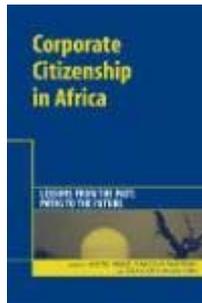**Corporate Citizenship in Africa:**

Lessons from the Past; Paths to the Future

Edited by Wayne Visser, Malcolm McIntosh & Charlotte Middleton

(Greenleaf, 2006)

~ CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ON CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP IN AFRICA ~

A Ten Year Review (1995-2005)

By Wayne Visser

Abstract

This paper provides a brief analysis of corporate citizenship research focused on Africa over the past 10 years. The paper reviews journal articles published in the key corporate citizenship journals over the period 1995 to 2005, and reaches several conclusions: 1) the volume of published research is still extremely low; 2) most papers focus on business ethics; and 3) most papers focus on South Africa. Hence, there is great scope for expanding the amount of research on corporate citizenship in Africa, as well as improving the diversity of its content and its geographic coverage.

Introduction

Corporate citizenship in Africa is a critical area of scholarly enquiry, driven by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, the human needs of the continent in the face of widespread poverty, and the trend towards improved social responsibility by multinationals in a globalising economy. Despite this growing importance, however, very little research has been done on corporate citizenship in Africa. In his introduction to the Business Ethics: A European Review special issue on Africa, Rossouw (2000) claims that "the first signs of academic life in business ethics on the African continent can be traced back to the 1980s" (225), but concedes that it remains fragmented and limited.

One of the reasons that this academic discourse is both interesting and important is that corporate citizenship in Africa has its own unique features, distinctive from other regions in the world. Rossouw (2000) suggests three areas that characterise business ethics in Africa: 1) On the macro-level, the influence of Africa's colonial and neo-colonial past; 2) On the meso-level, the moral responsibility of business towards the reconstruction of African societies; and 3) On the micro-level, the way in which individual businesses deal with affirmative action to overcome the consequences of historical racism, sexism and economic exclusion.

Visser (2005) argues that, in terms of Carroll's (1991) pyramid model of corporate social responsibility, in which the layers denote relative emphasis assigned to various responsibilities, Africa exhibits a different ordering to the classic model. Specifically, economic responsibilities still get the most emphasis, but philanthropy is given second highest priority (as opposed to legal responsibilities in the classic Carroll pyramid), followed by legal (as opposed to ethical) and then ethical (as opposed to philanthropic) responsibilities. Furthermore, he suggests that, given the ethical dilemmas faced by companies in Africa, a more dynamic and sophisticated model of corporate responsibility may be more appropriate, such as one drawing on complexity theory (McIntosh 2003).

In the first study of business ethics as an academic field in Africa, Barkhuysen and Rossouw (2000) found 77 courses and seven centres located in six countries, namely Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. Furthermore, they identified 167 relevant publications, including 130 articles and 26 books. The majority of articles were written by South African authors, followed by authors residing outside Africa, as well as some from Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria. The content was heavily focused on descriptive and normative ethical issues.

In a review of academic research on corporate citizenship in South Africa, Visser (2005) found that, of the pre-1994 publications, most deal with the ethical investment issues relating to apartheid, while, of the post-1994 articles, many focus on the individual ethics of South African managers. Other areas of focus have included specific South African sectors (most notably mining and chemicals), socially responsible investment, stakeholder theory, small and medium sized enterprises, corporate environmental management, sustainability reporting, corporate governance, and general CC corporate citizenship.

While not strictly comparable due to methodological differences, this paper builds on these previous contributions in two ways: 1) by broadening Barkhuysen and Rossouw's exclusive focus on business ethics; and 2) by expanding Visser's previous geographic focus on South Africa.

Research Method

This research is based on an electronic search of the online databases of journals in area of corporate citizenship. Some journals – like the Journal of Business Ethics, Business Ethics Quarterly, Business and Society, and Business and Society Review – justified inclusion based on their influence, as measured by the impact factor published by the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), and their ranking in the top 20 journals by impact factor over a number of years. This is same as the selection approach used by Lockett, Moon et al. (2005) in their review of corporate social responsibility articles published in management journals.

Since these are all US-based publications, other journals were selected – including the Journal of Corporate Citizenship and Business Ethics: A European Review – to improve the geographic balance, as well as being respected journals in their own right. Finally, a number of journals – like Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, Business Strategy and the Environment, Organization and Environment and Corporate Environmental Strategy – were included to improve the thematic coverage of the environmental aspect of corporate citizenship.

Of course, there are African-oriented corporate citizenship articles published in other journals – for example, in the International Affairs special issue on Corporate Social Responsibility in Developing Countries (May 2005, Volume 81 Issue 3) and in the Development special issue on Corporate Social Responsibility (September 2004, Volume 47 Issue 3). However, this review specifically targeted corporate citizenship journals to see how much African research had penetrated the core corporate citizenship academic discourse.

Table 1 shows the volumes and dates that are covered by the research for each journal. In the exceptional cases where these do not extend back to 1995, it is either because they were launched more recently – like the Journal of Corporate Citizenship – or they were unavailable online as far back as 1995 – like Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, Business Strategy and the Environment, Organization and Environment and Corporate Environmental Strategy.

The terms used for the electronic search were all the country names of Africa, as well as Africa itself. By implication, these would have to have been mentioned in either the title or abstract to have been selected for analysis. It is therefore possible that a few articles on corporate citizenship in Africa may have been missed if the geographical specification was not explicitly mentioned. Despite these limitations, however, the 51 articles identified represent a fairly comprehensive selection of academic research on Africa published in corporate citizenship journals over the past 10 years. A full list of the articles is included in Annex A.

Table 1: Journal Volumes Included in the Research on Corporate Citizenship in Africa (1995-2005)

| Journal	Volumes	Dates
Journal of Business Ethics	14(1) – 60(1)	Jan 95 – Aug 05
Journal of Corporate Citizenship	1 – 18	Spr 01 – Sum 05
Business Ethics: A European Review	6(1) – 14(2)	Jan 97 – Apr 05
Business and Society Review	92 – 110(2)	Win 95 – Sum 05
Eco-Management and Auditing / Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	3(1) – 12(3)	Feb 96 – Sep 05
Business Ethics Quarterly	5(1) – 15(3)	Jan 95 – Jul 05
Business and Society	34(1) – 44(2)	Apr 95 – Jun 05
Corporate Environmental Strategy	5(2) – 9(4)	Win 98 – Dec 02
Business Strategy and the Environment	5(1) – 14(4)	Mar 96 – Jul/Aug 05
Organization & Environment	10(1) – 18(2)	Mar 97 – Jun 05

Key Findings

Table 2 shows that publication of corporate citizenship research on Africa has occurred chiefly in two journals: the Journal of Business Ethics (JBE), which accounts for 37% of all articles, and the Journal of Corporate Citizenship (JCC), which accounts for 14%. This has been largely determined by the publication of special issues focused on Africa – accounting for five of the 19 articles, 26%, for the JBE (special issue Volume 9 Issue 4 2000), and 10 of the 14 articles, or 71%, for the JCC. Although the absolute number of articles appearing in the JBE is higher than the JCC, the proportion to total articles published is lower, since JBE has 12 issues per year compared with JCC's four.

The collective weight of the ethics focused journals is the most likely explanation for the thematic dominance of business ethics as a research topic, accounting for 42% of all articles, as shown in Table 3. It may also be that corporate citizenship debates have historically been framed in terms of ethics due to the high profile issues like the injustice of colonialism and apartheid and the prevalence of corruption and fraud on the continent. It is expected that other themes, such as stakeholders, social responsibility and health and safety (including HIV/Aids) will move up the agenda as corporate citizenship increasingly addresses these issues in an African context.

Table 2: Journals Publishing Articles on Corporate Citizenship in Africa (1995-2005)

Journal	Number of articles	Percentage of articles
Journal of Business Ethics	19	37%
Journal of Corporate Citizenship	14	27%
Business Ethics: A European Review	6	12%
Business and Society Review	3	6%
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management / Eco-Management and Auditing	3	6%
Business Ethics Quarterly	2	4%
Business and Society	2	4%
Corporate Environmental Strategy	2	4%
Business Strategy and the Environment	0	0%
Organization & Environment	0	0%
Total	51	100%

Table 3: Thematic Focus of Journals Articles on Corporate Citizenship in Africa (1995-2005)
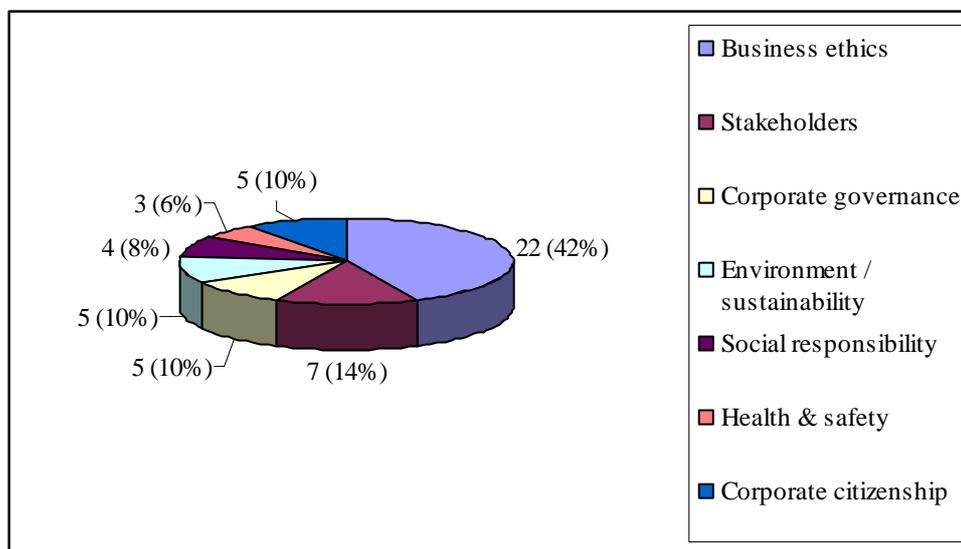
Echoing previous studies, South Africa continues to dominate the geographical focus of African corporate citizenship research, comprising 57% of all articles, as shown in Table 4. The secondary emphasis on Nigeria can be explained by the high media profile generated around corporate citizenship issues and the oil / petrochemical sector, especially focused on Shell and their impacts on the Ogoni people. It is both a sad indictment and great

opportunity that only 12 of Africa's 53 countries have had any research published in core corporate citizenship journals.

Table 4: Geographic Focus of Journals Articles on Corporate Citizenship in Africa (1995-2005)

Country	Number of articles	Percentage of articles
South Africa	29	57%
Nigeria	8	16%
Africa (General)	6	12%
Cameroon	1	2%
Cote d'Ivoire	1	2%
Egypt	1	2%
Kenya	1	2%
Mali	1	2%
Mauritius	1	2%
Sudan	1	2%
Tanzania	1	2%
Zambia	1	2%
Zimbabwe	1	2%

The most significant finding on industry sectors (Table 5) is that nearly two thirds of articles (61%) have no sector orientation at all. Of those that do focus on particular industries, it is unsurprising that traditionally high impact sectors like petrochemicals, agriculture and mining feature, while attention to areas like education and finance is encouraging. Once again, this indicates the huge scope for new and enlightening research that critically examines the role of particular industry sectors in practising corporate citizenship.

Table 5: Industry Sector Focus of Journals Articles on Corporate Citizenship in Africa (1995-2005)

Industry Sector	Number of articles	Percentage of articles
No sector focus	31	61%
Petrochemical	5	10%
Agriculture	3	6%
Education	3	6%
Mining	3	6%
Electricity	2	4%
Financial	2	4%
Motor	1	2%
Process	1	2%
Professionals	1	2%

Conclusion

This paper has been included as an introduction to the book in order to frame the debate about corporate citizenship in Africa going forward. Hopefully, the brief listing and analysis will serve as a reference point upon which future scholars can draw in their own studies. There are clearly massive opportunities to increase the scale and coverage of corporate citizenship research in Africa, and especially to incorporate more thematic, geographic and sector diversity. Let us hope that when a similar review is conducted in another 10 years, the field would have developed considerably in breadth, depth and quality. For nowhere is a contribution to knowledge more urgently needed than in the pursuit of ways to effectively address the human and ecological development of Africa.

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Annex A: Journal Articles on Corporate Citizenship in Africa: 1995-2005

Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal	Vol(Nr): Pages
Abratt, R & N Penman	2002	Understanding factors affecting salespeople's perceptions of ethical behaviour in South Africa	Journal of Business Ethics	35(4): 269-280
Ahmed, MM, KY Chung & JW Eichenseher	2003	Business students' perception of ethics and moral judgement: A cross-cultural study	Journal of Business Ethics	43(1): 89-102
Ahunwan, B	2002	Corporate governance in Nigeria	Journal of Business Ethics	37(3): 269-287
Barkhuysen, B & G Rossouw	2000	Business ethics as an academic field: Its current status	Business Ethics: A European Review	9(4): 229-235
De Jongh, D	2004	A stakeholder perspective on managing social risk in South Africa: Responsibility or accountability	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	15: 27-31
De Jongh, D & P Prinsloo	2005	Why teach corporate citizenship differently?	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 113-122
Dolan, CS & M Opondo	2005	Seeking common ground: Multi-stakeholder processes in Kenya's cut flower industry	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 87-98
Egels, N	2005	CSR in electrification of rural Africa: The case of ABB in Tanzania	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 75-85
Erondu, EA, A Sharland & JO Okpara	2004	Corporate ethics in Nigeria: A test of the concept of an ethical climate	Journal of Business Ethics	51(4): 349-357
Eweje, G	2005	Hazardous Employment and Regulatory Regimes in the South African Mining Industry: Arguments for Corporate Ethics at the Workplace	Journal of Business Ethics	56(2): 163-183
Fourie, A & T Eloff	2005	The case for collective business action to achieve systems change: Exploring the contributions made by the private sector to the social, economic and political transformation process in South Africa	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 39-48
Gichure, C	2000	Fraud and the African Renaissance	Business Ethics: A European Review	9(4): 236-247
Hamann, R, P Kapelus, D Sonnenberg, A Mackenzie & P Hollesen	2005	Local governance as a complex system: Lessons from mining in South Africa, Mali and Zambia	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 61-73
Hamann, R, N Acutt & P Kapelus	2003	Responsibility versus accountability: Interpreting the World Summit on Sustainable Development for a synthesis model of corporate citizenship	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	9: 32-48
Heese, Karen	2003	Black economic empowerment in South Africa: A case study	Journal of Corporate	12: 93-101

		of non-inclusive stakeholder engagement	Citizenship	
Higgs-Kleyn, N & D Kapelianis	1999	The role of professional codes in regulating ethical conduct	Journal of Business Ethics	19(4): 363-374
Hill, R	2001	Environmental initiatives in South African wineries: A comparison between small and large wineries	Eco-Management and Auditing	8(4): 210-228
Hummels, H	1998	Organising ethics: A stakeholder debate	Journal of Business Ethics	17(13): 1403-1419
Idahosa, P	2002	Business ethics and development in conflict (zones): The case of Talisman Oil	Journal of Business Ethics	39(3): 227-246
Ite, UE	2004	Multinationals and corporate social responsibility in developing countries: A case study of Nigeria	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	11(1): 1-11
Jackson, KT	2000	The polycentric character of business ethics decision making in international contexts	Journal of Business Ethics	23(1): 123-143
Kapelus, P	2002	Mining, corporate social responsibility and the "community": The case of Rio Tinto, Richards Bay Minerals and the Mbonambi	Journal of Business Ethics	39(3): 275-296
Krummeck, S	2000	The role of ethics in fraud prevention: A practitioner's perspective	Business Ethics: A European Review	9(4): 268-272
Kumar, R, WB Lamb & RE Wokutch	2002	The end of the South African sanctions, institutional ownership, and the stock price performance of boycotted firms	Business and Society	41(2): 133-165
Labuschagne, C, AC Brent & SJ Claasen	2005	Environmental and social impact considerations for sustainable project life cycle management in the process industry	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	12(1): 38-54
Limbs, EC & TL Fort	2000	Nigerian business practices and their interface with virtue ethics	Journal of Business Ethics	26(2): 169-179
Geo-JaJa, MA & GL Mangum	2000	The foreign corrupt practices act's consequences for US trade: The Nigerian example	Journal of Business Ethics	24(3): 245-255
Malan, D	2005	Corporate citizens, colonialists, tourists or activists? Ethical challenges facing South African corporations in Africa	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 49-60
Mbohwa, C & S Fukada	2002	ISO 14001 certification in Zimbabwe: Experiences, problems and prospects	Corporate Environmental Strategy	9(4): 427-436
Middleton, C	2005	Turning point: Interview with Michael Spicer, Chief Executive, South Africa Foundation	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 21-24
Moskowitz, MR	1995	Company performance roundup	Business and Society Review	92: 66-75
Nepal, G	2003	Ethical decision-making in business: Focus on Mauritius	Business Ethics: A European	12(1): 54-63

			Review	
Painter-Morland, M, J Fontrodona, WM Hoffman & M Rowe	2003	Conversations across continents: Teaching business ethics online	Journal of Business Ethics	48(1): 75-88
Prinsloo, ED	2000	The African view of participatory business management	Journal of Business Ethics	25(4): 275-286
Rambharos, M	2005	Turning Point: Managing HIV/AIDS at Eskom: A Non-negotiable for Business Sustainability	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 25-28
Rossouw, G	2000	Out of Africa: An introduction	Business Ethics: A European Review	9(4) 225-228
Rossouw, GJ	2000	Defining and understanding fraud: A South African case study	Business Ethics Quarterly	10(4): 885-895
Rossouw, GJ, A van der Watt & DP Malan	2002	Corporate governance in South Africa	Journal of Business Ethics	37(3): 289-302
Rossouw, GJ	2005	Business ethics and corporate governance in Africa	Business and Society	44(1):94-106
Schrage, EJ & AP Ewing	2005	The Cocoa Industry and Child Labour	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 99-112
Schwartz, M	1996	Business ethics in developing countries: A response to Rossouw	Business Ethics Quarterly	6(1): 111-115
Sethi, SP	1995	American corporations and the economic future of South Africa	Business and Society Review	92: 10-18
Sims, RL & AE Gegez	2004	Attitudes towards business ethics: A five nation comparative study	Journal of Business Ethics	50(3): 253-265
Uys, T	2000	The politicisation of whistleblowers: A case study	Business Ethics: A European Review	9(4): 259-267
Van Buren, HJ	1996	Why business should help save the rainforests	Business and Society Review	95: 22-25
Van Zyl, E & K Lazenby	1999	Ethical behaviour in the South African organisational context: Essential and workable	Journal of Business Ethics	21(1): 15-22
Van Zyl, E & K Lazenby	2002	The relation between ethical behaviour and work stress amongst a group of managers in affirmative action positions	Journal of Business Ethics	40(2): 111-119
Visser, W	2002	Sustainability Reporting in South Africa	Corporate Environmental Strategy	9(1): 79-85
Visser, W	2005	Corporate Citizenship in South Africa: A Review of Progress since Democracy	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 29-38
Visser, W, C Middleton & M McIntosh	2005	Introduction to the Journal of Corporate Citizenship Special Issue on Corporate Citizenship in Africa	Journal of Corporate Citizenship	18: 18-20
Wheeler, D, H Fabig & R Boele	2002	Paradoxes and dilemmas for stakeholder responsive firms in	Journal of Business Ethics	39(3): 297-

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