by the Johannesburg task team (Ibid). Moreover, desk-research enabled participants to share systematized forms of codified knowledge on the institutional and policy environment in Lilongwe (CA, 2010d; Erasmus, 2009). In addition, participants shared conceptual forms of codified knowledge during the process of generating shared meaning in land tenure systems and problem definitions of sanitation delivery services (CA, 2010d; UCLG, 2010b).

Power relationships produced by specific knowledge sharing activities seemed to have received variable attention during the course of the mentorship programme. On the one hand, facilitation of the multi-stakeholder workshop (CoJ, 2009) implies that officials in Johannesburg and Lilongwe recognized the potentially exclusionary effects of ICT-based knowledge sharing tools. Given Lilongwe's ICT infrastructure is poorly developed (Kitchin, 2009), desk-research could have limited knowledge sharing to stakeholders with privileged access to ICT-based

knowledge sharing tools. On the other hand, the Johannesburg task team expected their counterparts in Lilongwe to communicate over the phone and through email despite limited access to ICT for public officials in Lilongwe (CA, 2010d; Kitchin, 2009; UCLG, 2010b). The latter view implies a less sensitized perspective on the power dynamics produced by ICT-based knowledge sharing activities between cities at different levels of economic development (Kitchin, 2009).

It is not clear how other knowledge sharing activities influenced power relationships between the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams. For example, this study was unable to identify the nature of host-guest relationships between delegates from Lilongwe and representatives from Johannesburg during study tours in Johannesburg. As the exemplar city, there is reason to believe that the Johannesburg task team had an incentive to portray Johannesburg's initiatives in the best light possible. Therefore, there is a chance that dialogue during site visits did not allow for critical examination of the theories and assumptions underpinning Johannesburg's CDSs. However, given that partnership activities were jointly defined (CA, 2010d; Erasmus, 2009), the Lilongwe task team arguably could have oriented knowledge sharing activities to examine specific assumptions underpinning Johannesburg's CDSs.

5.1.2 Conditions of mutuality

Awareness of differences in assumptions held by the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams concerning CDS-related knowledge could have stemmed from epistemic parity. For example, joint-conceptualization of land tenure systems in Lilongwe revealed the culturally-specific frameworks of rights to land ownership and occupancy in Lilongwe and Johannesburg (CA, 2010d). More generally, the peer-review process to draft the SLC report could have promoted epistemic parity between Johannesburg's technical and experience-based knowledge, and Lilongwe's local knowledge of governance structures and poverty dynamics (Ibid).

Inclusion of actors from the public, market and voluntary sectors in partnership activities presented an opportunity to promote epistemic parity across organizational sector lines (CoJ, 2009). Moreover, workshop discussions could have served as a context for joint reflection on the nature of governance and institutional challenges identified in the draft SLC report (Ibid). In addition, the survey taken to measure the level of satisfaction with the mentorship process (Ibid)

also could have enabled participants to jointly reflect on the role of international cooperation for Lilongwe's development. However, it is not clear if dissident stakeholders within the respective sectors were invited to this workshop, or whether those present were of 'like minds'. If the workshop excluded dissident perspectives, then it achieved minimal epistemic parity because it would have been based on selective epistemic representation.

Proposals in the Stabilization Strategy could indicate that the mentoring programme aimed to strengthen Lilongwe's capacity as an active learner. At the onset of the mentorship programme, the LAC had limited capacity to actively learn because staff members lacked adequate technical skills to collect data for the SLC report (CA, 2010d; CoJ, 2009). As a result, the Johannesburg task team took a lead role in generating data for the situational analysis (Ibid). The Stabilization Strategy introduced data-collection methods (Kitchin, 2009), which could enhance technical skills within LAC in order for Lilongwe to take a more direct role in defining its policy and institutional environment in the future.

Evaluation of the mentorship partnership by the CA and UCLG emphasized equal status between participants at the senior-management level (CA, 2010d; UCLG, 2010b). The understanding is that by engaging learners with decision-making power, partnership activities can receive the political support necessary for implementation (Ibid). Political support is linked to the mentees ownership of both the process and content of partnership activities (Ibid). Therefore, conditions for mutual learning processes are necessary to garner the political support for learning outcomes.

Emphasis on ownership by Lilongwe of both the partnership process and content of the CDS implies that the partnership aimed to foster symmetrical influence by Lilongwe over the partnership process. This is particularly important considering that the Johannesburg task team had both more experience and greater resource capabilities to navigate partnership activities (Kitchin, 2009). This does not suggest that the leadership role taken by Johannesburg in partnership activities such as drafting the SLC report and developing the Stabilization Strategy did not at some point give it greater influence. The objective is to note that partnership activities evolved through some level of interdependent action between the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams, which could have promoted critical examination of knowledge shared.

Informal contact and flexibility could have built trust between the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams. The informal nature of pre-agreement contact sessions could have

enabled participants to base their working relationship on a level of trust that is normally difficult to realize in conventional bilateral municipal partnerships (Thorpe, 2011). In the latter, a formal political agreement precedes any engagement between those tasked with operationalizing its content (Ibid). However, members of the Lilongwe and Johannesburg task teams met before any agreement was reached to jointly define the nature of the relationship, and partnership objectives and activities (Ibid). In so doing, the partnership created some flexibility in partnership activities (CA, 2010d) that could have further built trust. Interestingly, the capacity gaps that the partnership aimed to fill were also a contributing factor to a flexible working relationship. In particular, having no precedence in CDS approaches, partnership activities were not constrained by bureaucratic procedures within the LAC (CA, 2010d; UCLG, 2010b).

Openness and shared discourse in problem-definition and solving could have also fostered trust between the Lilongwe and Johannesburg task teams. The formation of an external stakeholder group in the Lilongwe task team seems to have facilitated a space for open dialogue in partnership activities. This view is affirmed by workshop participants who perceived that the mentorship programme aimed to promote "open and honest assessment of the situation and challenges in Lilongwe" (CoJ, 2009 p. 2). Joint-definition of priority areas of intervention to develop Lilongwe's CDS during pre-agreement contact sessions could have also built trust between the Johannesburg and Lilongwe task teams (CA, 2010d; Erasmus, 2009; Thorpe, 2011). Moreover, the proposal to develop a Stabilization Strategy following the workshop points to shared problem-solving between participants, which also could reflect some level of trust between them. Also, participants potentially built trust by jointly defining problems of sanitation services in Lilongwe during the peer-review process to draft the SLC report (CA, 2010d; UCLG, 2010b).

5.2 The Peer Experience and Reflective Learning (PEARL) network

Knowledge sharing practices within the PEARL network could have a mixed rationalist and post-rationalist orientation. The national workshop and site visits are seemingly underpinned by a post-rationalist epistemological view. The international workshops are post-rationalist in both their underpinning and promotional lesson-drawing approach. Moreover, documented

practices in the PEARL newsletter and reports largely adopt a rationalist lesson-drawing approach.

Knowledge sharing activities in the national workshops are designed around the characteristics of a city-cluster (PEARL, 2009d). A rationalist approach to knowledge sharing based on city-cluster characteristics would assume that there are not important epistemic or power differences between actors, and that a voluntary association of cities would create a context where everyone is equally willing and able to learn. A post-rationalist approach would take that starting point and ensure that there were mechanisms to investigate and accommodate power and knowledge differences through reflexivity and a pro-active effort to include otherwise marginalized voices. The proposal to form a working-group within the Mega City cluster suggests that knowledge sharing activities in the national workshop suggests that knowledge sharing could promote post-rationalist approach to lesson-drawing. In particular, the working-group could facilitate a context for relevant engagement in producing lessons on JNNURM practices and reforms. Moreover, lesson production could promote epistemic parity between perspectives at city, state, and international levels. It could also promote other mutual conditions such as trust by enabling participants to jointly define similar challenges facing city-cluster members. It must be noted; however, that discussion on the Mega City working-group does not mention engaging voluntary and market sector actors, or ensuring that gender perspectives are represented (PEARL, 2009d). Therefore, it is possible that the working group would realize epistemic parity, if any, primarily across spatial levels, and less so across organizational sectors and gender differences.

The knowledge sharing processes enacted by the Mega City cluster national workshop itself also appear to foster epistemic parity primarily across spatial levels. Spatial differences emerge with the inclusion of actors from both state and local agencies in India, and urban development stakeholders at the international level (PEARL, 2009d). Sectoral differences emerged with the inclusion of actors from both public and market sectors (Ibid). However, available data indicate that representatives from the voluntary sector were not included (Ibid). Available data also suggest that there was not an explicit focus on balancing gender perspectives on the processes and outcomes of JNNURM reforms and practices (Ibid). This is in contrast to

the site visit that was geared specifically to female councillors, thus delineating a space for gender-defined perspectives to shape knowledge-sharing processes (PEARL, n.d.b).

International workshops are potentially underpinned by a post-rationalist lesson-drawing process by not only providing an opportunity for participants to share tacit knowledge, but also possibly fostering epistemic parity and relevant engagement. Participation of actors from different organizational sectors and spatial levels in workshop discussions could have promoted epistemic parity between them (CA, 2010b). In particular, both workshops included public, market, and voluntary sector actors (CA, 2010b; PEARL, 2009e). In addition, participants represented perspectives at the international, regional, state and local levels (Ibid). Relevant engagement between the range of perspectives from different organizational sectors and spatial levels could have been realized most concretely in panel discussions. For example, panel discussions in the second international workshop could have enabled participants to share discourse on problem solving by developing measures to improve peer-to-peer learning methods (CA, 2010b).

In addition to underpinning knowledge sharing activities in the post-rationalist orientation, international workshops could also promote post-rationalist lesson-drawing through their substantive focus on peer-to-peer learning methods. Literature on C2C learning identifies peer-to-peer partnerships as a context for potentially generating shared meaning (Johnson and Wilson, 2009). Mutuality promotes shared meaning because it creates the conditions necessary for participants to contest and agree on the assumptions and theories that underpin a particular body of knowledge (Bontenbal, 2008; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; van Ewjik and Baud, 2009). However, upon inspection, the measures proposed during panel discussions to improve peer-to-peer learning partnerships between PEARL city-members do not appear to favour conditions of mutuality. Instead, they apply a rationalist, instrumentalist focus on structuring learning processes through communication and goal-setting, in addition to preventing replication of bad-practices.

The PEARL website also potentially promotes a rationalist approach to lesson-drawing by sharing codified knowledge of JNNURM initiatives through newsletters and best practices reports. Such promotion of best practices on the basis of replication has an overtly rationalist orientation. Initial criteria of replication identified site visits as a mechanism for implementing

agents to share their knowledge with potential learners (PEARL, 2009a). As indicated earlier, site visits could facilitate post-rationalist processes of tacit knowledge sharing. However, the current framework for site visits is limited to an instrumentalist promotion of the exemplar so that it is ideally replicated and adopted in different contexts (PEARL 2009b, 2010a, 2011a). Consequently, the latter view promotes a rationalist lesson-drawing approach by linking the credibility of a practice to the scope of evidence of its success.

Documentation of best practices is underpinned by a rationalist lesson-drawing process; although there is potential for post-rationalist elements. Codified documentation of practices as potentially universally applicable practices is consistent with the rationalist epistemological view. These practices are codified as narratives and pictures (PEARL, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b). However, there is a prospective post-rationalist element in the range of codified practices documented in the PEARL best practices reports and newsletter. In particular, contributions to documented practices can be made by stakeholders at the state and local levels (PEARL, 2009b, 2009c, 2011a), that could promote epistemic parity of codified perspectives between them. Moreover, provision is made for contributions from grass-roots organizations (PEARL, 2009a), which has the potential to diversity the range of codified perspectives across organizational sectors.

5.3 Approaches to Promote Replication of CA-supported Projects

The CA seems to adopt a mixed rationalist and post-rationalist approach in both its underpinning and promotional lesson-drawing processes. Generation of lessons from CA's slum upgrading and CDS portfolio is underpinned by a rationalist instrumentalist lesson-drawing approach. Moreover, replication based on flexible project designs could promote rationalist lesson-drawing. However, activities promoted by the CA for grant recipients to share their experience in implementing slum upgrading and CDS projects could promote a post-rationalist epistemological view.

Knowledge sharing activities to draw lessons from individual slum upgrading and CDS projects reflect a post-rationalist epistemological view. Site visits and desk research (CA, 2003, 2004) could enable the CA Secretariat and implementing agents to share both codified and tacit knowledge. However, these knowledge sharing activities are treated as means to produce

conceptual models of CA-supported projects, and are therefore consistent with the rationalist instrumentalist approach. Pertinent factors identified in the conceptual models of CA-supported projects include the specific nature of challenges and available resources allocated to an intervention (CA, 2003, 2005).

The methodology employed by the CA to produce lessons illustrates the importance of a post-rationalist approach to lesson-drawing by importing agents. The lessons generated by the CA Secretariat do not embody a synthesis of different perspectives (Jakimow, 2008). Instead, they largely reflect the assumptions and theories ascribed by the CA to best practices in slum upgrading and CDS approaches. Any claims of best practice are problematic because there are multiple approaches to slum upgrading and CDSs (Abbott, 2002; Mukhija, 2006). Evaluation site visits could offer a space to synthesize CA's knowledge with perspectives of intended beneficiaries and officials at the local level. However, discussions are currently limited to the CA Secretariat and official local government representatives (CA, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009a). Moreover, it is not clear if these discussions explore CA's discourse on best practices. Critical examination of lessons documented by the CA would bring to light the particular assumptions and theories underpinning CA's criteria of best practices. As a result, importing lesson-drawing agents will be able to negotiate the relevancy of CA's perspectives on slum upgrading and CDS approaches for local contexts.

Replication – even on the basis of flexible project designs – promotes a rationalist lesson-drawing approach. According to the CA, flexible project designs allow for variable inputs such as M&E tools to adapt successful project concepts to different contexts (CA, 2008). However, a project design is a means to a policy, which from a constructivist perspective is justified by the assumptions used to define the nature of the policy problem (Soroka, 2007). These assumptions reflect the beliefs and values of the policy advocate, and the socio-economic conditions in a specific time (Stone, 1988). Therefore, replication of policy designs across time and space should be based on critical examination of underpinning assumptions of policy means and ends (Soroka, 2007; Stone, 1988), rather than a narrow focus on variable inputs that produce comparable outputs.

The CA promotes lesson-drawing from its slum upgrading and CDS portfolio through knowledge sharing activities facilitated by project grant recipients. Face-to-face contact through

peer-to-peer exchanges, study tours, communities of practice, and write shops could enable participants to share tacit knowledge (CA, n.d.g). However, face-to-face interaction does not necessarily imply a post-rationalist knowledge sharing approach. Given that the current analysis did not generate any data from specific knowledge sharing activities facilitated by recipients of CA-support, no conclusions can be drawn about their rationalist or post-rationalist nature.

5.4 Dissemination of Best Practices

The CA's dissemination strategy promotes rationalist lesson-drawing because its publication program, dissemination strategy and website are designed to share codified knowledge without necessarily critically examining the knowledge systems and power contexts of that knowledge's generation. Underpinning lesson-drawing processes foster some diversity in the range of codified perspectives shared through the CA annual reports and e-newsletter. However, dissemination partnerships are underpinned by a dominantly rationalist orientation. Therefore, the CA dissemination strategy promotes rationalist lesson-drawing, but is underpinned by variable degrees of rationalist and post-rationalist lesson-drawing processes.

The CA annual reports promote rationalist lesson-drawing processes by disseminating codified knowledge of CA-supported slum upgrading and CDS projects. However, the annual reports are underpinned by a post-rationalist perspective in so far as it attempt to promote epistemic parity within the CA membership. Annual reports do not only disseminate experiences of CA-supported projects. They also disseminate the experiences gained through projects undertaken independently by individual CA members. The CA membership includes public organizations at the city, national, and international levels. Recently two voluntary sector organizations joined the CA, namely SDI in 2007 and HFHI in 2010 (CA, 2009 p. 119; 2010 p. 27). Therefore, inclusion of lessons from CA members diversifies the range of codified forms of knowledge shared through CA's annual reports across organizational sectors.

As with annual reports, CA e-newsletters promote rationalist lesson-drawing processes, but are underpinned by potentially post-rationalist elements. Newsletters promote rationalist lesson-drawing processes because they disseminate codified knowledge on the processes, outcomes and mediating relationships of slum upgrading and CDS approaches. However, the call for external stakeholders to submit their practices through the CA website enables individual CA

members and partners at the local level to share potentially diverse types of codified knowledge. However, given that urban development stakeholders in developing countries have limited capacity in ICT-development, the realized potential of diversified codified perspectives in the newsletters is likely to be limited.

Both the CIVIC Notes series and dissemination partnerships largely promote rationalist lesson-drawing processes. They both disseminate codified knowledge of project approaches. Moreover, dissemination partnerships are underpinned by rationalist lesson-drawing processes. In particular, potential partners are identified on the basis of their capacity to both codify policy experience and disseminate that knowledge using ICT-based tools such as e-mail list servers and documents (CA, 2003).

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the distinction between the rationalist and post-rationalist orientation is not applicable in a strict sense to the majority of CA's support modalities to C2C learning. The Johannesburg-Lilongwe mentorship programme is an exception in that to a great extent it seemingly fostered conditions of mutuality in the partnership that could promote critical examination of knowledge shared between the two municipalities. The other modalities of support relied on predominantly rationalist knowledge sharing activities to generate lessons, with the occasional, potentially post-rationalist element. As a result, lesson-drawing was also largely based on rationalist principles, with minimal opportunities for post-rationalist lesson-drawing processes.

6.1 Orientation of Knowledge Sharing Activities to Generate Lessons

Knowledge sharing activities deployed by the PEARL network underpin the lessons generated therein in both rationalist and post-rationalist lesson-drawing approaches. Lessons on effective peer-to-peer learning approaches produced in the international panel discussion are underpinned by a post-rationalist approach. They emerged following joint reflection and conceptualization by participants, who represented perspectives from different spatial levels and organizational sectors. The proposed Mega City cluster working-group will underpin lessons on JNNURM-related practices in the post-rationalist lesson-drawing approach. Although participants are likely to represent a smaller range of urban development perspectives,

participants from the public and private sectors at different spatial levels will share a context to define problems and solutions. The documentation process of JNNURM initiatives by the PEARL network underpins lessons of best practices in the rationalist approach. Data suggests that these lessons are generated primarily by codifying the process and outcomes of individual initiatives in accordance with submission criteria. However, inclusion of experiences from both public and voluntary sector actors fosters epistemic parity of codified knowledge between the organizational sectors to which these actors belong.

Lessons generated by the CA Secretariat are dominantly rationalist, although knowledge sharing activities indicate a post-rationalist epistemological view. For example, knowledge sharing activities deployed to evaluate CA-supported slum upgrading and CDS projects are underpinned by a post-rationalist epistemological view. However, they do not foster conditions of mutuality between participants, as contended earlier. Instead, lessons amount to conceptual models that reflect CA's discourse on best practices. Moreover, CA's approach to generate lessons through dissemination partnerships is underpinned by a rationalist epistemological view because of emphasis on ICT-capabilities as a criterion for establishing partnerships. However, CA's annual reports and e-newsletter have the potential to foster epistemic parity in the lessons shared therein, albeit with limitations created by ICT-based mechanisms to foster external input.

6.2 Orientation of Knowledge Sharing Activities Promoted for Lesson-drawing

The Johannesburg-Lilongwe mentorship programme promoted a dominantly post-rationalist lesson-drawing approach by fostering all four conditions of mutuality. Variation in the degree of mutuality was evident in certain condition, for example, a critical perspective of power relationships produced by particular knowledge sharing activities. In contrast, CA's approach to promote project replication and disseminate best practices promotes a dominantly rationalist lesson-drawing approach. Replication based on the flexibility of project inputs promotes rationalist lesson-drawing processes by likening lesson-drawing to an engineering exercise. Promotion of face-to-face knowledge sharing activities between grant-recipients and potential importing lesson-drawing agents could promote a post-rationalist epistemological view provided the encounter was explicitly framed to foster mutuality and epistemic parity. CA's publication program fosters rationalist lesson-drawing because it codifies conceptual models of slum upgrading and CDS approaches.

The PEARL network promotes both rationalist and post-rationalist lesson-drawing processes. International workshops promote post-rationalist lesson-drawing by focusing on peer-to-peer learning methods. Studies in C2C learning advocate peer-to-peer learning partnerships as mechanisms for mutual learning (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2009; van Ewijk and Baud, 2009). However, because workshop discussions do not identify specific conditions for mutual learning, it is possible that the PEARL network might not promote post-rationalist lesson-drawing processes through peer-to-peer partnerships. The PEARL did promote post-rationalist lesson-drawing by facilitating a site-visit for female local authorities. This visit fostered epistemic parity by engaging feminine gender perspectives, an issue gaining wider attention internationally for effective urban management (UN-Habitat, 2010b). Dissemination by the PEARL network of best practices through reports and newsletters, however, rely on rationalist lesson-drawing process. Narratives of JNNURM practices and reforms are likened to conceptual models that support prospective evaluation, a staple in rationalist lesson-drawing studies.

6.3 Enhancing Post-rationalist Lesson-drawing in C2C Learning

Rationalist knowledge sharing elements hinder the effectiveness of CA's support to C2C learning. These elements do not foster critical examination of meanings ascribed to policy problems and solutions. As a result, they limit the capacity of urban managers and officials to promote interventions that tackle locally-specific poverty dynamics. These limitations can be avoided if the CA widens the range of post-rationalist elements in its modalities of support to C2C learning. We will explore two measures through which CA can realize its potential to strengthen urban governance capacity through knowledge sharing activities rooted in the post-rationalist approach.

The first measure that the CA can adopt for a greater post-rationalist orientation is to support learning partnerships explicitly based on specific mutuality conditions. The Johannesburg-Lilongwe mentorship programme stands as a prime example for the CA to recognize and promote mutual learning in direct municipal partnerships. The CA can also support city networks such as the PEARL in fostering or developing conditions for mutual learning. Conditions of mutuality can either be targeted to the processes deployed by the broader

network to generate lessons. Support can also be targeted to assisting networks in promoting knowledge sharing activities to city-members that foster mutual learning processes.

The second measure to enhance CA's learning support is to generate lessons based on mutual learning processes. The CA is well-positioned to identify different policy approaches by virtue of its global orientation in urban development cooperation. An individual importing agent, particularly from a developing region, has limited resources and capacity to identify the range of policy approaches that have successful managed the challenges of urban poverty. Therefore, it is important that the CA continue to generate lessons, and that these lessons emerge from a synthesis of diverse perspectives across spatial, organizational, and gender lines.

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