

**Public Participation as a Tool to Enhance Service Delivery in
Local Government: A Case Study of the Capricorn District
Municipality in the Limpopo Province**

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DECLARATION OF OWN WORK

I, Lufuno Robert Mudzanani (student number 8601708), declare that the thesis titled “Public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in local government: A case study of the Capricorn District Municipality in the Limpopo Province” is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged in-text and by means of complete references.

Signature

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Date

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the notion of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. Public participation is a milestone of democracy and local governance. Local government – which is closest to the people – provides an ideal forum for the flourishing of participatory democracy. The centrality of public participation in the development of policies and programmes or action plans has been widely recognised by both government and the private sector. However, involving the public in the development of any policy, programme or action plan is a daunting task. Indeed, if not well-managed, public involvement often leads to protests, litigation, criticisms, and delays in service delivery to the people. Thus, the extent to which public participation can be a tool for the enhancement of service delivery in Limpopo – especially in the Capricorn District Municipality – is the focus of this study.

This study is guided by the following questions: What are the key concepts that relate to public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery? What impact does the Constitution of South Africa, Act 08 of 1996, and other government legal frameworks have on public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in South Africa, particularly in the Capricorn District Municipality? What modes and models of public participation are used to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality? What are the main factors that influence public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality?

The study adopts both qualitative and quantitative research approaches whereby the use of primary and secondary sources was augmented by interviews with local government actors. Moreover, questionnaires were administered by the researcher and his assistant researchers. A purposive sampling method was used. The researcher ensured that all relevant elements of

research ethics were observed. The data generated by the questionnaires and interviews were analysed and interpreted using the latest statistical tools. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods were used. Data collected using questionnaires were analysed by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The information was presented in the form of tabulations, frequencies, and percentages. Data collected through interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.

The findings of this study reflect that public participation mainly serves the purpose of meeting the statutory requirements for the development of best value initiatives and gaining information from citizens. The majority of the respondents were of the view that the Ward Committee system is fully functional in their municipalities. All Capricorn District municipalities have officers responsible for public participation; however, not all of them are accessible to the public. It was revealed that the public participation budget in Lepelle-Nkumpi and Mollemole is insufficient. The other main constraints identified are the serious lack of personal and working tools and resources. The study also found that not all documents were translated into the languages spoken in the Capricorn District and that there is a lack of feedback mechanisms on the issues raised by members of public during the IDP and Budget Fora. These findings were discussed in relation to the study's objectives and research questions.

In view of the argument presented in this study, some recommendations were made on the implementation of public participation as a tool for the enhancement of service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. It was recommended that the Capricorn District Municipality constantly monitor and evaluate its officials' ability to discharge their duties; that a concerted effort be made to empower Ward Committees with basic computer skills so as to enhance their networking and communication abilities. The study further recommended that a new normative model for enhanced public participation be developed. This model should advocate for the institutionalisation of public participation initiatives and strategies

across the board, within the Capricorn District. It was also recommended that the Capricorn District establish a task team to investigate the possible reasons for the lack of coordination so as to propose solutions to the current challenges.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC: African National Congress

CDM: Capricorn District Municipality

CDW: Community Development Workers

DPSA: Department of Public Service and Administration

EU: European Union

FC: Focus group

GCIS: Government Communication and Information Services

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

IDP: Integrated Development Plan

IPP: International Public Participation

LED: Local Economic Development

MP: Members of Parliament

MPL: Members of Provincial Legislature

NDP: National Development Plan

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NA: National Assembly

PP: Public Participation

TPPF: Towards Public Participation Framework

SA: South Africa

SALGA: South African Local Government Association

WPLG: White Paper on Local Government

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CHAPTER ONE

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the issues relating to the conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Limpopo Province – with specific reference to the Capricorn District Municipality(CDM). The latter was established in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) on 1st October 2000 (Provincial Government Notice No. 307 of 2000). The CDM is a category C municipality as determined by Section 4 of the Local Government: Structures Act of 1998 (Act 117 of 1998). The CDM comprises of four local municipalities: Blouberg, Lepelle-Nkumpi, Molemole, and Polokwane (Capricorn District Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2015/2016). Section 155 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) categorised municipalities into three groups. These are category A municipalities which have exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in their areas); category B municipalities which have a collective executive system referred to as a mayoral system and a plenary executive system which ensures a wide participation; and category C municipalities which have municipal executive and legislative authority in a given area that includes more than one municipality. The municipalities that constitute the Capricorn District are in category B.

This study investigates the level of municipal service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. Specific emphasis is put on public participation as a mandate of the

municipality, the roles and functions of councilors, as well as the identification of the Capricorn District's training needs in its endeavour to deliver quality services.

It suffices to note that the current legislations provide numerous avenues for members of the public to participate in governance – beyond elections. Sections 17, 59, 70 and 118 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, for instance, encourage stakeholders' participation on issues that affect them. Similarly, sections 19, 72, 73 and 74 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) urge municipalities to develop mechanisms, to consult members of the public in performing their functions and exercising their powers. Sections 16, 21, and 18 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) further urge municipalities to develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representatives of the government with a system of participatory governance. These sections also call for municipal councils to consult their communities about the quality level, range, and impact of services. Sections 14, 52, 57, 75, and 110 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 (Act 56 of 2003) prescribe consultation or communities' involvement in municipal affairs – especially all matters affecting them. Sections 4 and 49 of the Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act of 2004 (Act 6 of 2004) requires that the draft Rates Policy be published on the municipality's website, as part of the community participation process. Sections 5, 37, 67, 71, 80 and 91 call for all relevant information affecting members of the public to be published, ensuring that the message is clear.

Barberton (1998: 44) contends that local government policy in South Africa has proposed a greater degree of local democracy and local public participation. If local democracy can be advanced through public participation, to what extent do stakeholders within the Capricorn

District Municipality understand the value of public participation and what progress can be made in promoting public participation at grass roots level?

Hence, this research assesses whether public participation, as an arm of service delivery, does indeed fast-track the delivery of services at district level. Indeed, service delivery has become a pertinent question, not only at district level, but even provincial and national levels. In the process, the study also attempts to fill the gap in current literature, notably the fact that since its implementation, the concept of public participation has not been extended to all South African citizens. It must be noted that local government is expected to be developmental in order to move progressively towards the social and economic upliftment of communities. This can be accomplished, first, through the provision of basic services to all the people within the jurisdiction of the municipalities; and, secondly, by increasing economic opportunities through the promotion of public participation.

Thus, this study undertakes to show the link between the many protests observed in the Capricorn District and its level of service delivery. It suffices to observe that the exclusivity in addressing service delivery matters within the municipality's administration raises more concerns and causes protest-strikes and communities' disowning of certain projects.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The ongoing service delivery protests paint a negative picture of South Africa, locally and internationally. These protests leave one with an impression that the government is failing to deliver services to the people, especially at local level. Voters want to see the government realise its election promises which are expected to improve their lives.

Makhoba (*City Press*, 3:3 April 2014) reported that there had been 48 major service delivery strikes against local government in South Africa between 1st January and 3rd April 2014. Gauteng and the Eastern Cape were the provinces with the most protests in that year. Such Gauteng areas as Khutsong, Bekkersdal, Roodepoort, Bronkhorstspuit, Sebokeng, Mooiplaas, and Kliptown were significantly affected. In the North-West Province, protesters took to the streets in Britz and Majakaneng. In the Northern Cape, Brits communities also occupied the streets, demanding services from their local councillor. In Limpopo, the residents of Makweng and Thoka Village embarked on a service delivery protest on 06 October 2014.

Against this backdrop, the government should act fast to provide services to the people. Indeed, twenty years into democracy, the majority of South Africans are fast becoming impatient with the government which they consider as having failed to provide them with basic services – as guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). Seleka (*Sowetan*, 2:27 February 2013) reported that corruption, cadre deployment, nepotism, and tenderpreneurs contributed to increasing the number of non-performing municipalities. Thus, this study emphasises these critical elements and encourages municipalities to start engaging communities and civil society groups – as partners in the delivery of services. Communities and other role-players should be afforded the opportunity

to contribute to finding solutions to the problems that hinder service delivery at the local government.

The Capricorn District Municipality, like any other, has an obligation – in terms of sections 16,18 and 21 of the Local Government: Municipal System Act of 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) – to put in place systems, mechanisms, and procedures that enable members of the public to participate on service delivery matters that concern them. Another important obligation of a district is to meet its constitutional and legal mandate to undertake developmental oriented

planning, as enshrined in the Local Government: Municipal System Act of 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), and meeting the rights of citizens, in accordance to sections 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29,152 and 153 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996).

During the period before 1994, the then government of South Africa had created a myth with regard to the concept of public participation. This myth held that national government could decide and administer based on its own public policy; local people were seen as a threat rather than an asset to policy-making and service delivery (Berner 2006: 81). Believing this myth, the government has put in place legislation and policies (Bell 1998: 23). This myth perpetuates the command and control process whereby the government decides on the needs of the public and then elaborates its own policy action (Berner 2006: 83). According to Almond and Verbal (1989: 21), this approach was meant to provide or impose information available to members of the public, without them participating directly on issues affecting them. However, these authors' work was inconclusive regarding the bottom-up approach which provides a greater voice to members of the public on issues of service delivery. Thus, this study challenges the top-down approach, since public participation plays a critical role as a tool to enhance service delivery and is indispensable in sustaining democracy and promoting good local governance and administration (Cloete, 1995: 34).

Public participation is an active process in which participants take initiative and action, that are stimulated by their own plans and discussions, over which they can exert effective control. As a tool to enhance service delivery, public participation calls for a bottom-up approach (Cloete, 1997: 29). This approach encourages capacity-building through a continuous process of enhancing the public's knowledge, skills, perspective and strength, so that service delivery can be efficiently and effectively delivered.

Public participation should be considered as one of the milestones of democratic government, because it provides a mechanism for involving members of the public in governance processes. The local government which is the closest to the people should enable democracy to flourish. Through correct governance processes, public participation can convey valuable information about the public's needs and demands. It promotes responsiveness to public needs and facilitates the processes of service delivery. In terms of South African policies and legal frameworks pertaining to public participation, the local government is required to involve local communities in matters of service delivery – through public participation programmes.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

As South Africa celebrates the achievements of the past twenty years of democracy, there are people who cannot join in because they can only participate in government activities through voting which is done once every five years. Some politicians are remote from their electors. Politicians' incompetence, corruption, and bribery are prevalent; and, vital decisions that affect local citizens are still made behind closed doors (De Visser, 2005: 132).

The Capricorn District Municipality Integrated Development Plan suggests that the district has developed a communication strategy to deepen democracy. This strategy, among other

things, seeks to educate the citizens, create awareness, promote and popularise policies, mobilise for action and reassurance, change citizens' attitudes towards involvement in issues of governance, and change their negative perceptions on local government and its ability to deliver services. Despite the above strategy, the Capricorn District still experiences more service delivery protests. An example is the recent service delivery protests that took place in October in Molemole, in September in Aganang, and in February 2015 in Molemolle ... (*Capricorn Voice* 6 February 2015).

Insufficient public participation on issues of service delivery is an apparent obstacle towards the sustainability of projects that are geared towards improving the lives of communities within various municipalities. Thus, municipalities are experiencing hardships in their endeavour to provide quality services to members of the public. Service delivery protests suggest that members of the public are displeased with the level and standard of services, as well as the level of their involvement in matters that affect them.

The lack of access to information related to service delivery within the district is generally frustrating, with many projects failing to break-even. This state of affairs can only lead to human rights violations, more strikes, and a culture of unresponsiveness (Barberton & Kotze, 1998: 62). It appears that the Capricorn District believes in a top-down approach which engenders many protests. A pervasive public apathy and a persistently-insignificant public participation could lead to the demise of the hardly-achieved freedom and democracy. Indeed, members of the public act as guardians of democratic principles; thus, they have to challenge the actions or inaction of public institutions. In other words, the neglect of public participation may occasion the abuse or misuse of administrative and political power (Davids, 2005: 78).

Thus, this research explores and endeavours to answer the following central question: *To what extent have the municipalities in the Capricorn District facilitated public participation, and what are the challenges that they face in promoting public participation and the enhancement of service delivery?*

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to provide guidance to municipal officers and councillors on how to advance their approach to service delivery through public participation, and to develop a more systematic approach to public participation. Furthermore, the study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness and functionality of public participation as it relates to timing, reliable information, and response patterns. This will enable the elaboration of strategies to improve public participation in matters of service delivery.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to:

- Determine the manifestation of the concept of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery within the Capricorn District Municipality;
- Establish the capacity of public participation officials with respect to carrying out their public participation responsibilities;
- Describe and examine the current structures, mechanisms, and legislative frameworks for the facilitation of public participation in the Capricorn District Municipality;
- Explore the provision of financial and human resources to encourage public involvement in the Capricorn District Municipality;
- Determine appropriate mechanisms and make recommendations on how to improve public participation in the Capricorn District Municipality;

- and Investigate the existence of a monitoring mechanism and evaluate its influence on officials' commitment and accountability with respect to public participation.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A critical study of the subject and the application of primary and secondary sources research methods will be used to provide answers to the following questions:

- What modes of public participation are used to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality?
- What is the nature and scope of the public participation programmes implemented in Capricorn District municipalities?
- What is the underlying cause of service delivery protests in the Capricorn district?
- Does the Capricorn District Municipality have the capacity to deliver services based on its constitutional and legislative competencies?
- What are the main factors influencing public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality?
- How does the Capricorn District Municipality ensure that communication and public participation initiatives are aligned?
- Do the IDP and budget processes of the Capricorn District Municipality provide the public with sufficient opportunity to partake in their development, implementation, and evaluation?
- Does the Capricorn District Municipality have functional Ward Committees which meet regularly?
- What policies, strategies, and structures exist in the Capricorn District Municipality to promote public participation?
- Does the Capricorn District Municipality adequately budget for public participation?

- What are the challenges facing the local government – particularly the Capricorn District Municipality – in terms of fulfilling its constitutional mandate of creating a democratic, transparent, and responsive governance?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study consists in the fact that it will inform policy formulation and implementation processes within the Capricorn District Municipality specifically, and

departments and other spheres of government generally, on how public participation can serve as a tool to enhance service delivery. Moreover, since this study is an integral part of academic research, scholars who are active in the field of public participation and service delivery in local government are likely to benefit more from the study's outcome. It suffices to note that the South African government and other stakeholders are becoming increasingly concerned with the quality and on-time service delivery, when implementing government programmes. They feel that services should be prioritised according to the people's needs; hence, the need for the public's participation in the planning process. Good implementation of the public participation process, in turn, may improve service delivery to communities. This would ensure sustainable development as well as a long-term and consistent provision of quality services.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this research may assist in identifying the areas that require improvement regarding the implementation of public participation programmes. Indeed, the conclusions drawn might shed light on how to develop capacity and influence commitment, as well as how to assist management or leadership in effectively implementing the public participation process in the municipalities. The research would also assist in developing benchmarks for good public participation. It would suggest ways and means to fill the identified gaps in the implementation of public participation within the municipalities (Closer

& Rosenberg, 1970: 71). The research is further expected to raise questions for further research on public participation in the municipalities.

The original contribution of this study is that it endeavours to enrich the sparse existing body of knowledge on public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery. This contribution can be summarised thus:

- To enhance the role of municipalities in facilitating public participation by trying to bridge the existing gap between theory and practice;
- To identify the knowledge and skills required to facilitate meaningful public participation and strengthen strategies for public participation in governance processes; and
- To build a body of knowledge (*learning perspective*) that would benefit the municipal sector by providing an opportunity to theorise and explore different methods and mechanisms for a meaningful public participation in governance processes.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to municipalities situated in the Capricorn District of the province of Limpopo in South Africa. This province comprises of five districts, namely, Capricorn, Mopani (east), Sekhukhune (south), Waterberg (west), and Vhembe (north). This study focuses on five local municipalities that constitute the Capricorn District Municipality. Particular attention is on public participation that is deliberately stimulated by local municipalities within the Capricorn District.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Bailey (1982: 49) underscores the need to clearly define the scope of any research being conducted. The following aspects may be taken into account: time, geographical borders,

hierarchical dimensions, age groups, and so on. Ideally, this study should have covered all local municipalities of the province of Limpopo. However, due to limited financial resources and time constraints, the study could not go beyond the boundaries of the Capricorn District. It must be noted that access to senior traditional leaders still poses a major challenge because of protocol. Another limitation relates to problems that could be faced during the data collection process. These may result from some respondents' refusal to cooperate, political differences within the municipality, and managers' unavailability. However, these limitations will not significantly affect the adequacy of the data or the drawing of valid conclusions (Davids, 2005: 98).

1.10 STUDY AREA

The study area for this research is the Capricorn District Municipality which is situated in the centre of the province of Limpopo and borders four district municipalities, as indicated above. The Capricorn District – which encompasses the capital city of the Limpopo province – is situated at the core of the province's economic development. One national and various major provincial and regional roads pass through the Capricorn District's municipal area. These include the N1 (national road from Gauteng to Africa, via Zimbabwe), the R37 (from Polokwane to Burgersfort/Ladenburg), the R521 (from Polokwane to Alldays and Botswana), and the R71 (from Polokwane to Tzaneen and Ba-Phalaborwa).

The total population of the Capricorn District is 1 261 463. Its population density is 58.1/km² for a total area of 21 705 km². This district contains five local municipalities and 342 838 households. It is divided into 121 local municipality wards (Capricorn District Municipality 2015/2016 Final IDP).

1.11 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

An effective analysis of a conceptualisation of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery requires an understanding of core concepts. Thus, this section unpacks the core concepts of this study. It must be noted that this explanation of concepts will not include terms which are not part of the title of the study; these will be explained where they are used for the first time.

1.11.1 Public

The public is any individual or group of people, or any organisation or political entity with interest in the outcome of a government decision. These are often referred to as stakeholders (De Villiers, 2000: 76).

1.11.2 Public Participation

Public participation refers to the deliberate involvement of all citizens and communities in a goal-oriented activity (Atkinson, 1992: 99). Herberlain (1976: 55) construes public participation as a process of involving all organised and unorganised groups of citizens or citizen representatives on a particular issue. For Guire (2007: 89), public participation is the process of involving private citizens in decision-making for matters that affect different spheres of life. According to Baxter (1984: 35), public participation is a process that involves communication between the public and political office-bearers. In this study, public participation is understood as the process of intentionally involving citizens, workers, individuals, group members, group representatives, interest groups, community groups, voluntary members, religious members, business, unions, and charity organisations in goal-directed issues (services) that affect them.

1.11.3 Service Delivery

Service delivery refers to the needs of citizens, what members of the public request from government institutions, or the services that the government undertakes to supply to citizens in terms of their priorities (Bayat & Meyer, 1994: 73). Service delivery is further defined as a commitment to address the needs of members of the public, so that they can begin to live a dignified life. Citizens' aspiration to better services is a right entrenched in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996).

1.11.4 Local Government

According to Bekker (2011: 44), local government refers to a decentralised, representative institution with general and specific powers devolved upon it by the central or provincial government, in respect of a restricted geographical area within a nation or state. Thus, local government is mostly concerned with a particular segment of society and provides services to a particular locality. Hence, Bell (1972: 34) notes that local government is that sphere of government that directly serves the needs of communities at grassroots level.

This study adopts Bayat and Meyer's (1998:1-3) definition of local government as a decentralised, representative institution vested with general and specific powers by a higher tier of government, within a geographically-defined area.

1.11.5 Municipality

A municipality is one of the spheres of government which is closest to the people. Its main mandate is to provide developmental, social and political services, as well as a democratic and accountable governance to local communities. The provision of services to the citizens or members of public municipalities in South Africa is divided into three categories: A, B and C. These categories are outlined in Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of South

Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) and Section 42 of the Local Government Structures Act of 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998).

1.12 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

The preliminary literature review concerns the consultation of literature on service delivery and public participation, as well as democracy and local government.

1.12.1 Categories of Public Participation

Public participation has long been a subject of discussions in the field of political and administrative sciences. Allen (1984: 7) and Spiegel (1986: 132) have the same understanding and view of public participation which they construe as a citizen action that endeavours to influence decision-making, or an action that incorporates the demands and values of communities into public administration services. The above view classifies public participation into two categories: political participation which includes the casting of a vote during election or getting involved in political proceedings, and administrative participation which involves a close-watch on administrative operations (Anderson, 2000: 83). This study will not limit itself to one single category, both categories will form part of the undertaken review and analysis. Clearly, there are different views/perceptions on public participation; these vary from one author to the other. Among these many views, the one which – according to the researcher – carries more weight is the one formulated by the International Association for Public Participation (International Association of Public Participation, 2008: 3). This approach to public participation defines its core values. Here, public participation is viewed as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make decisions. It is the process through which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decision-making. This view shows

that public participation is a two-way communication and interaction mechanism whose overall goal is to make better decisions that are supported by the affected citizen.

The public participation process is underpinned by a number of values. Firstly, the public should have a say in decision-making processes about actions that affect their lives. Secondly, the public participation process must communicate with the participants on how their input has affected the decision. Thirdly, the public participation process must provide participants with information that would enable them to participate in a meaningful way. Fourthly, the public participation process should involve participants in defining how they participate. Fifthly, the public participation process must seek and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by the decision to be made. Sixthly, the public participation process must communicate the interests and meet the needs of all participants. Seventhly, public participation must include the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

1.12.2 Constitutional Framework on Public Participation

A number of sections cited in the introduction to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa deal directly with the concept of public participation. These sections charge all legislatures with the responsibility of facilitating public participation. Legislations such as the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (Draft National Framework for Public Participation, 2000) and many more cited in the introduction to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa require that government engage with citizens, when making decisions that affect their lives.

Bella (1982: 93) stresses the imperative for organisations and decision-making bodies to learn – from their stakeholders – how to construct mobilised products, services, and processes that are more powerful. If a government or municipality wants to learn from or involve the public

in decision-making, it needs to be willing to approach and involve its constituencies. According to Citizen Participation in Local Government (2006: 20), the reason most citizens never provide input or participate in law-making processes is that politicians doubt the quality of their input or its ability to make a difference. If government departments truly want the public to participate or desire to change the attitude of community members towards assisting, they need to consider community proposals and suggestions. Government

departments should value the public's input. If the public recommend changes to products or services, government departments need to consider those changes (Citizen Participation in Local Governance, 2006: 9). Bain (1986: 89) espouses the view that stakeholders' insights are valuable, and that government needs to reward its stakeholders for sharing information.

1.12.3 Efficacy of Public Participation

Alke (2001:17) notes that challenges related to service delivery in local government are often best solved through common effort. When local government starts to connect with citizens by asking for and offering assistance and support, the local municipality will discover the strengths and passion it never knew it had. Through this connection with members of the public, the municipality may realise that participation is the very soul of democratic citizenship and that it can enrich the local community's life. Loeb (1999: 141) shares these sentiments in addressing issues pertaining to the inadequacy of participation from the public, which is also related to a lack of understanding of the complexities of municipalities. Certainly, members of the public need to decide for themselves – irrespectively of whether particular causes are wise or foolish – on such matters as the politics of campaigns on IDPs, or efforts to safeguard water, air, and wildlife. They need to identify and connect with worthy groups that take on these issues. But, first, they need to be assured that their individual involvement is worthwhile, and that what they might do in the public sphere will not be in

vain. In this regard, Brynard (1996: 149) states that municipalities suffer from an understanding of themselves as private sanctuaries. This belief will be investigated in this study, as most government problems can be solved through common efforts. It suffices to indicate that the dream of a private sanctuary is an illusion which erodes the constitutional mandate of the municipalities – which calls for public involvement. In other words, it diminishes the municipality's sense of involving community members. Thus, walls are built

around municipalities, around those closest to them, and ultimately around internal stakeholders (councillors and personnel). These walls may provide a temporary feeling of security; however, they cannot prevent citizens from engaging them.

Many public participation practitioners, including those involved in this study, support Bhuckory (1969: 14-16) who argues that public participation should form an integral part of democracy. Traditionally, the defining characteristic of democracy was the right to elect political leaders or government officials so that they can take important decisions for citizens – with the assistance of citizens. Since the inception of South Africa's democracy, decisions previously made by elected political office-bearers in a political process, are now delegated to citizens. This approach minimises many challenges that could result from disgruntled members of society and fast-tracks service delivery, as members of society will own the decision.

1.12.4 Rationale for Public Participation

Various factors account for the inclusion of public participation activities in municipality programmes, plans, projects and other actions that affect members of the public. These factors or reasons can be categorised as, but not limited to the following.

Learning reason: This perspective views public participation as a source of information about the services citizens want. During participation, members of the public learn more about service delivery and issues that affect them (Brynard, 1996: 146). The knowledge acquired can then be applied to other challenges or daily matters.

Political reason: This perspective regards participation as a way to freedom and encourages disadvantaged individuals/groups in a community. Participation is also used to garner votes and gain political popularity during elections (Bradburn, 1988: 112).

Instrumental reason: This is based on the notion that public involvement and service delivery in developmental projects will also aid the end-product of such a decision-making process (Cloete, 1995). The researcher believes that this approach will assist to build the confidence, trust, legitimacy, credibility, and acceptability of a project or decision-making process (Bekink, 2006: 134).

Procedural reason: Public participation should be regarded as a means to source or generate approval for actions taken by government officials; hence, members of the public are urged to participate in order to conform to the legislative/procedural requirements (Bridges, 1974: 57).

Conflict resolution reason: Public involvement should be considered as a means to settle conflict between interested and affected parties, or to garner support for resolving a conflict (Carney, 1998: 125).

Improved decision reason: Public involvement should be viewed as a process through which information is exchanged; it further gives members of the public the opportunity to monitor the implementation of the decisions made, and determines the effectiveness, efficiency and efficacy of the adopted mitigation measures (Cohen & Manion, 1995: 56).

Normative/Democratic sovereignty reason: It is assumed that in any democratic society, members of the public have the right to be involved in the issues that affect them, like those

relating to service delivery (Connelly, 2006: 86). This calls for members of the public to be given the opportunity to be involved in anything that affects them or any project that affect their lives – only if they chose to do so.

Source of information/substantive: Members of the public should not be undermined, since they have knowledge and experience which can be used to supplement technical judgment, particularly regarding the identification of critical alternatives and other challenges that relate to identified projects (Bishop, 2002: 59).

Empowerment reason: This element views public involvement as a means of equipping the public with the skills, values, attitudes and knowledge that enable them to take charge of their lives. It is against this backdrop that public participation should be regarded as both an end in itself and as a means to self-development (Dror, 1975: 124). Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005: 56) further differentiate between participation as a means (passive) and participation as an end (active).

Through public participation, political office-bearers ensure that the will of the affected citizens is reflected in the decisions made. The notion of citizens' authority in administrative decision-making is fundamental to democracy. Politicians should not make decisions without weighing them in terms of the priorities and competing values that members of a society consider good. Public participation creates a new, direct link between the public and decision-makers in the bureaucracy. Public participation is a way of ensuring that those who make decisions that affect people's lives have a dialogue with the public before making those decisions. This enhances the public's influence on the decisions that affect their lives. It also provides decision-makers with more information about the relative importance that the affected public assigns to the values that underlie a particular decision. In return, members of

the public develop the feeling of owning the decision. This promotes and fast-tracks service delivery and could minimise citizens' protests and strikes against municipalities.

According to Creswell (2003: 3), citizens' involvement can also be achieved through community fora or community engagement fora. This approach involves disseminating information, generating information or opinions about issues, sharing information among people, identifying best-practices, or building skills. It attempts to mobilise or connect people to an issue; thus, it encourages and promotes engagement and connection or networking.

This study shares Heberlein's (1976: 216) belief that public involvement – if well-implemented – can result in better service delivery. Indeed, Heberlein (1976: 231) argues that municipal decisions that involve citizens are more likely to be acceptable to the people concerned. As for Turner and Jonathan (1975: 213), they believe that citizens' participation in municipalities helps to check and balance political activities and allows the public fuller access to the benefits of a democratic society.

1.12.5 Strategies for Enhanced Public Participation

This study adopts the methods and approaches to public participation elaborated by Comwall (2003: 23-24). The latter believes that there are different approaches, methods, forms, and trends of public participation. The most common (but often least effective) form of public participation is public hearing. This form requires government representatives to give a presentation on a proposed decision. It further calls for the public to make comments, give inputs, or pose questions. The other forms are ballot initiatives, petitions, izimbizos (community assembly), Integrated Development Plans, advisory committees or electronic public participation, publications, public meetings, open houses, workshops, target groups,

toll free phone lines, interviews, surveys, study circles, future search conferences, public policy dialogues, and appreciative inquiries (Democracy and Public Participation, 2008: 176).

1.13 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve a research problem. It may also be understood as the science concerned with how research is conducted (De Vos, 2002: 7).

Methodology comprises both particular research methods for the collection and analysis of data and more general epistemological perspectives on which these methods are based. Thus, this section presents and or describes the research approach, research design, study area,

population, sampling, sampling size and sampling method, data collection, instrument, data analysis method, and the related ethical considerations.

1.13.1 Research Design and Methodologies

A research design is the conceptual structure within which research would be conducted. It also refers to the plan according to which the researcher selects research participants and collects information from them (Fox & Meyer, 1995: 53). Research methodology further relates to the process and steps of the research process. Methodology deals with the data collection, data collection methods, communication, and how the results are to be analysed to answer the research question or solve the problem that initiated the research (Mutuvhi, 2012, in Collis and Hussey 2013: 113). According to Heymans (1994: 29), methodology is the study of scientific research methods. As for Mouton and Maraise (1990: 99), they define methodology as a choice made about the cases to study, the data gathering methods, data analysis, as well as the planning and executing a research study. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use mixed methods as a research methodology. This means that both qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied – to ensure triangulation. Triangulation

reflects a conscious combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies within one study; it enables the expansion of research methods to enhance diversity. This approach enriches the understanding of the research problem (Hanson, 1995).

De Vos (1998: 15) characterises the quantitative approach – in social sciences – as more highly formalised and more explicitly controlled. Its range is clearly defined and involves the study of subjects and a broader understanding. It focuses on the collection of numeric data which are then analysed statistically (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2002: 39). This method is appropriate for this study because it gives a broader understanding of the phenomenon under

investigation. It describes with precision the characteristics, similarities, differences, and causal relations that exist within the population. Qualitative research is an inquiry system which seeks to build a holistic and largely narrative description that will inform the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon (Huttington, 1990: 47).

Leedy (2005: 46) defines qualitative research as one in which the researcher directly observes and records people in their natural setting for an extended period of time. The adoption of a qualitative method in this study is appropriate because it can enable the researcher to gather or gain new perspectives or ideas on how much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information about the phenomenon under study. The qualitative method will be used to explore and describe the participants' experiences of the public participation mechanisms employed in the different wards of the targeted municipalities. The triangulation of results from both the qualitative and quantitative methods, if well-interpreted, ensures validity and substantial findings. Triangulation will be underpinned by the following data collection methods: documentary analysis, interviews with the relevant officials responsible for public participation, councillors, traditional leaders, community development workers, constituency

administrators, community-based organisations, Ward Committees, and structures on public participation practices within municipalities. Where necessary, the researcher will attend municipal public participation activities and IDP programmes.

In the qualitative phase of the research, the phenomenon of interest, relationships, attitudes, behaviours, and experiences will be explored within the real world setting. Furthermore, because data are principally verbal, the researcher will gain a first-hand, holistic understanding of phenomena. The data collection will be shaped as the study proceeds. Through this method, the researcher will mostly depend on interviews and focus groups

which will assist in understanding *why* public participation is carried out and *how* public participation is implemented by the municipalities under review. The process will involve the development of a structured questionnaire comprised of closed and open-ended questions, as well as the conduct of interviews and focus groups.

The quantitative research approach to be used in the study refers to a formal, rigorous, objective, systematic process. The latter will help to collect data, to describe variables and their relationships, and to deal with numerical data. The measurements focus on specific variables that are quantified through rating scales, frequency counts, and means.

1.13.2 Study Population

Public participation involves communication between the service provider (the local municipality) and the beneficiaries (community members) – especially the interested and affected parties – with the aim of improving decision-making. The study population refers to the sector or group (usually of people) about which the researcher would like to draw conclusions. Du Ploy (2009: 108) argues that the term population does not refer only to people, but can also be applied to any aggregate of individuals, groups, organisations, or

social artifacts/objects. Friend (2004: 52) defines population as the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to draw specific conclusions. Together, the above authors define population as a study object consisting of individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events, or the condition to which they were exposed.

The study population will be drawn from four municipalities within the Capricorn District (Blouberg, Molemole, Lepel-Nkumpi, and Polokwane). The total population of the district is 1 261 463. The respondents will include the following: community development workers, ward representatives, municipal IDP managers, constituency administrators, traditional

leaders, chairpersons and secretaries of civic associations, business organisations, and politicians.

1.13.3 Sampling

Sampling refers to the strategies used to select a sample of participants, from the whole population, to gain information about the larger group (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006: 13). According to Johnson (2002: 66), sampling is a process whereby a small population or subgroup of a population of interest is selected for a scientific study. As for Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006: 49), they define sampling as the selection of participants from a population; as such, it involves decisions about the people, setting, events, behaviour and or social processes to be observed. In this study, the selected sample group includes the following: community development workers, ward representatives, IDP managers, constituency administrators, traditional leaders, civic associations, business organisations, and political office-bearers.

Different categories of sampling exist: probability, quasi-probability, and non-probability. This study will use purposive sampling techniques (i.e. non-probability sampling). According to Babbie (2010: 32), a purposive sampling technique will make the study more

credible. Purposive sampling involves collecting a sample composed of subjects deliberately selected (on purpose) by researchers.

Silverman (2005: 119) stresses the existence of elements that should be considered by any researcher as possible means to reduce the cost, for example, sample size, method of data collection, population, accuracy, and statistical analysis. A typical sample size for phenomenological research, according to Mouton (2001: 87), is a minimum of five individuals who have direct experience with the studied phenomena. This is a process by which respondents are chosen to represent the population in which the study is conducted.

Babbie (2010: 56) provides the following guidelines for the selection of a sample size:

- For a sample population ($N < 50$), there is little point in sampling. It is recommended that the whole population be considered.
- If the population size is around 100, 75% should be sampled.
- If the population size is around 500, 50% should be sampled.
- If the population size is around 1,000, 35% should be sampled.

The total sample population for this study consists of 161 respondents. The sampled groups will comprise of respondents responsible for the coordination of the activities related to council issues within the Capricorn District: 41 community development workers, 48 Ward Committee members, 5 IDP managers; 5 public participation managers, 5 constituency administrators, 10 traditional leaders, 5 business people, 19 executive members of civic associations, 14 municipal councilors, and 5 municipal managers.

1.14 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection refers to the process of preparing for and collecting data/information relating to the study. Data are any form of recorded information, observation, or facts (Johnson, 2000:

51). According to Baumgartner and Hansley (2006: 44), a data collection method is a procedure that specifies techniques and measuring instruments to be utilised, as well as activities to be conducted in a research study. The main objective of data collection for this study will be to obtain information, keep record, make an informed decision about important matters, and transmit information on to others. The following three research instruments will be used to collect data in this study:

- interviews;
- questionnaires; and
- documents.

1.14.1 Interviews

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 121), an interview is a data collection instrument consisting in an interviewer asking the respondents questions and recording their responses. These answers could be recorded by means of a tape- recorder, cellphone, Ipad or any other device; the answers can also be manually recorded (handwritten). This data-collecting technique is closely aligned to questionnaires.

Primary data will be obtained through interviewing the participants. The interviewer will use open-ended questions which will be read to the respondents who are traditional leaders, constituency administrators, business people, and political office-bearers. This is because they are directly involved in public participation and service delivery but would not have time to go through the whole questionnaire, due to their busy schedules.

1.14.2 Questionnaire

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 94), a questionnaire is a set of written questions and or statements to which identified stakeholders will respond and thus provide relevant

information needed for the successful completion of a project or study. The questions are mostly grouped into open-ended and closed-ended (Du Plooy, 2009: 59).

1.14.3 Documents

The study will also use documents to corroborate the evidence for or against what the researcher would like to question on (Turner, 1975: 51). Media reports on service delivery, press statements, policy documents, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, pieces of legislations, journals, and other related government documents will be scrutinised – to provide an understanding of the participants' varying viewpoints.

1.14.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a list of principles and guidelines (informed consent, confidentiality, safety of the participants, trust, and full disclosure) offered by professional organisations to guide research practices and to indicate behaviours that are ethical (Baker, 1994: 89). Bless (2006: 140) defines ethical consideration as a way of helping to prevent research abuse and assisting investigators in understanding their responsibilities as ethical scholars. The ethical considerations indicate how respondents are protected in a study (Bulmer and Warwick, 1993: 315-318). The approach in this study is to ensure that data are not collected in a manner that undermines the Constitution of South Africa. Ethics requires a researcher to determine what is proper and improper, when conducting social research.

1.15 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

According to Leedy and Ormord (2005: 136), data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview and field notes that have been accumulated to increase the researcher's own understanding and enable him or her to add to what others have

researched on. Data analysis is also defined as the process of placing observations in numerical form and grouping them according to their thematic properties so as to derive their meaning (Turner, 1975: 84).

In this study, two methods of data analysis will be used, namely, quantitative data analysis for quantitative data and qualitative data analysis for qualitative data. Data collected using questionnaires will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The information will be presented in the form of tabulations, frequencies, and percentages. Data collected through interview schedules will be analysed using thematic processes. The data will be presented in a narrative form.

1.16 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One introduces the topic, provides legislative context and the background to this study, states the problem, aim and objectives of the study, formulates the research questions, indicates the significance of the study, defines key concepts, provides the delimitation and limitations of the study, describes the research methodology, and provides a brief literature review.

Chapter Two provides an extensive review of the literature on public participation. This chapter mainly reviews the theoretical literature on public participation in order to contextualise South Africa's commitment to public participation in local government and highlight the potential pitfalls of this type of structured engagement between citizens and municipalities. The chapter also examines the assumed meaning of, importance, and types of participation.

Chapter Three provides an extensive legal framework for the research topic. It deals with the legislative frameworks enunciating public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery, for instance, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; the Local Government:

Municipal Systems Act of 2000; the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998; the White Paper on Local Government of 1998; and the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003. International and local literatures will be examined in an attempt to understand the conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery. This chapter will further characterise the ideal-type encounter envisaged for the creation of inviting spaces – informed by the Constitutional Court’s rulings on the meaningful engagement of citizens.

Chapter Four describes the research design and methodology applied in the study.

Chapter Five deals with the data analysis, interpretation, presentation of findings, and the discussions of the data collected on public participation practices applicable in the Capricorn District Municipality.

Chapter Six provides some recommendations and draws a conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROLE AND PROCESSES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The involvement of members of the public in service delivery matters is of critical importance in a democratic society. This is because public participation is a mechanism for entrenching democracy and promoting cohesion between local government and communities, particularly regarding the provision of quality and sustainable services. In pre-1994 South Africa, the Apartheid government suppressed all forms of public participation from the black communities. After 1994, the new elected administration committed itself to and embraced a community-centered development approach. Hence, public participation became a constitutional imperative as it is stated that people's needs should be responded to and the members of the public should be encouraged – through the mechanism of public education

and outreach – to participate in policy-making or anything that affects them (Naidu, 2008: 83- 92).

Thus, this literature review chapter is aimed at investigating and exploring some of the research pertaining to the topic of the study. This chapter strives to provide a solid foundation for the subsequent chapters. Here, the research problem concepts articulated in Chapter One will be analysed in such a way that the measurable parts become obvious. It should be indicated from the beginning that the outlining of the concepts in this chapter is not exhaustive. This is because scientific and theoretical knowledge on public participation changes constantly, as new information is added.

This chapter commences by outlining the meanings of concepts that are key to this study. This will be succeeded by a discussion of some forms of public participation. Subsequently, an exploration of some levels of public participation will be undertaken. This will be followed by a discussion of some of the obstacles to public participation – in terms of the relationship between practice and legislation – in the Capricorn District Municipality. This literature review will ensure that the main objective of the study, which is to establish the extent to which public participation enhances service delivery, is achieved. The specific concepts to be discussed in this chapter include public, participation, democratisation, democracy, local governance, community development, and service delivery. Each of these concepts will be explored to establish how it relates to service delivery and public participation. This study will endeavor to show how a well-planned and effectively implemented public participation can improve service delivery as well as the values and benefits that can be enjoyed by the South African government, particularly in the Capricorn

District. A wide range of participatory forms will be outlined in this study and an assessment of the levels of participation will be undertaken.

It suffices to note that public participation is no longer a new phenomenon in South Africa's democratic government. Thus, the sources consulted will rather assist in answering the research questions which are:

- What is the nature of the public participation involved in the Capricorn District Municipal's activities?
- How do councillors view and comprehend their roles and responsibilities?
- What is the capacity of the Capricorn District Municipality in terms of service delivery – based on its constitutional and legislative competencies?

The sources reviewed may provide answers to some of the above and other questions raised in this study. Indeed, it is expected that the literature will provide both supportive and contrary views and perceptions on the key argument of this study. It is held that many service delivery protests which occurred in the Capricorn District Municipality suggest that members of the public are not pleased – not only with the poor quality of the services received, but also with the limited level of their involvement in the issues that affect them: the high rate of protests is directly linked to the low standard of the services provided by the Capricorn District Municipality.

2.2 KEY CONCEPTS RELATED TO SERVICE DELIVERY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Fundamental to a good conceptual analysis of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery is an understanding of related core concepts. Thus, this section elaborates on core

concepts which are central to this study. Other equally important terms which are not part of the title of the study will be explained where they are introduced for the first time.

According to Jacobs (1996: 60) a phrase or concept indicates an abstraction formed by generalisations based on particular elements of reality. John (2000: 81) believes that each new class of data isolated from the other classes – on the basis of definite characteristics – can be called a concept or phrase. Concepts are framed, developed, and coined in a particular space or geographical area, or in a situation, when knowledge and understanding is available within a particular community. It should be emphasised that knowledge is not static. That is, when knowledge increases, the meaning of concepts also changes – depending on the context in which they are applied. When more knowledge is gathered, accurate and precise meanings are given to concepts (Bhuckory, 1969: 24).

In this study, concepts are analysed scientifically to ensure that they carry comprehensive meanings and that their measurable elements become evident. The following sections outlines key concepts that are closely linked to service delivery and public participation at local government, particularly in the Capricorn District.

2.2.1 Public

The public is any individual or group of individuals, organisation, or political entity with interest in the outcome of a decision. These are often referred to as stakeholders (De Villiers, 2000: 76).

2.2.2 Participation

Participation is underpinned by numerous theories. Like most conceptual constructs, the consolidation of participation also elicits divergent scholarly views and definitions. The concept “participation” is subject to ambiguous and diverse interpretations (Leach, 2000: 30). Participation refers to the act of partaking – with others – in a particular activity (Scott,

2008:12). For Held (1996:15), participation is a means of contributing to something. Bekker (s.a: 41) defines participation as an activity undertaken by one or more individuals – who were previously excluded from the decision-making process – in conjunction with one or more other individuals who were previously the sole protagonists in that process.

2.2.3 Public Participation

Public participation is defined as the deliberate involvement of all citizens and communities in a goal-oriented activity (Fiorino, 1990: 99). According to Herberlain (1976: 55), public participation is the process of involving all organised and unorganised groups of citizens or citizen representatives in a particular issue. Guire (2007: 89) defines public participation as the process of involving private citizens to affect decision-making – with different spheres of life. Baxter (1984: 35) construes public participation as a process that involves

communication between the public and political office-bearers. In this study, public participation is understood as a process of intentionally involving citizens, workers, individuals, group members, group representatives, interest groups, community groups, voluntary members, religious members, business people, unions, and charity organisations in goal-directed issues (services) that affect them.

2.2.4. Service Delivery

Service delivery refers to the needs of the citizens that government institutions have to satisfy, or the needs that the government undertakes to supply to the citizens in terms of their priorities (Berner, 2006: 93). Service delivery is further defined as a commitment to address the needs of the members of public, so that they can begin to live a dignified life. The citizens' right to have better services is entrenched in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996).

2.2.5 Local Government

According to Bekker (2011: 44), local government refers to a decentralised, representative institution with general and specific powers devolved upon it by the central or provincial government, in respect of a restricted geographical area within a nation or state. This focus on a particular segment of society or the provision of services to a particular locality is one of the most distinguishing elements of local government. Hence, Bell (1972: 34) notes that local government is the sphere of government that directly serves the needs of communities at grassroots level. This study adopts the definition of local government given by Bayat and Meyer (1998:1-3), which construes local government as a decentralised, representative institution vested with general and specific powers by a higher tier of government within a geographically-defined area.

2.2.6 Municipality

A municipality is one of the spheres of government which is closest to the people. Its main mandate is to provide developmental, social and political services; and ensure a democratic and accountable government that focuses on local communities' needs. In South Africa, municipalities are organised into three categories: A, B, and C. These categories are outlined in Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) and Section 42 of the Local Government Structures Act of 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998).

2.3 FORMS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There are different forms and dimensions of public participation, depending on how and the environment in which they are applied. The following subsections outline some of the most relevant forms of public participation at a local government level.

2.3.1 Political Parties

Political parties can sometimes be major pressure groups on issues of service delivery and public involvement on issues that affect members of the public within all spheres of governance. They are called pressure groups because they have the potential to influence major political decisions through putting persistent pressure on matters of service delivery and the involvement of members of the public. It suffices to note that political parties sometimes seek to exploit situations to gain control, either by unaided efforts or in collaboration with other parties – in an endeavor to oppose the ruling benches (Berner, 2006: 81). Political parties serve as an important pressure group with regard to the articulation and final inclusion of the needs and demands of the public in the Integrated Development Plan of a municipality's service delivery priority list.

2.3.2 Middle Class Groups

Middle class groups are constituted by members of such professional bodies as Legal Aid, the Medical Council, Teachers Unions, or School Principal Associations. These groups have the potential to influence policy-making and implementation on issues of service delivery and public participation within municipalities (Berner, 2006: 91). They ensure that issues of service delivery affecting their members are taken into consideration by the government.

2.3.3 Consultation

The term consultation refers to the process of seeking information or advice. It is a process whereby a municipality exchanges ideas and notes with members of the public who are affected by the services needed. It provides information to members of the public and solicits opinions from the affected participants. This form of engagement involves a process of communication between the government and the affected members of the public (Craythorne, 1997: 99).

2.3.4. The Business Sector

A country's level of democracy is closely linked to such basic freedoms as the right to private ownership. The latter enables people to be part of the free market system of profit based on the supply and demand principle. The connection between the free market system, private entrepreneurship, and democracy has certain outcomes for service delivery and public participation. Thus, the business sector can fulfill an advisory function on issues of service delivery and can indicate how members of the public may participate on issues affecting the economy of their municipality (Fred 2003:63). This sector cannot be ignored, as it has the necessary financial muscles to boost the economy of the municipality. The business sector's strategic financial position provides its preferential access to public participation on issues of service delivery.

2.3.5 Non-Violent Protests

Members of the public may participate on issues of service delivery through such non-violent forms of protest as peaceful marches, demonstrations, and mass meetings. According to Bridges (1974: 30), a non-violent protest is not necessarily a sign of the rejection of authority, because it is normally based on moral pressure. Large-scale, passive resistance has the potential to become more serious. This is because it directly challenges authority and is regarded as an effective approach to revolutionary action. Non-violent protest – in a complex municipality with rapidly changing needs – is more than just a safety block. It can also become a valuable catalyst of public participation for a municipality that is capable of using it effectively and efficiently for the same purpose.

2.3.6 Public Hearings

A public hearing is the most common form of public participation where municipalities and legislatures call a public hearing where interest groups, stakeholders, and individuals are invited to comments on relevant issues. This form of participation provides members of the public with an opportunity to share their views on a particular issue and to ask questions on any matters tabled before them. It also allows the government to conduct educational outreach, before the members of the public are required to make inputs. Public hearing encourages municipalities to facilitate pre-hearing workshops, to provide members of the public with guidance on how inputs can be prepared and submitted. This form of public participation compels the government to provide members of the public with a chance to make inputs when the Bill is tabled before them.

2.3.7 Elections

Elections are regarded as a process through which the electorates elect among candidates who are eligible for a vacancy like the political position of municipal councillor. Voting during elections is viewed as the primary form of public participation at local government level. Elections are usually held at intervals of not more than five years, to give registered voters the opportunity to approve or disapprove the nominated candidates. Therefore, elections are the channel through which the electorates participate on issues of service delivery.

2.3.8 Interest Groups

Interest groups comprise of six to ten people brought together to exchange notes and ideas on a specific matter. They serve as the mouthpiece of a specific group in a society (Hanekom, 1991:80). Interest groups have one purpose: to influence government to consider their proposals or needs of the community they represent – through oral or written submissions.

They are more interested in promoting the interests of their members and do not give up until their demands and needs are met (Atkinson, 1992: 21). They enable the government to take cognisance of the prevailing views, facts and values of a group – with the aim of establishing a meaningful priority for general satisfaction within a particular community.

2.3.9 Referendum

A referendum provides members of the public with the opportunity to make a choice between alternative courses of action on an issue affecting them. The outcome of a referendum may then be integrated in the particular state's Constitution (Leach, 2000: 90). According to Artin (2002: 75), a referendum is a provision permitting electorates to accept or reject the position of a government or council, through a formal election. A referendum requires a long and expensive phase of information and debate. Through this form of public participation, members of the public may be more susceptible to emotional assertions than to apply their minds to a particular position – bearing in mind the political, economic or social implications of their votes (Allen, 1984: 98). This form of public participation provides members of public with an opportunity to inform the council or government about the popular view or opinion on a controversial issue (Fred, 2003: 69). However, the power of a referendum does not allow the public to invalidate a law which is already operational, but rather suspends or annuls a law that has not yet gone into effect

2.3.10 Survey Questionnaires

Through survey questionnaires, a researcher is able to ask prepared questions to a sample population which is statistically representative of all stakeholders or affected communities (Atkinson, 1992: 21). This form of participation assists researchers to get the views, attitudes, and opinions of the affected communities about specific issues. It provides municipalities or members of the public with valuable information on public preferences. It should be noted that survey questionnaires are normally administered through interviews. The latter consist in

the application of survey questionnaires with semi-structured questions directed to key informants in the local government. These questions relate to a set of variables which the technical planning team is responsible to carry out (Patton, 1989: 78).

2.3.11. Education and Outreach Programmes

Education requires the local government to have some form of outreach programme in the areas that fall in the jurisdiction of each municipality. Strategies generally used include educational workshops and information dissemination. The latter is achieved through focused media strategies and through the use of community radios and the South African Broadcasting Corporation's radio stations. Some municipalities (Polokwane, Aganang) in the Capricorn District have developed programmes targeting people who do not belong to organised civil society structures, although organised structures are likely to be included in workshops and discussions. Such organised structures are also far more likely to be successful in making oral and written submissions. In the case where significant pockets of

members of the public do not understand how municipalities are structured and function, as well as the important work of councils within each municipality, most municipalities produce pamphlets as well as other materials and educational tools that supplement outreach programmes. Such interventions have the potential to radically increase interest in and awareness of municipal processes, strengthen the relationships between municipal councils and communities, and build community groups' capacity to understand and engage with council processes.

2.3.12 Constituency Offices

Constituency offices – which are mostly driven by politicians – have the potential to strengthen and deepen democracy, if well trained/managed. These offices can assist by informing their constituencies about the work of each municipal council. These offices can facilitate public education and outreach. They can empower members of the public by

providing them with knowledge and information on how to submit issues of service delivery to municipal councils. The only major challenge with these offices is that they are more political entities than service stations or extensions of the municipality or the Parliament. Thus, there is a need to empower and capacitate these offices so that they understand their main mandate of serving the communities.

2.3.13 Committee Meetings

A committee is a formally constituted structure that comprises stakeholders who have been appointed or elected with the aim of examining a particular policy matter (Webster, 1995:180). The fact that members of the public come together, at particular point, to discuss their issues should be regarded as the heart of public participation processes, be they social get-togethers, committees, workshops, or any other public meetings (De Visser, 2005: 69). I personally concur with the above view that committee meetings are interactive fora where

participants partake in in-depth municipality-related engagement on issues of public participation and service delivery.

2.3.14. Social Media

According to Fred (2003: 21), social media should be regarded as a means of making available a large amount of regularly up-dated reference material meant for members of the public to enable them to give their inputs or ask questions where they do not understand. In my opinion, social media provides members of the public with an opportunity to submit their views or opinions on issues of service delivery. As members of the public exchange ideas through social media, they are offered an opportunity to get involved on issues that affect them.

2.3.15 Mass Media

Mass media such as community radios and SABC radio and television stations play a major role in transferring information, and they enable people to call in to make inputs or to engage the public on issues of interest. Radio and television stations should therefore be regarded as additional platforms for public participation on issues of service delivery or any other public matters. Likewise, local, national, and international newspapers and magazines are also mass media through which members of the public can convey their views or opinions and vent their frustrations on service delivery.

2.4. LEVELS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation comprises different levels, as outlined in the subsections below. The polemics on the concept of public participation presented here are informed by a diversity of secondary sources. It must be noted that there are three levels of passive or masked participation. The latter is the kind that is outside people's control, since its design and purpose are externally conceptualized. The levels of public participation considered in this study are referred to as extractionist, vertical, and handout-induced.

2.4.1 Handout-Induced Public Participation

The handout-induced approach to public participation tends to maintain the supremacy of professional knowledge and expertise. This approach often stifles people's initiatives, as people have to wait for professional guidance and approval, to elaborate and implement policies. Dependence, therefore, develops and leads to paternalism. The orientation of this approach is the modernisation school of thought which believes that poverty is caused by such internal factors as ignorance, disease, disasters, and climatic conditions (Patton, 1989: 11). This model is characterised by an attempt to involve knowledge and resources from outside in the policy-making process.

2.4.2 Extractionist Public Participation

The extractionist type of public participation is reminiscent of the central government's development planning where a 'blue-print' or plan is elaborated and handed to the local government. In this framework, policy-makers see public participation as a process of drawing people into the making and implementation of policy. People are thus regarded as potential resources in the policy-making process. As such, communities are seen as having readily-available and free labour for local government's modernisation programmes, which Kotze (1984: 99) terms sweat equity.

In extractionist public participation, people are often treated as objects to be acted upon by policy-makers (White, 2003:43). In this paradigm, people are stripped of their policy-making responsibilities. Through carefully-planned manipulation loaded with participatory slogans and rhetoric, people are relegated to the status of mere tools for the execution and implementation of policies elaborated by others. This approach assumes that people do not know their development needs and priorities. Law enforcement and punitive measures are usually employed to coerce people to co-operate – where persuasion fails. Such an approach undoubtedly creates room for abuse of power.

It is essential to note that, with the above extractionist analogy, the researcher does not intend to create the impression that citizens' contribution to policy-making and implementation are unimportant. The crux of the matter here is the imperative to fast-track service delivery.

2.4.3 Vertical Public Participation

Vertical public participation manifests itself in circumstances where community power-brokers' development of mutually beneficial relations with individual elites forms the basis for people's mobilisation for participation. In this form of participation, a community appoints one or more formal representatives in a policy-making institution (Fox, 1979:37). The basic view is that when less people are represented in a policy-making institution, their

interests, preferences and demands would most likely be sidelined or overlooked. In this case, public participation is understood in terms of representation.

2.5 WHY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Generally, five reasons are presented to justify public participation at all spheres of government, particularly in the local government sphere:

- To enable decision-makers to establish members of the public's service delivery priorities and preferences, as well as how members of the public can play their role in ensuring that quality services are rendered;
- To improve ways of making decisions by incorporating the local knowledge of members of the public into the final product. This helps members of the public to own up the undertaken projects and minimise the chances of service delivery protests and the destruction/burning of government assets;
- Well-implemented public participation methods can assist to advance fairness and justice – which are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
- For systematic reasons, the needs and priorities of members of the public – particularly those of the least advantaged – are not recorded or do not reach the
- decision-makers through the normal information sources and analytic procedures. The priorities and preferences of the members of the public may come into the IDP document of the local government through an open public participation process; and
- Public participation is about getting legitimacy for public decision on issues of service delivery and policy affecting communities. Any matter can be regarded as democratic and legitimate if it went through the minds and hands of members of the public; public participation is a constitutional mandate or legal requirement that calls for all spheres of government to consider the views of the people before a final decision is taken (Guba, 1994: 67).

Involving citizens or members of the public in the public participation process can build a sound relationship and public trust in relevant authorities. Municipalities are required to be transparent in the provision of services to communities. When members of the public are involved in any service delivery project, they own up the projects and have a better understanding of the related processes. The benefits of increased participation are that it might improve the project's design and offer a solution that members of the public can afford and are willing to pay for. Best practice public participation can provide relevant local knowledge. By providing communities with a space to voice their issues and participate in resolving them, public participation is likely to make people buy-in to projects and thus enhance their sense of responsibility. The following sections allude to possible ways of improving public participation and service delivery in local government.

2.5.1 Provision of Incentives

It has been established that the provision of incentives to members of the public and local government does encourage participation. Conversely, the absence of incentives may discourage participation, thereby militating against the credibility and legitimacy of service

delivery decisions and projects (Sewell & Coppock, 1977). Girma (2012) suggests that in order to make the public participation process effective, transport, materials, refreshments (such as coffee, lunches, a glass of wine or juice, and so on), and an enabling environment (such as short walk, fresh air, jokes and planned amusement) should be provided. The incorporation of the above brings the people closer and helps to reduce tension.

2.5.2 Access to Adequate Information

Members of the public with information are compelled to make a well-informed decision about a project (Lohani, Evans, Ludwig, Everitt, Carpenter, & Tu, 1997). A fully-informed person will insist on better, rational and sustainable service delivery decisions (Melnick et al,

2005). The information should be clear and must add value to existing knowledge which, in turn, encourages participation by well-informed members of the public. The information given to participants should be sufficient and accurate, with less technical jargons, so as to minimise confusion and frustrations (Jackson, 2000v).

2.5.3 Early Participation

Public participation must occur early in the decision-making process. Thus, local government should avoid reacting to challenges, but should rather be proactive on issues of service delivery and public participation. Early public participation reduces service delivery protests – as members of the public would have been given accurate information (Martens, 2006) and the opportunity to consider alternatives (Palerm & Aceves, 2004).

2.5.4 Broad-Based Participation

Public participation calls for board consultations with the various stakeholders who are differently affected – especially the disadvantaged and minorities (Palerm & Aceves, 2004). There is a growing consensus that timely and broad-based participation is an essential tool for effective environmental planning and resources management (Hughes, 1998).

2.5.5 Promote Dialogue

Public participation must be a two-way exchange of information, where dialogue is initiated in order to reach a consensus (if possible) between the local government and members of the public (Palerm & Aceves, 2004).

2.5.6 Empowerment

Well-managed public participation equips stakeholders with knowledge-derived authority and power to participate in all local municipality matters affecting them. It provides the necessary skills, knowledge, and values that members of the public need to change their own situations

and own the undertaken projects, which can minimise the burning of public infrastructure (Davids et al, 2005).

2.5.7 Access to Justice

The people should be afforded the opportunity to change decision-makers' focus and seek legal redress (Palerm & Aceves, 2004).

2.5.8 Social Learning

Public participation should be directed towards mutual learning, where the participants will be able to understand other people's claims (Webler, Kastenholz, & Renn, 1995; Lane & McDonald, 2005). Indeed, effective participation promotes exchange of ideas and calls for listening skills, and respect for different views or opinions.

2.6 HINDRANCES/OBSTACLES TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION BEST-PRACTICE

It is critical to assess how South Africa performs in terms of public participation practice in local government; however, this is mostly ignored. Legally-warranted methods of public participation in local government's decision-making in South Africa – public hearings, IDP meetings, comments, public education and outreach, petitions, sectoral meetings, and reviews – do not yield good results if they are not well-planned and effectively-implemented (Innes & Booher. 4: 2004). The above legally required practices fail to achieve genuine public

participation because some meetings are run in English and most documents are in English. The timing of meetings can also impact negatively on attendance. Some members of the public may also manifest some resentment, because they doubt whether their inputs will be considered in the final IDP document (Nye, 1997). Moreover, the methods used during the IDP often put attendees against each other, as they feel compelled to speak of the issues in polarising terms. This practice makes it more difficult for decision-makers to select ideas from points made by members of the public. This practice often discourages busy and

thoughtful individuals from waiting for their time. Indeed, this practice appears to be nothing more than a mere ritual which aims to comply with legal requirements (Day, 1997).

The South African government has learnt – through courts of law – that flawed public participation can lead to lawsuits, protests, wars, and stalemates. Hence, it is critical that all methods applied to public participation be democratic and legitimate (King, 1998). The main challenges/obstacles faced by South Africa regarding public participation and service delivery are outlined below.

2.6.1 Resistance to Change

Public institutions generally resist change brought by members of the public and prefer to stick to practices which do not always speak to local communities. In other words, communication blocks within public institutions can prevent the latter from responding timely to the needs of members of the public. Established routines and institutional systems involving many bodies seek to promote the ‘status quo’. Institutional structures which support sustainability and public participation are therefore regarded as a threat to the ‘command and control’ style of management systems (Leach, 2000: 41). Hence, public

managers who have risen to power in this style frequently resist the transition to alternative structures which embrace public participation.

2.6.2 Conflict in Public Participation

More, broad, and deep public participation practices may delay the implementation of programmes; this may cause conflict (Leach, 2000: 58). Indeed, becoming involved in a consultative process where a decision has already been made or where the possible outcomes are not made clear at the outset can lead to conflicts and deep disagreements among

practitioners and members of the public. Anger may follow when the public's inputs are not considered – without providing the reason for their non-inclusion. Conflict can also occur between professionals. One source of conflict or disagreement could be the different emphases of scientific peer review process which is essential to the assessment of the technical information provided to policy-makers (Leach, 2000: 80). Therefore, conflict in public participation affects the success of public participation initiatives.

From the above, it is clear that although local government endeavours to implement public participation in the policy-making process, it has to deal with some obstacles (Davidoff, 1965). The latter prevent effective and successful public participation in local government.

2.6.3 Lack of Awareness of Need

Lack of information and public education on how public participation can be done within a municipality or department is another major obstacle. When the need for improvement does arise, members of the public do not show awareness and are not sensitive to it. This is due to how each municipality conducts its outreach programme to its communities. It serves no purpose if there is a need for participation but nothing is done about it (Leach, 2000: 84). Thus, when the need for public participation arises, members of the public should be informed or educated about how they can participate.

2.6.4 Unfavourable Climatic Conditions

Best public participation practices require a conducive climate or environment. High crime areas, illiteracy, and volatile economic conditions hamper the best public participation practices. For public participation to succeed, there should be an acceptable climate characterised by the use of a local language, absence of violence, and political tolerance (Leach, 2000: 134). Thus, lack of cooperation between all the parties involved in public participation leads to ineffective interactions.

2.6.5 Insufficient Report-Back/Feedback

The lack of strategy on how to give the participants feedback is another major challenge. After every service delivery or public participation event, members of the public should be given a progress reported pertaining to the issues raised during Imbizos, IDP meetings, mayoral meetings, and council and Ward Committee meetings. It is important for members of the public to know that their inputs are received and used. Once members of the public have identified their needs, this information should be passed on or fed back to the relevant agents. The latter must provide feedback to members of the public so that they know that their inputs are valuable and used (Leach, 2000: 91 & 190).

2.6.6 . Lack of Desire to Improve

Best public participation practices require members of the public to be ready for any change that can lead to the improvement of life within communities. (Leach, 2000: 81). For every strategy to work in a particular community, people should be inspired to tackle the challenges that they face – through collective decisions. Hence, members of the public must be passionate about improving their living conditions. This desire must be very strong, for members of the public to become aware of the need to improve their conditions.

2.7 EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

The word effectiveness is defined differently from one author to another. Clearly, there is no universally-acceptable definition of “effectiveness” in existing literature. The conditions which ensure that a process is effective differ from situation to situation. Sadler (1996: 37) define effectiveness as “something which works as intended and meets the purpose for which it is designed.” According to Jain, Urban, Stacey and Balbach (1993), effective public participation involves providing the community with adequate and timely information, and

equal access to decision-making processes (i.e. the public must be involved in problem-identification and other discussions), as well as equipping members of the public with implementation power (i.e. the final decision should reflect the objectives of both the project proponents and the public).

For Connelly (2006:12), effective public action must be strategic in its planning and approach and should be implemented with the involvement of the affected stakeholders (state actors). Similarly, Daniels and Walker (1996) stress that effective participation must be about more than just involving the public in good communication or discourse. Studies have shown that for public participation to be effective, it must be underpinned by representativeness/inclusion, access to information, improved decision-making processes, education, negotiation, and support to the participants (Petts, 2001; André, Enserink, Connor, & Croal, 2006; Palerm & Aceves, 2004; Rowe et al., 2005; Chilvers, 2008). In short, the effectiveness of public participation depends on the employment of each of the following elements in a particular context, situation, or environment.

2.7.1 Representation and Access

Effective public participation requires that the interested and affected parties be highly-involved (Moote, McClaran, & Chickering, 1997; Petts, 2001; Buchy & Race, 2001; Agger & Löfgen, 2008). All participants – irrespective of their political, religious and racial affiliation – including the vulnerable and less privileged, should be given equal opportunity to participate (NEMA, 1998). Shepherd and Bowler (1997) observe that the public becomes skeptical about a project in the absence of a broad-based participation. They add that once

members of the public lose trust in a project or its proponents, it becomes difficult or totally impossible to regain it. Furthermore, the time and venue of meetings should be accessible and convenient to all the participants. In other words, there should be transport facilities which are convenient to the people; the language used should be accessible to all; and the area or environment chosen should be free of crime and other possible threats.

2.7.2 Information

Members of the public should be provided with information that enables them to participate meaningfully in decision-making. In other words, information should be adequate and accessible to the members of the public (Innes, 2004; Palerm & Aceves, 2004). The information given to the participants should be very simple and clear or easy to understand (Kenyon & Edward-Jones, 1999; André et al., 2004).

Communication should also be interactive, that is, a two-way exchange of information (Palerm & Aceves, 2004). A well-informed public will be able to contribute meaningfully and effectively during the public participation process (McEwan, 2003; Charnely & Engelbert, 2005). Moote et al. (1997) note that inadequate exchange of information has been the chief cause of polarisation or the adversarial positioning of the interested and affected parties participating in service delivery processes.

2.7.3 Early Participation

For public participation to be effective in any situation, members of the public should be involved or consulted during all the stages of the process (Petts, 2001; André et al., 2004). This is based on the premise that early participation provides members of the public with the opportunity to participate on issues affecting them – through inputs, amendments or rejection of the stated problem and or its geographical demarcations (Enserink & Monnikhof, 2003). Early participation provides members of the public with an opportunity to submit their inputs

and make changes that reflect their needs, thereby affording them the opportunity for the co-production of the services needed. Through this approach, real participation occurs, trust is built, time is saved, service delivery is improved (screening, scoping and decision-making), rumours are reduced, and the image of the local government is improved.

However, Shepherd and Bowler (1997) observe that, sometimes, project proponents tend to undertake minimum consultation, based on the belief that increased public consultation might lead to delays or opposition to the project. They argue that when members of the public suspect or perceive that the project proponents are trampling on their rights, they quickly instigate legal actions against the project proponents – a situation that is likely to strain the expected good relationship between these parties.

2.7.4 Improved Decision-Making

Public inputs provided during service delivery meetings or processes should be incorporated into the final decision (Buchy & Race, 2001). Petts (2001) underscores that the ultimate decision should be beneficial to members of the public and should encourage them to participate in future. It is also suggested that public concerns be heard, acknowledged, and addressed or incorporated into the designed projects or other decisions (Doelle & Sinclair, 2006).

2.7.5 Education

For members of the public to participate effectively on issues of service delivery, public education should be encouraged. This is because it provides people with more information on the matters to be discussed. Education will provide a good opportunity for members of the public to participate more effectively as they understand each other and the affected community. Through education, the participants get to know their values, interests, rights, obligations, and claims (Webler et al., 1995; Daniels & Walker, 1996). Education also

informs members of the public about a project and its likely impacts on their lives (Kenyon & Jones, 1998). All the participants are expected to acquire and share information, thereby promoting collective learning (Moote et al., 1997). Clearly, education is an important component of public participation (Sinclair & Diduck, 1995). A well-informed participant will insist on better performance, which will culminate in a more rational and sustainable service delivery and public participation practice (Melnick, et al., 2005) – for the benefit of all the stakeholders.

2.7.6 Negotiation

A well-managed participation process should reduce differences and conflict among participants. This, in turn, should promote collaboration, convergence of all affected parties, and consensus among the participants (André et al., 2006; Innes, 2004; Chilvers, 2008). In addition, the participants should be given the opportunity to express their issues or concerns, defend their assertions, and challenge other people's assertions (Moote et al., 1997; Webler & Tuler, 2000; Petts, 2001). This will enable the participants to review and, if necessary, refine their own values and interests (Moote et al., 1997). Moreover, project proponents should listen to the public, be open-minded so as to accommodate conflicting opinions, and be sensitive to the feedback from the public whose perspectives, value systems and experience differ from theirs (Kontic, 2000).

2.8 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Section 152 (e) of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa stipulates that local government is compelled to promote the involvement of communities and civil society (civil society is defined as the realm in which citizens associate with each other in order to ensure that government and governmental or state institutions responds to their needs, and are accountable to them) in government matters – to enhance service delivery. Many more sections of the South African Constitution also call for public involvement.

The South African democratic government regards public participation as the cornerstone of democracy and service delivery. Public participation is a constitutional right that should be exercised. This is highlighted in Chapter 1 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which states that the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic and that any conduct in conflict with it is invalid and that the obligations imposed by the Constitution must be complied with at all spheres of government. As it becomes evident, a constitutional provision places an obligation on government to establish public participation structures and systems. The following sections of the South African Constitution promote public participation and good governance:

Section 17: “Everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions.” However, this section requires members of the public to apply for permission to stage protest. Therefore, any action by protesters should be in line with the laws that guide protest marches.

Section 59 (1): “The National Assembly must facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Assembly and its Committees.” This calls for deep and broad consultation with the affected communities. Facilitation will also require that public

education be undertaken. In short, members of the public should be taught how to participate on issues affecting them.

Section 70 (b): “The National Council of Provinces may: make rules and orders concerning its business, with due regard to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement.” This means that the National Council of Provinces should ensure that oversight is well-managed and that members of the public are involved when they process bills.

Section 72 (1) (a): “The National Council of Provinces must: facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Council and its Committees.”

Section 115 (a): “A Provincial legislature or any of its committees may: receive petitions, representations or submissions from any interested person and institutions.” This section requires politicians to receive all petitions – irrespective of the political affiliations of those who submit them.

Section 118 (1) of the South African Constitution makes provision for the public to have access to Provincial Legislatures and to be involved in legislative processes. It states that Provincial Legislatures must facilitate such public involvement. It also maintains that Legislatures must conduct their business in an open manner, and may only block access on reasonable grounds.

Public participation has long been a subject of active discussions in the field of political and administrative sciences. Allen (1984:7) and Spiegel (1986:132) share the same understanding and view on public participation as a citizen action that endeavor, to influence decision-making or as an action that incorporates the demands and values of communities into public administration services.

South Africa is a multi-party representative democracy operating under a Constitution which is sovereign and entrenches human rights. Despite being a representative democratic system, South Africa’s Constitution and some legislation complement politicians’ power with forms of public participation (Scott, 2009: 45; Bacchus et al., 2007:9). South Africa has entered its second decade of freedom with the strengthening of its democracy and the acceleration of its programme aimed at improving the quality of life of all its people. The achievement of democracy in 1994 marked the birth of South Africa as an African nation on the southern tip

of the continent. Democracy has afforded South Africans the opportunity to establish a government based on the will of the people as well as on people-centred and people-driven principles. This forms part of the process to deracialise the economy and society, pursue economic growth, development and the redistribution of resources to achieve a better life for all. This, in turn, should strengthen the government – as a leader – in the implementation of a practical programme of social change and a movement rooted among the people. This should enable the government to build democracy as well as a culture of human rights and a value-system based on human solidarity. It should also allow and the government to work with African and global progressive forces, to advance human development in South Africa, the African continent, and across the globe. These opportunities are achieved through citizens' participation. Local government should try its best to ensure that members of communities are encouraged to participate in its activities. Such initiative ensures that citizens are provided with what they need. Public participation is enforced in South Africa to ensure the satisfaction of communities' need; hence, government departments should embark on public participation processes.

2.9 PARTICIPATORY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Pateman (2003) views participatory local government as concerned with the creation of meaningful opportunities for members of the public to be involved in the political process within their municipality. This generally includes the involvement of the community in various political institutions, as well as referenda probing members of the public's opinions regarding local government's service delivery processes. The structural transformation of local government in South Africa in recent years has reformed its functioning, alongside a

wide range of other agencies. According to Alke (2001: 114) and Atkinson (2000: 21), “local government should work towards maintaining total transformation of the structure of government into a system of local government, involving complex sets of organisations drawn from different sectors, such as public, private and voluntary sectors”. These sectors seek to address issues of participation in local government. Municipal councils are representatives of communities which play a very important role in the promotion of local democracy. Indeed, municipal councils should promote the involvement of citizens in the design and delivery of municipal programmes.

Much has been written on the challenges associated with democracy and public participation in South Africa and how, despite all these challenges, the implementation of democracy as well as the evocation of the role and value of public participation remain thorny. In an attempt to address some of these challenges, a number of scholars such as Chambers, Alke, and Pateman raised issues pertaining to the importance of involving members of the public in decision and policy -making processes related to the needs of the community (Chambers, 2003: 308). Involving members of the public on issues that affect them – especially in the governance process – should be rooted in the planning of service delivery to communities. This calls for a locally-based, bottom-up government that is responsive to members of the public’s reasonable needs and desires. Whether or not members of the public use the opportunity to participate on issues of governance, keeping that option available is of critical importance in a democratic country such as South Africa. Indeed, key decisions are taken during government’s service delivery meetings and processes. Thus, the latter appear to provide a very important opportunity for meaningful public participation. Yet, little is done in terms of when and how members of the public are to be involved in issues of service delivery in townships or villages.

Effective public participation requires that members of the public or communities understand how government operates; not only at a local level, but also at other spheres. Various spheres of government are therefore required to empower communities through public education, so that members of the public understand how to participate in government processes. However, this study focuses its attention on the local sphere of government which is the closest to the community. To the public, ‘government is government’. This underlines how important it is for all three spheres of government (national, provincial, and local) to work together – in a coordinated and integrated manner – as recommended in the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act of 2005.

Democratic government should promote engagement between government and members of the public on issues affecting them – without failure. This view calls for the establishment of an accountable government that addresses service delivery issues. Therefore, citizens must advise the government about their needs and priorities in terms of the services required in their residential areas. It suffices to recall that the Apartheid government denied black people the opportunity to participate by giving inputs and assisting in decision-making. Moreover, most citizens were denied the right to vote, which is the first step in public participation. However, true participation entails much more than partaking in elections; it is an integral part of local government processes. Good governance requires civil society to participate in

decision-making processes in all spheres of government, most notably at the level of the local government which is closest to the people (Bayat & Meyer, 1994:13).

In the light of the above, members of the public should actively participate in local government’s planning and implementation processes, such as IDP and budget processes. Subsequently, the monitoring and evaluation of government’s performance should follow through reports. The development of local government is a constitutional requirement; however, it also constitutes one of the challenges confronting local government. One reason

for this is that South Africa does not have a proud history of public participation (Held, 1993:15).

Given that local government is the most immediate interface point with citizens, it is important that local government achieve the two major goals of public participation: to involve the public in government decision-making and to inform the public of government programmes and decisions. The above stated goals can serve as guidelines to building sound relationships with members of the public. This will ensure that in its interaction with stakeholders, government provides accurate and truthful information; recognises that what one person one is talking about will benefit the meeting; offers to help with communities' preoccupations; shows communities that they need government as much as the latter needs them; keeps members of the public informed about any changes or developments that may affect them; maintains regular contact; and ensures that communities do not become impatient if nothing happens immediately.

Although the Capricorn District Municipality usually offers some avenues for public participation, sometimes reluctantly, officials are unsure as to how they might link public participation to service delivery and the extent to which they can do so. It is essential, therefore, that before it tries to enlarge issues of public participation, the Capricorn District

Municipality should understand the methods that work well – considering the different ethnic groups within its boundaries.

It suffices to reiterate that the main purpose of local government is to provide the essential services and amenities required by households and business to support their daily activities and maintain a level of order and dignity in the lives of their communities. From the foregoing, public involvement should be regarded as a tool which requires a fair amount of creativity from the municipality. If well-crafted, public participation has the potential to

contribute immensely to municipal service delivery by ensuring that relevant stakeholders with interest in the affairs of the municipality get feedback and the latest developments pertaining to service delivery.

2.10 CATEGORIES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation can be classified into two categories, namely, political participation which includes casting a vote during election or getting involved in political proceedings, and administrative participation which involves demanding a close watch on the government's administrative operations (Anderson, 2000: 83). This study incorporates both categories in its reviews and analysis. From the above, it is clear that there are different views on/perceptions of public participation. The one which, according to the researcher, carries more weight is the view expressed by the International Association for Public Participation (2008: 3) which approaches public participation in terms of its core values. Public participation is viewed as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make decisions or initiate processes through which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decisions. This view shows that public participation is a two-way communication or interaction whose overall goal is to make better decisions that are supported by the affected citizens.

The values of public participation entail, among others, that members of the public should have a say in decision-making processes about actions that affect their lives, that the public participation process indicates to participants how their inputs have affected the decision, that the public participation process provides the participants with the information that they need to participate in a meaningful way, that the public participation process involves the participants in defining how they participate, that the public participation process seeks and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected, that the public participation process

communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all the participants, and that the public participation process includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

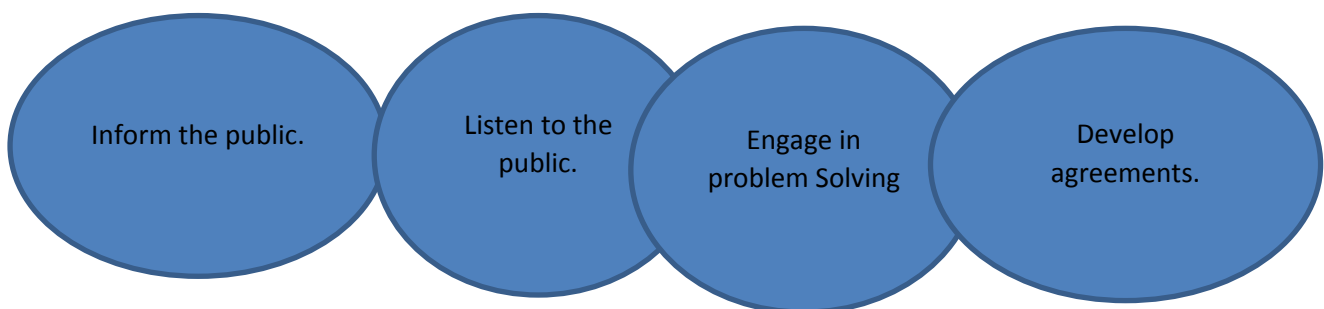
2.11 MEANING OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public participation process, if well-managed and applied effectively, can provide individuals with an opportunity to influence public decisions on issues affecting communities. The history of public participation can be traced to ancient Greece and colonial New England. Before the 1960s, governmental processes and procedures were designed to facilitate "external participation". Public participation started to emerge in the mid-1960s in the United States, when President Lyndon Johnson introduced his Great Society Programmes (Bamberger, 1990: 122). According to De Visser (2005: 45), public participation creates opportunities and avenues for members of the public to articulate their perceptions, assumptions, and views or opinion on matters of governance in all spheres of government – either directly or indirectly.

Public participation provides members of the public with an opportunity to have a direct voice in public decisions. According to Kotze (1997: 37), the concept of people's participation or public participation is the core of a people-centred development approach and may refer to the following aspects: involvement, communication, a new attitude

from/towards government, and reciprocal influence. Davids (2005: 19-29) defines public participation as "an inclusive process aimed at deepening democracy through formal participatory mechanisms...." Authentic public participation should entail involvement in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as sharing the benefits of governance and developmental outputs or outcomes. For Meyer and Theron (2000:1), public participation includes people's involvement in decision-making processes on issues that affect them – particularly those regarding service delivery issues; in the implementation

of service delivery programmes; and in efforts to evaluate such programmes. Arnstein (1969: 27) construes public participation as the process through which public concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental and corporate decisions. Creighton (2005: 7) summarises the difficulty of capturing the essence of public participation when he notes that there are numerous definitions of this concept, as shown above. Nevertheless, most of these definitions have some common aspects: public participation applies to administrative decisions; public participation is not just about providing services to the public – interaction is an important component; there is an organised process for involving the public; participants have some degree of impact or influence on the decisions made. Creighton (2005:8) notes that the word ‘participation’ has many different meanings and is best understood and illustrated as a continuum, as reflected below.



According to Bekker (1996:41), public participation can broadly be divided into two main phases, namely, the receiving of information by members of the public and the shaping of their priorities in terms of needs. It is, however, often argued that the provision of information cannot be regarded as participation. Nevertheless, it helps to empower and educate citizens by equipping them with the necessary participation tools.

It suffices to stress that tangible benefits can be derived from effective public participation activities. Public participation is much broader than decision-making; it sets the scene for decision-making and continues during the decision-making process and beyond – into the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. In other words, public participation starts

well before a decision is taken and extends well beyond it. Furthermore, acts of participation should not be viewed in isolation, but rather within a stream of interconnected acts (Bekker, 1996: 41). Public participation is inextricably linked to democracy – more specifically participatory democracy. The term “public participation” includes the notion of a two-way exchange of information between members of the public and the government. Public participation offers a multiplicity of benefits which include the provision of valuable information about the needs and aspirations of members of the public to the government in order to initiate and implement informed decision. Members of the public’s participation in local government affairs should be regarded as the backbone of any democratic form of government.

2.12 EFFICACY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Alke (2001: 17) argues that the challenges related to service delivery in local government can often best be addressed through common effort. When local government starts to open up to citizens, asking for and offering assistance and support, the local municipality will discover strengths and the passion it never suspected it had. Through this reconnection with members of the public, the municipality may realise that participation is the very soul of democratic citizenship, and that it can enrich the lives of members of the local community. Loeb (1999: 141) shares Alke’s view that the inadequacy of participation is not only due to a lack of understanding of the complexities of municipalities. Sometimes, communities feel the need to decide for themselves whether certain causes relating to the politics of IDP campaigns, or efforts to safeguard water, air, and wildlife. They need to identify and connect with worthy groups that take on these issues; but, first, they need to be ensured that their individual involvement is worthwhile, that what they might do in the public sphere will not be in vain.

Brynard (1996: 149) notes that municipalities are hindered by a view of themselves as a private sanctuary. This belief needs to be investigated in this study, because most government problems can be solved through common efforts. Municipalities' private sanctuary self-perception is an illusion which hampers their constitutional mandate which calls for the public involvement of members of the community. Public participation practitioners such as Creighton and Bekker agree with Christenson and Robinson (1980: 14-16) who argue that public participation should form an integral part of democracy. Traditionally, the defining characteristic of democracy was the right to elect political leaders in government positions so that they can take important decisions for citizens – with the assistance of citizens. Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, decisions that used to be made by elected political office-bearers – in a political process – are now delegated to citizens. This approach minimises various challenges that could emanate from disgruntled members of society, and fast-tracks service delivery because members of society own the decision.

2.13 DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Section 16 (1) of the Municipal System Act of 1998 requires that municipalities develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. For this purpose, municipalities must (a) create

conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality. These include:

- (i) The preparation, implementation and review of the municipality's integrated development plan;
- (ii) The establishment, implementation and review of its performance management system;

- (iii) The monitoring and review of its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance; and
- (iv) The preparation of its budget, structure, and political office-bearers, when appropriate; the initiation of consultative sessions with locally recognised community organisations and, where appropriate, traditional authorities, and then report back to the local community.

When establishing mechanisms, processes and procedures in terms of subsection (2) of the Municipal System Act, the municipality must consider the special needs of people who cannot read and write, people with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged groups.

Public participation in decision-making is an imperative for a democratic government (Gildenhuys, Fox, & Wissink, 1999: 124). According to Bell (1998:99), six social values are served by various forms of public participation: educating the community, incorporating community values into policy making, improving the substantive quality of community policy, increasing community trust, reducing conflict, and achieving cost-effective community policy.

Public participation at local government level should be regarded as the basis for the development of trust between communities and their municipalities. It should also be viewed as a prerequisite for enhancing service delivery to members of the public. Local government

should be at the forefront of involving citizens in local governance and development by providing them with practical platforms and by creating opportunities for members of the public to be involved in the solving of issues that affect them.

However, there is an assumption or perception that public participation may lead to a variety of (perceived) negative consequences. The latter include increased workload, additional resource requirements, increased level of public scrutiny, negative media coverage, and

increased level of apathy towards or distrust of the government (Connor, 2003: 45). This study rejects this assumption on the ground that a well-planned public participation promotes the ownership of projects, propels service delivery, and minimises protests and court actions.

2.14 THEORY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A study of public participation in ancient democracies reveals that the essence of public participation is to ensure the continued existence of democracy (Stewart, 1976: XI, as cited in Clapper, 1996: 70). According to Hogwood (as cited in Clapper, 1996: 52), the word “democracy” originally refers to a type of government in which the power to rule resides with the people; for example, the city-state of Athens at the time of Pericles. The key characteristics of the Athenian democracy, also known as a participatory democracy, were public control over public decisions and maximum public participation in the making of decisions and the holding of public offices (Brynard, 1996: 52).

Artin (2002: 44-46) distinguishes between “realist” theories of democracy which emphasise that representation, responsible leadership, and elite responsiveness are the key elements of democracy. Davidson (1998:14) contends that few people would disagree that public involvement in planning is a good. The first set of theories indicates that the degree of direct democracy exercised by members of the public in the relatively small assemblies of Athens is no longer possible in today’s large, complex societies. The ‘realist school’ of thinking about democracy recognises public participation as a feature of democracy and reduces it to only one manifestation – voting (Buchy & Race, 2001: 55). This theory recognises that not everyone is convinced that democracy should necessarily try to involve the public in intensive ways. Elite models of democracy understand that a vote into office is essentially a political blank cheque for elected representatives to proceed as they see fit (Cornwall, 2003: 17). The second set of theories emphasises that democracy – in its original sense of ‘rule by

the people' – is hardly conceivable without a whole range of participatory activities through which members of the public not only vote for the sake of appointing and monitoring representatives, but also become political citizens in the full sense of the word. Such is the enthusiasm for representative democracy (Cohen & Arato, 2003: 276). Participation is important in ensuring that government addresses the real needs of communities in the most appropriate way.

The concept of public consultation – which implies that citizens should be more directly involved in the decisions affecting them (Fiorino, 1990: 62) – features strongly in debates about democracy. Hence, Doelle and Sinclair (2006:151) talk about “strong democracy” which calls for active citizens to govern themselves, not necessarily at every level and in every instance; but frequently enough and particularly when basic policies are tabled and when significant power is deployed. The participatory form further maintains that the exercise of power is good for the public. In this sense, democracy would allow the public – not only the elite – to acquire a democratic political culture (Fox, 1979: 88).

The difficulty relating to participation is that many democratic societies experience a high degree of apathy among voters. In South Africa, this is particularly felt at local level in Limpopo and Gauteng. Many voters do not participate in elections at this level, due to dissatisfaction with service delivery. Consequently, electoral apathy is now regarded as

essential to maintaining stability, while mass participation has come to be associated with societal disorder and tendency towards totalitarianism (Sewell, 1977: 67).

The very act of participating is somehow educative and politically significant. Greater participation in the political sphere is believed to enhance democracy; however, structures to coordinate stakeholders are required. The current tendency is towards elite participation and

representation by organised civil society. This means that the individual rarely participates. Nevertheless, social movements often reject democracy and the principle of operating through elected representatives only, advocating a strategy of direct democracy that seeks on-going accountability (Barber, 1997: 20). Public participation is thus considered a standard practice and an essential characteristic of a successful modern democracy. This is supported by Pimbert and Wakeford (2001: 23, in Creighton, 2005: 2) who state that democracy without citizen deliberation and participation is an empty and meaningless concept. The essential principle of democracy is that members of the public must be enabled to participate, should they choose to do so – through effective channels of communication and civil society. It suffices to note that the ultimate mark of liberal democracy is the freedom to choose whether or not to participate (Kotze, 1997: 69). The type of participation envisaged in a participatory democracy, namely, an on-going interaction between the people (public) and their elected representatives in all decision-making processes, is regarded as contributing significantly to the enhancement of democracy in society.

Nonetheless, participatory democracy is sometimes contrasted to representative government, although strategies to improve public participation can also be thought of as reinforcing and strengthening representative government. Indeed, public participation provides public representatives with information that they would not otherwise have had, but which is

necessary for effective and responsive decision-making (Agger, 2008: 112). Strategies to facilitate and promote public participation are also critical in ensuring the participation of marginalised and under-resourced constituencies in the decision-making process led by representative bodies. In the absence of special measures, public decision-making is also vulnerable to “capture” by special interests (Davids, 2006). De Visser (2001:135) state that there are many flawed and inadequate efforts; yet, the long-term benefits of participation far

outstrip its setbacks. Buchy (2007: 86) argues that public participation is a costly exercise that raises premature expectations, as standard practice is perceived as more democratic, efficient, and more likely to remain successful than democracies in which old top-down methods are used.

The proponents of what has become known as “participatory, deliberative democracy” believe that these three requirements can be met if the locus of decision-making is radically decentralised and brought closer to the citizens, and if deliberation becomes the mode of interest articulation and mediation” (Terre Blanche, 2006: 56-57). In the light of the above, it is clear that participation is an old notion and practice rooted in the first democracy proclaimed in Ancient Greece. The latter is a reference to the civilization relating to a period of Greek history that lasted from the 6th to the 8th century – which lasted 1300 years. Even then, it was understood that democratic rule was not possible without heeding the people’s voice. Over time, the principle of participation was entrenched, formally or informally, in all democracies across the globe. In modern society, democracy is widely believed to be the regime that make the best provision for public participation, as it institutionalises the principle of “rule by, for, and of the people”. However, given the various types of democracy that have emerged, one has to recognise that not all proponents of democracy would necessarily view public participation as a key indicator of democracy (Atkinson, 1992: 67).

2.14.1 Decision-Making Structure Theory of Public Participation

Citizens’ participation in public decision increases the use of technology in public policy decision (Brynard & Hanekom, 2006, as cited in Frankena & Frankena, 1992: 273). These authors conclude that public decisions are increasingly influenced by technology. The following two broad decision-making structures are defined and analysed:

- The technocratic approach; and

- The democratic approach.

The technocratic approach is defined as the application of technical knowledge, expertise, techniques, and methods to problem-solving. As for the democratic approach, it refers to citizen involvement activities in relation to government planning and policy-making (Coetzee, 2003: 5). These approaches are described in greater detail below.

2.14.2 Technocratic Decision-Making Theory of Public Participation

The technocratic approach to decision-making has historically been applied in many services-related decisions. Strong arguments can be made in favour of a technocratic decision-making approach. A key argument is that trained staff are the “experts” or best-suited people to make complex technical decisions. Experts are increasingly becoming part of decision-making structures in both public and private sectors (Coetze, 2003: 7). However, Fox (1979: 133) concludes that scientific and technocratic approaches “not only failed to solve social problems, but often contributed to them.

Techniques and methods applied by experts are most effective when considering technical decisions, as opposed to value or mixed decisions. Technical decisions are those which are based solely on the application and extrapolation of scientific issues. Value decisions are those which are concerned with the resolution of important normative or societal issues. Mixed decisions are those which have both technical and value components. Technical decisions rely on scientific techniques and extrapolations to determine the potential of “what is”. Value decisions involve the normative determination of “what should be”. Although scientific information can provide guidance with respect to value decisions, it is rarely the sole determinant (Loebe, 1999: 128). It must be underscored that the technocratic approach to decision-making is difficult to apply successfully to social problems, because social goals are often complex, conflicting, and unclear (Buccus & Hicks, 2007: 9). According to Kantrowitz, the problem for experts is that the issues they most frequently confront, when addressing

social problems, are “mixed decisions”, that is, decisions involving both technical and value judgments (Davids, 2005: 133).

One result of this skepticism is a heightened demand for greater citizen participation with respect to technological decisions (Mitchell, 2003: 11). As a result, technological processes will face increased public scrutiny, as the deficiencies of technology and experts become more apparent. Various related factors indicate a growing need for decision-making processes at all spheres of government to allow agencies to successfully integrate the public’s demand for greater input, while incorporating agencies’ expertise and desire for efficiency.

2.14.3 Democratic Decision-Making Theory of Public Participation

Democratic decision-making, in contrast to bureaucratic or technocratic decision-making, is based on the assumption that all who are affected by a given decision have the right to participate in taking that decision. There are different forms of public participation in decision-making. Gildenys *et al.* (1991:98) argue that public participation in decision-making is an imperative for a democratic government. Democratisation, which refers to a transition to democracy, requires that the structures and functioning of public institutions be established in such a way that they allow and encourage public participation (African National Congress, 1994: 120-12). Democratisation is about making an autocratic society democratic in nature. Participation can be direct – in the classical, democratic sense – or can occur through

representatives. In fact, public participation provides a mechanism for democratising decision-making processes in particular (Bekker, 1996: 41). Kweit and Kweit (1986: 22) further observe that the criteria for evaluating policies in a democratic process are the accessibility of the process and/or the responsiveness of the policy to those who are affected by it, rather than the efficiency or rationality of the policy.

2.15 RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY

The public's participation in municipalities' activities, programmes, plans, projects, and other actions that affect members of the public is supported by quite a number of reasons. The latter can be categorised as – but are not limited to the following:

2.15.1 Learning Reason

The learning perspective views public participation as a source of information about the services that the citizens want. During participation, members of the public learn more about service delivery and issues that affect them (Brynard, 1996: 146). The knowledge acquired can be then be applied to other challenges or daily matters.

2.15.2. Political Reason

The political approach views public participation as a way to exercise freedom and encourage individuals/groups to participate in all political matters that promote service delivery (Sewell & Phillips, 1979: 112). Participation is also used to garner votes and gain political popularity during elections.

2.15.3 Instrumental Reason

The instrumental perspective is based on the notion that the public's involvement in service delivery and developmental projects will improve the decision-making process (Cloete, 1995). The researcher believes that this approach will assist to build confidence and trust

among the parties, and will ensure the legitimacy, credibility, and acceptability of the project or decision-making process (Fiorino, 1990: 134).

2.15.4. Procedural Reason

The procedural approach regards public participation as a means to source or generate approval for actions taken on behalf of members of the public; hence, they are urged to participate in order to conform to legislative/procedural requirements (Geldenhys, 1996: 57).

2.15.5 Conflict Resolution Reason

The conflict resolution perspective understands public involvement as a means to settle conflict between interested and affected parties, or garner support for the settlement of conflicts (Sewell & Phillips, 1979; Sinclair, 1995: 125).

2.15.6 Improved Decision Reason

The improved decision approach considers public involvement as a process through which a message is conveyed or information is exchanged. It further gives members of the public the opportunity to monitor the implementation of the decision made, and to determine the effectiveness, efficiency and efficacy of the mitigation measures (Fox, 1979: 56).

2.15.7 Normative/Democratic Sovereignty Reason

The normative/democratic sovereignty perspective assumes that in any democratic society, members of the public have the right to be involved in the issues that affect them, like service delivery matters (Connelly, 2006: 86). This requires that members of the public be given the opportunity to be involved in any project that affects their lives – only if they chose to do so.

2.15.8 Source of Information/Substantive Reason

The source of information/substantive approach emphasises that members of the public's knowledge and experience which can be used to supplement technical judgment – particularly in the identification of critical alternatives and other challenges that relate to undertaken projects – should not be undermined (Carnet, 1998: 59).

2.15.9 Empowerment Reason

The empowerment perspective views members of the public's involvement as a means of equipping the public with the skills, values, attitudes and knowledge that enable them to take charge of their lives. Against this backdrop, public participation should be regarded as both an end in itself and a means to self-development (Morrissey, 2000: 124). Davids, Theron and

Maphunye (2005: 56) further distinguish between participation as a means (passive) and participation as an end (active).

Public participation gives political office-bearers the responsibility of ensuring that the will of the affected citizens is expressed in the decisions made. The notion of the authority of citizens in administrative decision-making is fundamental to democracy. Politicians cannot make decisions without assigning a weight to or prioritising competing societal values. Public participation creates a new, direct link between the public and decision-makers in the bureaucracy. It is a way of ensuring that those who make decisions that affect people's lives have a dialogue with the public before deciding; this enhances the public's influence on the decisions that affect their lives. Public participation also provides decision-makers with more information about the importance that the affected public assigns to the value choices that underlie a particular decision. In turn, members of the public buy in the decision made. This promotes and speeds service delivery, and could reduce citizens' protests and strikes against municipalities.

According to Devilliers (2000: 3), citizens' involvement can also be done through community engagement fora. This approach involves disseminating information, generating information or opinions about issues, sharing information among people, identifying best-practices, or building skills. It attempts to mobilise or connect people to an issue. In this way, it promotes engagement, connection, or networking.

This study shares Heberlein's (1976: 216) belief that public involvement – if well-implemented – can result in better service delivery. Indeed, Heberlein (1976: 231) argues that municipality decisions that involve citizens are more likely to be accepted by local communities. For Turner (1975: 213), citizen participation in municipalities serves to check

and balance political activities; and, it allows citizens fuller access to the benefits of a democratic society.

Clearly, public participation paves the way for a smooth running of the process of service delivery (Van der Waldt, 2007: 34). Anderson (2000: 9) defines service delivery as a relatively stable and purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors, in dealing with a problem. The planning, implementation, and maintenance of services is critical to sustaining basic standards of living and economic activity in any local municipality. Hence, all local municipalities are required to develop service standards guidelines for each service; these guidelines need to be communicated to members of public. Scotts (2008:34) notes that the demand for public consultation in policy analysis and decision-making is part of a large movement that evolved in the 1960s. The initial question raised was: *Who is the public?* In trying to answer this question, this author defined the term public as the organised public, the general public, politicians, public interest groups, and local experts. The second question was: *Whom does each group represent?* The answer is that some groups may be highly-organised and know how to lobby; but, they may not reflect the views of the majority of the population. Thus, Berner (2006: 39) emphasises that it is essential that a public consultation programme be properly designed, in order to establish a process that provides the opportunity for all views to be identified and incorporated into the decision-making processes. The purpose of public consultation is to aid decision-makers by ensuring that the

public's views are identified, that questions are raised, that answers are provided, and that judgment is supported.

Day (1986: 284) identify five benefits of citizen participation in the planning process: gaining information and ideas on public issues; public support for planning decisions; avoidance of

protracted conflicts and costly delays; reservoir of goodwill that can carry over to future decisions; and the establishment of a spirit of cooperation and trust between the agency and the public. As for Creighton (2005:18-19), he lists the following benefits of public participation: improving the quality of decisions; minimising costs and delays; building consensus; increasing the ease-of-implementation; avoiding worst-case confrontations; maintaining credibility and legitimacy; anticipating public concerns and attitudes; and developing civil society. From their part, Theron, Ceaser and Davids (2007: 2) maintain that public participation holds two main benefits for democratic policy-making processes: participation leads to better policy outcomes, and assists members of the public in developing the capacity for improving their lives. Public participation also ensures that the public's input is taken into account during the processes of policy-making and implementation. As such, it could help to combat dictatorship and promote good governance (Kotze, 1997: 55-56).

According to Jackson (2000: 76), a well-practised public participation mechanism ensures that policy implementation run smoothly and fosters a sense of ownership of and commitment to a process. It could, therefore, contribute to policy implementation by building support and eliminating resistance. Manor (1996: 59) argues that public participation could save costs by minimising and/or eliminating the need for policing the implementation of decisions/projects. Importantly, continuous public participation in service delivery, as well as in policy- making and implementation, could serve as a control mechanism to limit the abuse of authority. Similarly, Clapper (2005:125) claims that an informed citizenry could ensure that public officials use their discretion in a responsive and responsible manner.

In addition to the multiplicity of benefits already mentioned, public participation also provides valuable information – about the needs and aspirations of local people – to the local government. This enables the latter to make and implement informed decisions. Public participation further offers a platform through which civic interest can be expressed, with the aim of influencing public managers (as well as councillors) to adopt a particular position. Through public participation, the general public is informed, involved, and educated (Meyer & Theron, 1975: 97). Public participation also contributes to the creation of community institutions which will enable the public to bridge the existing gap between themselves and public authorities. Furthermore, public participation plays a pivotal role in local government, as it consolidates democratic beliefs (commitment), practices, and principles that would otherwise not be observed by the majority of citizens in a democratic state. In practice, public participation constantly reaffirms one's identity and feelings of self-worth and dignity as a citizen, thereby giving effect to the principle of basic equality (Meyer, 1995: 132). Public participation – as promoter of the realisation of civic interest – has the capacity to enhance and consolidate the democratic culture of any aspiring nation (Gildenhys, 1996: 66). De Villiers (2000: 99) adds that public participation in legislative and oversight processes is essential for long-term democratic stability. This is because it enhances legitimacy and creates public support for legislation and government policies.

The most important long-term benefit of public participation is the way in which it empowers communities. Indeed, by engaging the government on issues that affect people's lives, civil society is brought into the mainstream and acquires skills, knowledge, and capacity. Public participation signals a new way of thinking about governance and democracy (Devillers, 2001:135). It must be noted that twenty-one years after the advent of South Africa's democracy, the legacy of apartheid is still visible in the country's segregated human

settlement patterns and delivery of services rendered, as well as in the type and characteristics of municipal institutions. Thus, an effective transformation from the apartheid era to the new democratic government requires an understanding of the historical role of local government in the creation and perpetuation of local separation and inequality. Equally important is an understanding of the impact of apartheid on municipal institutions, as well as the history of resistance to previous apartheid local government structures. Cloete (1997:13) confirms that from 1983 up to 10 May 1994, four separate local authority systems – respectively serving Blacks, Coloureds, Indians, and Whites – were operating in all provinces of South Africa, with each operating on the basis of segregated spatial development planning. Girma (2012: 46) suggest that local government is the sphere that interacts most closely with citizens – through service delivery – and responds most effectively to local problems.

In 1991, the then Minister of Provincial and Local Government, Mr Sydney Mufamadi, stated that local government is a dynamic system of governance whereby powers reside with the people of that locality and municipal authorities. In 2005, he further stated that in designing the new system of local government, care had been taken to ensure that the legacy of a system that had exposed White and Black South Africans to vastly-different socio-economic environments be eradicated. These interventions have made a positive impact on the way challenges such as public participation, programme management, as well as the imperative to create conditions for sustainable service delivery and economic development are managed.

International experience (PP2: 5) has shown that public participation is an essential part of effective and accountable local governance. Subsequently, a number of statutes were promulgated after the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa – to make provision for

public participation. They are all underpinned by and based on – arguably – the most famous statement to ever emanate from South Africa, the Freedom Charter. Furthermore, in order to undertake an overview of the need for public consultation and participation in South Africa, one needs to discuss the new mandate of local government. The democratisation of local government demands that communities be engaged and have a say in the kind of services delivered to them, as well as the fees/tariffs that they are charged in the form of rates and taxes. Since South Africa's democratisation, not only has there been a change in the co-operation between the different spheres of government, but there has also occurred an institutional change characterised by a move from a 'racial and autocratic system' to an 'open, democratic and transparent system'. A participatory development planning approach has also been introduced. This hybrid process combines top-down and bottom-up approaches to planning processes (Fiorino, 1990: 5). Besides the above-mentioned structural changes that have occurred since 1994, Gildenhuis (1997:32) notes that newly integrated municipalities have been formed, boundaries have changed, local council members are now elected in a more democratic way, and both staffing and service delivery mechanisms have changed.

Cahn and Camper (1986: 43) identify six goals or objectives of public consultation – although all six are rarely achieved. These are:

- (1) To build credibility with those who will be affected, those who will pay, and those who will use the services. In terms of Section 17 (2) of the Local Government Municipal System Act of 2000, local government must provide mechanisms, processes and procedures for participation; and, if these are implemented expansively
- (2) and elicit involvement and accountability from all stakeholders, service delivery will be enhanced.

- (3) To identify public concerns and values. Some municipalities do this in a relatively open and straightforward manner. Municipalities have instituted IDP Representative Fora which are constituted by councillors, traditional leaders, Ward Committee representatives, and officials from the relevant municipalities and provincial and national governments. The purpose of IDP Representative Fora is to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to represent the interest of their constituencies and serve as structures for joint decision-making.
- (4) To develop consensus among the impacted parties, users, and those who pay. It must be stressed that in contexts characterised by controversies, consensus is rarely achieved; thus, it is very satisfying when it is reached.
- (5) To create the greatest number of “unsurprised” apathetic citizens. Indeed, although not everyone wants to be involved, communities should not be surprised; rather, they should be informed.
- (6) To produce better decisions. Indeed, public consultation can produce better “technical” decisions than a strictly technically-oriented decision-making process. According to Connelly (2006: 72), Ward Committees were established as a tool to encourage community participation in local government. Their primary functions are to be formal communication channels between councils and communities, and contribute to decision-making.
- (7) To enhance democratic practice. As a matter of fact, public consultation allows for and promotes participation; thus, avoiding the issues that could arise when the public is excluded from decision-making processes. In South Africa, public participation is an essential component in enhancing and effecting accountable governance.

Public participation in local government extends beyond legislative compliance. The value of public participation resides not in merely ensuring that people are able to influence activities

that will affect them, but mainly in ensuring that such participation helps to build capacity and contributes to empowerment. Through participation, people should increase their control over their lives and livelihoods. A robust civic society is a clear indicator of a strong democracy. Debates over the last decade have, at times, created antagonistic relations between the state and civil society. There are two prevalent definitions of civil society. Firstly, according to Selman (2004: 123- 126), civil society refers to all the political forces that are in opposition to government. Secondly, from a liberal perspective, civil society comprises of all institutions that are independent from the state but are not necessarily in opposition to the government. A strong and vigilant civil society constitutes an essential pillar of a mature democracy. A robust and active civil society complements governmental institutions and plays an important role in generating good governance and economic growth (www.hologram.org.za).

Nevertheless, it is important to establish why so much emphasis is placed on public participation, as well as its relevance globally and in the South Africa. Public participation is beginning to be viewed as an integral part of democracy. Traditionally, the defining characteristic of democracy has been the right to elect government leaders. In this regard, Creighton (2005: 17) notes that “Democracy is intended precisely to give the people power over choices about the ultimate aims and goals of the government action”. According to Gildenhuis, Fox and Wissink (1991:124), “a situation that encourages and/or allows participation in general elections only is, therefore, not entirely democratic. In fact, public participation in decision-making is an imperative for a government”. Therefore, in any

democratic country, public participation in policy-making and implementation processes is necessary.

Public participation creates a new link between the public and decision-makers in the bureaucracy. At its most basic level, public participation is a way of ensuring that those who make decisions that affect people's lives have a dialogue with the latter before making those decisions. From the perspective of members of the public, public participation increases their influence on the decisions that affect their lives. From the perspective of government officials, public participation provides a means through which contentious issues can be resolved. Clearly, public participation is a way of channeling opinion differences into genuine dialogue between people. It is a way of ensuring genuine interaction and reassuring the public that all viewpoints are considered (Creighton, 2005:17).

Dauids (2005:12) maintains that the key factor in preserving democratic practice may be participation. Participation rates – through legal channels – constitute one indicator of the legitimacy of a state system. As long as people consider participation to be worth their time, they are assumed to have some level of efficacy, that is, a belief that participation matters (and that they still consider the system legitimate). This is supported by Bryant and White (1982: 5) who note that the survival of government depends, among other things, on its legitimacy which, in policy-making and implementation, is key (Held, 1996: 34). In this light, public participation is an essential ingredient of good governance in any democracy. Democracy is aimed precisely at giving the people some degree of power over choices relating to the aims and objectives of government action (Creighton, 2005: 17). Public participation should be encouraged, given its significant role in facilitating the interaction between members of the public and policy-makers and/or implementers. Public participation also assumes a prominent role in democratising and controlling the making and

implementation of policy, facilitating the exchange of information between the government and members of the public; promoting responsiveness to public needs; and facilitating policy implementation and community development processes (Masango, 2002: 63).

For De Visser (2005: 14- 18), the ‘Social goals’ framework incorporates all the evaluative measures which are discussed below. An evaluation of government’s social action must be based on the following six distinctive purposes of public participation: (1) educating and informing the public; (2) incorporating public values into decision-making; (3) improving substantive quality of decisions; (4) increasing trust in institutions; (5) reducing conflict; and (6) achieving cost-effectiveness. According to Guire (2007: 147), a citizenry which is aware of its rights and asserts them confidently is a vital foundation for a national integrity system. Conversely, an apathetic or passive public, not interested in taking part in governance or the enforcement of accountability, provides an ideal breeding ground for corruption, fraud, and mismanagement – which result in poor corporate governance. Rioting, according to the late Martin Luther King Jr., is the language of the unheard. Therefore, the violent country-wide service delivery riots and protests that South Africa has been experiencing represent more than a service delivery failure on the part of local government. They suggest that consultation, communication, and community involvement and engagement have also failed dismally (www.idasa.org.za).

According to Thornhill (2001:19), in the new system of development, local governments or municipalities are meant to be firmly-embedded in communities. For Bekker (1996: 45), the rationale for direct public participation is that the public should play a major role in terms of development planning at the formative stage, rather than after officials have already committed themselves to particular choices.

2.16 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Spiegel (1986: 123-129) has provided a concise overview of citizen participation in the planning process. Leach (2000: 35) contends that traditional, comprehensive and strategic planning processes are insufficient for resource management planning, advocating a more interactive approach to planning. An integrated approach to resource planning must provide for interaction with the stakeholders, in the search for relevant information, shared values, consensus and, ultimately, a proposed action that is both feasible and acceptable. Leach (2000: 39) further suggests that conventional planning tends to be dominated by a technical/analytic style. Similarly, Knoetze (1997: 469) notes that one of the obstacles to public participation is the fact that municipal officials gather in a boardroom, decide to build a project, elaborate a document, allocate resources, and then tell people what they have planned. Instead, communities must be engaged from planning to implementation, and should also be involved in the evaluation phase of a particular project – to ensure that the transfer of skills to and a sense of ownership of the process by local communities. Clearly, the adopted planning style often brings about challenges in service delivery, which could lead to community uprisings against the local leadership. Thus, data collection and analysis in the context of public participation constitute a means of finding the best solutions to problems and developing a technically-sound plan. The implicit assumption here is that better information leads to a better decision.

Success in conventional planning is measured by the extent to which the objectives of the plan are achieved. Leach (2000: 39) states that interactive planning is based on the assumption that open, participative processes led to better decisions. The planner engages directly with stakeholders, to gain support, build consensus, identify acceptable solutions, and secure implementation. Success in interactive planning is measured by the degree to which

balance has been achieved between competing interests – to reach consensus on appropriate actions.

Interactive planning	Conventional planning
<p>Includes information/feedback, consultation, and negotiation.</p> <p>Interaction with a wide range of stakeholders occurs early on and throughout the planning process.</p> <p>Assumes that open participation leads to better decisions.</p> <p>Planner as value-committed advocate.</p> <p>Focuses on mobilisation of support.</p> <p>Plan = what we agreed to do.</p> <p>Success measured by achievement of agreement on action.</p>	<p>Limited information/feedback; some consultation may take place.</p> <p>Early interaction with implementers; affected/interested parties are not involved until late in the process.</p> <p>Assumes that better information leads to better decisions.</p> <p>Planner as value-neutral expert.</p> <p>Focuses on manipulation of data.</p> <p>Plan = what we should do.</p> <p>Success measured by achievement of plan's objectives.</p>

Source: Langa (1986: 39).

Leach (2000: 41) further suggests that planning practice is dominated by a perspective that is sometimes called “technical rationality”, although three other perspectives – organisational, political and persona – are central to resources planning.

The 1997 White Paper on Transformation in Public Service Delivery, also called *Batho Pele*, was promulgated to promote responses to the public’s needs. As for the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, it provides a number of principles that guide municipalities on issues of service delivery. These principles are outlined below.

- **Inclusivity** – All views and opinions are embraced in the process of community participation.
- **Diversity** – In a community participation process, it is important to understand the differences associated with race, gender, religion, ethnicity, language, age, economic status, and sexual orientation. These differences should be allowed to emerge and ways should be sought to reach consensus.
- **Transparency** – Openness, sincerity, and honesty must be promoted among all the role-players in a participatory process.
- **Flexibility** – This entails the ability to make room for change, for the benefit of the participatory process. Flexibility is often required in respect of timing and methodology.
- **Accessibility** – At both mental and physical levels, accessibility will ensure that the participants in public participation processes fully and clearly understand the aims, objectives, issues, and methodologies of the process, and that they are empowered to participate effectively.
- **Accountability** – All the participants in a participatory process accept full responsibility for their individual actions and conduct, and affirm their willingness

and commitment to implement, abide by, and communicate all measures and decisions in the course of the process.

- **Trust, commitment and respect** – Trust refers to faith and confidence in the integrity, sincerity, honesty, and ability of the process and those facilitating it.
- **Integration** – The integration of public participation processes into mainstream policies and services, such as the IDP process and service planning, is essential (www. dplg.gov.za: Batho Pele Principles).

The basic intention of *Batho Pele* (White Paper) is to encourage public officials to listen and respond swiftly to people's needs.

2.17 VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS AND PLANNERS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The perception of stakeholders and planners is an important consideration in the development and implementation of any public participation programme. Public participation is often a requirement for planners; however, it is always optional for citizens who only choose to participate when they expect a satisfying experience and hope to influence the planning process. Cogan et al. (1986: 287) suggest that participation can offer a variety of rewards to citizens. These may be intrinsic to their involvement through the very act of participation, or instrumental, that is, resulting from the opportunity to contribute to public policy. Planners' expectations are also important. An effective public participation programme can lead to better planning process, an improved product, and heightened personal satisfaction.

Well-planned citizen involvement programmes reflect the expectations of both citizens and planners. It must be noted that public participation may mean different things to different people. In 1969, Arnstein published one of the most influential articles on public

participation, title “A ladder of citizen participation.” It describes an eight-rung metaphorical ladder of participation. The rungs are organised into three levels: non-participation (manipulation and therapy); tokenism (informing, confirming, consultation, and placating); and citizen power (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control). In this manner, Arnstein described the lack of meaningful participation in policy-making in poor urban communities. Subsequently, he termed “citizen control” as the proper definition of citizen participation in planning. This ladder constitutes a powerful critique of duplicitous participation processes that do not provide citizens with real power. In successful citizen involvement programmes, the disparity between the expectations of planners and those of the participants is minimal. In a contrary situation, there is always a conflict. The latter is damaging to the planning process, the agency’s reputation, and the relationship between the participants and the planner (Comwall, 2003: 66).

Public participation programmes can increase costs and the amount of time that a project should take. In other words, there is a certain level of risk associated with citizen participation programmes. However, Cogan (1986: 285) suggests that citizen participation programmes can make the planning process and planners more effective by reducing the isolation of the planner from the public, creating a spirit of cooperation and trust, providing opportunities to disseminate information, identifying additional dimensions of inquiry and research, assisting in identifying alternative solutions, providing legitimacy to the planning effort and political credibility of the agency, and increasing public support. From the foregoing, it can be argued that effective public participation programmes may actually save time and money by ensuring that the proposed solution is acceptable to all the relevant stakeholders.

2.18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS

Public participation mechanisms are specific tools for the practical implementation of public participation programmes. Various techniques can be used to solicit public input in planning processes. These range from basic open meetings to more sophisticated mechanisms that ensure successful public involvement. These mechanisms can be graphically-presented as a continuum ranging from passive involvement to active involvement. The Public Participation Toolbox (2000-2004) identifies the following as the different mechanisms that could be utilised in public participation: techniques for information sharing with the community/public, techniques to consolidate input from public and provide feedback, and techniques to bring communities together so as to promote interaction and the sharing of views.

Cogan (1986: 298) underscores that a successful citizen participation programme must be integral to the planning process and should focus on the latter's unique needs. He adds that a citizen participation programme is designed to function within the available resources of time, personnel and money; and, it must be responsive to the citizen-participants. It must be noted that each specific project requires a different approach to public involvement. However, Cogan (1986: 298) indicates that most successful citizen participation programmes contain some common characteristics. They endeavour to meet legal requirements; clearly articulate their objectives; command political support; be an integral part of the decision-making structure; receive adequate funding, staff and time; identify concerned or affected publics; and outline clear roles and responsibilities for the participants. It is expected that public participation programmes that incorporate these elements will generally be effective in meeting the expectations of both planners and participants.

2.19 CAPACITY REQUIRED TO DELIVER QUALITY SERVICES

According to de Villiers (2000: 62), capacity places emphasis on the ability to deal with the quantitative element of an institution's capability to deliver certain services. It must be stressed that although competencies may be present, they may quantitatively not match the needs of the end-users. Together, competence and capacity constitute the essential service delivery ingredients for any institution. They enable a local municipality, for instance, to deliver its main product or service. However, the researcher believes that capacity should be regarded as a municipality's ability to function at the required minimum level. Capacity entails issues of financial management, a credible and reliable IDP, sound mechanisms for dispute-resolution, and resources for the provision of services to communities within the boundaries of each municipality.

The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other related legislations and policy documents require all municipalities to employ the human resources that are necessary for the effective performance of their functions, such as the provision of electricity and water. The provision of these and other services in an efficient manner is believed to positively affect the quality of the lives of members of the public. For Lane (2007: 16), a municipality's capacity to deliver quality services is linked to its administration's ability to interpret policies and legislations, its mechanisms for the collection of information from rural settlement settings, and its development of the skills required for the management of municipal finances. Herberlain (1979) and Opperman (2007: 96) argue that the lack of capacity negatively affects municipal service delivery. However, these academics do not assess the strength of government programmes or interventions implemented to address value-for-money skills shortages. This confirms that capacity plays a major role in municipal service delivery.

In this study, human resource capacity is regarded as a direct contributing factor to the bigger picture of municipal service delivery hiccups. Guire (2007: 41) indicates that, while there is a need to put money into municipal development activities, there is no capacity to match the skills required to manage the allocated fund. The researcher concurs with Guire's above position.

2.20 CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

De Villiers (2001: 159-160) maintains that the basic principles of public participation are pro-activity, inclusiveness, shared responsibility, openness throughout the process, access, transparency, and respect for public input. These principles are key in promoting successful public participation policies and practices, which require firm and continuous commitment from both government and civil society. Comwall (2003:12) identifies four essential characteristics of public participation: it is inherently good; it is a source of wisdom and information about local conditions as well as citizens' needs and attitudes, thus improving the effectiveness of decision-making; it is an inclusive and pluralistic approach through which fundamental human needs are fulfilled and user-value is reflected; and it is a means of defending the interests and satisfying the needs of individuals and groups of people.

According to Creighton (2005: 23), the one obligation of public participation is that the larger public be informed of the impact of decisions to be made before they can decide whether or not they want to be involved in the public participation process. Therefore, it should be a common practice to establish and maintain effective public information mechanisms. Furthermore, public participation programmes must be highly visible and accessible to the public so that, should they decide to participate, they have a clear understanding of how and where this may be done. Christenson and Robinson (1980:11) indicate that the International Association for Public Participation has adopted a set of public participation 'core values'.

The latter is intended to serve as warrant and touchstone for public participation principles, priorities, and practices. The following constitute the core values of public participation: the public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives; public participation must include the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision; public participation must secure and facilitate the involvement of those who are potentially affected by or interested in a decision; public participation must promote sustainable decisions by establishing and communicating the needs and interests of all the participants, including the decision-makers; public participation must seek input from participants – in designing how they will participate; public participation must provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way; and public participation must indicate to the participants how their input affected a given decision (Gutto, 1996: 27).

2.21 VEHICLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This study accepts Comwall's (2003: 23-24) view on the methods and approaches to public participation. He believes that there are different approaches, methods, forms and trends of public participation. The most common – but often least effective – form of public participation is public hearing. The latter consists in government representatives giving a presentation on a proposed decision. Public hearing further requires the public to comments, make inputs, or pose questions. The other forms of public participation are ballot initiatives, petitions, Izimbizos, Integrated Development Plans, advisory committees or electronic public participation, publication, public meetings, open houses, workshops, target groups, toll free phone lines, interviews, surveys, study circles, future search conferences, public policy dialogues, and appreciative inquiries (Democracy and Public Participation, 2008: 176).

Clearly, participation is a complex mechanism, because there is no single blueprint. Indeed, each area is characterised by different dynamics and demographics. This view takes cognisance of the fact that development does not occur successfully if its intended beneficiaries are not part and parcel of the planning and implementation process (Comwall, 2003:27). This prompts one to endeavour to establish whether public participation is the key to social and economic development. It could be argued that public participation could slow delivery, as it is a time-consuming and expensive process. Indeed, the formation of Ward Committees – which are meant to facilitate development – has been found to be potentially time-consuming. Nonetheless, the World Bank (1994: 3) observes that there is no perfect model of public participation. The development experience of this institution has proven that the form taken by public participation is highly influenced by the overall circumstances and the unique social context in which action needs to be taken.

Participation involving municipalities and committees would be on the level of policy formulation, priorities, and strategies. Nevertheless, the fact that the implementation phase occurs with Ward Committees could jeopardise the legitimacy of the services. However, its long-term benefits, such as the empowerment and capacitation of communities, outweigh a situation in which participation does not occur. This approach is important at all levels of the planning cycle, decision-making, and problem solving. Indeed, all these phases are integral to the process of empowerment and meaningful participation.

Bekker (2005: 23) describes local government in South Africa as in a state of flux. Hence, increased public participation in municipalities is of crucial importance if a democratic and representative framework is to succeed at local level. In the South African context, public participation is clearly essential to the nurturing the country's young, emerging democracy.

This is because participation sets a sound foundation for the relations between government and society. Participation helps to deepen democracy and increase the effectiveness of policy formulation and implementation.

According to Cloete (1997:41), The 1998 White Paper on Local Government requires municipalities to establish processes and structures, to ensure effective participation. Currently, the government can promote public participation in a number of ways. The first is via legitimate community participation structures (Ward Committees). The second through mechanisms that enable communities to plan (Community-based Planning). The third is by integrating this planning with the IDP process of local government. The fourth is by supporting and enabling wards to implement their plans, by allowing them to use the discretionary funds that they control and by encouraging voluntary action to do so. The fifth is by providing support to Ward Committees and community groups, using community development workers (CDW). All these are vehicles of public participation.

2.21.1 Community Development Workers

CDWs are expected to explain government departments' policies and services, as their work cuts across all of these. CDWs are required to have excellent listening and facilitation skills, as they are often expected to act as mediators when problems arise in communities. This structure adds value and promotes service delivery and public participation within municipalities. This is because CDWs live in the very communities in which they work; they show respect for the people, as well as their norms and values; they acknowledge and accept leaders; they serve all community members – irrespective of their political affiliation; they are open about positions and ranks; they get to know people and their circumstances; they deepen their insight into people's needs and resources; they identify the local structures with which they can work ; they promote partnership between themselves and such local structures

as Ward Committees; they exchange information, guide and provide expertise; and, they enable, advocate and catalyse action (www.idasa.org.za).

Speaking at the launch of the CDW Programme in Winterveldt, Western Cape, in November 2005, former Public Service and Administration Minister Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi urged workers to help ensure that government was based on the will of the people and encouraged workers to work, live, walk and talk to the people in their own language (www.southafrica.info). It must be noted that the implementation of the CDW Programme is coordinated by all three spheres of government (national, provincial, and local). The Department of Provincial and Local Government facilitates the relationship between these three spheres regarding CDWs, while the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is responsible for the overall coordination of the programme. Provincial administrations are the employers of the CDWs, while SALGA and municipalities, among other things, provide workplaces for the CDWs and create the necessary environment for them to perform their duties. Finally, the Provincial Local Government Association and the Offices of the Speakers within municipalities are tasked with overseeing the creation of an enabling environment for CDWs (www.idasa.org.za).

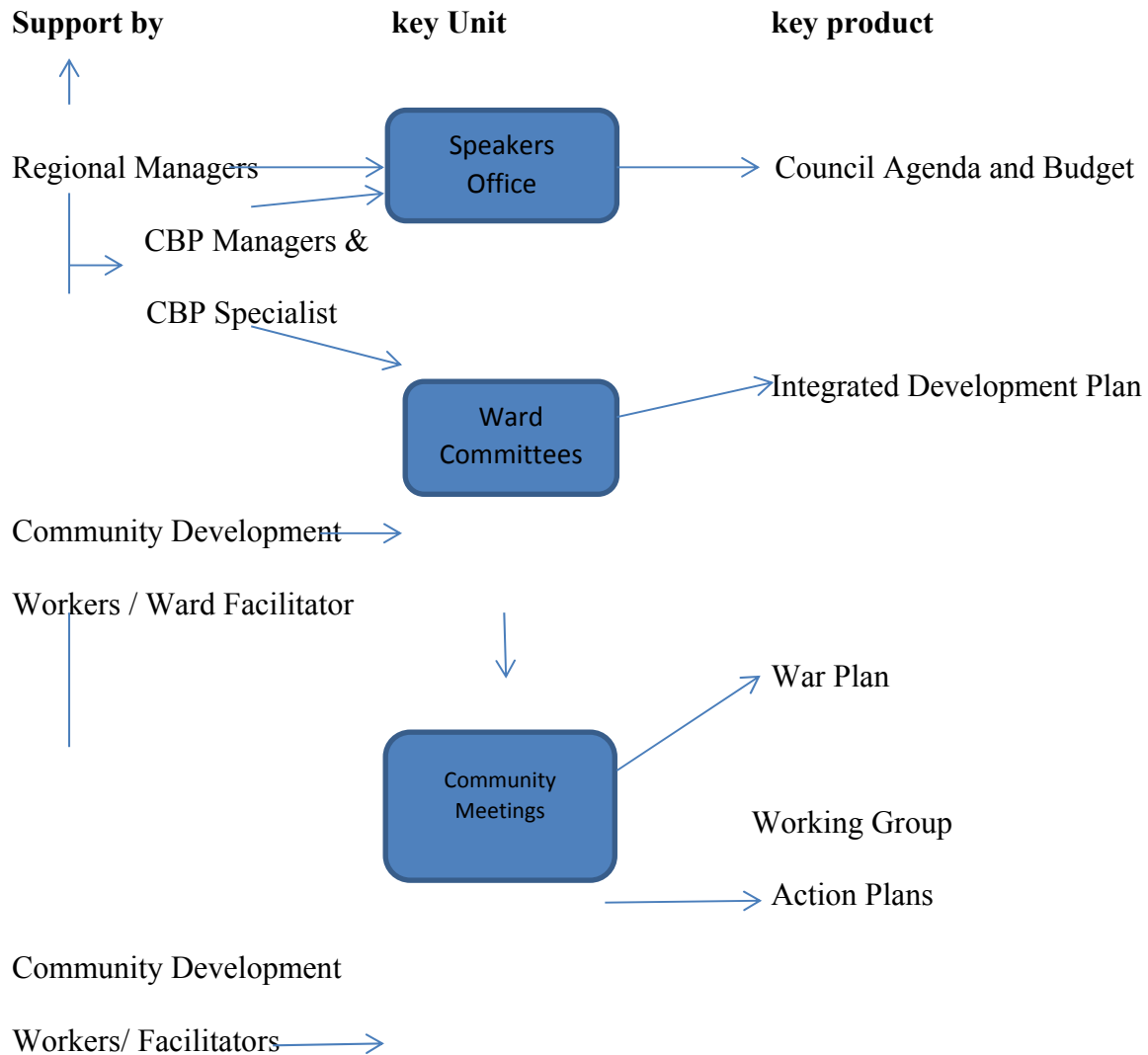
In discharging their duties, CDWs should interact with Ward Committees and Ward Councillors, since they serve the same constituencies; hence the need for them to work together in a complementary manner. These two groups help to ensure that government meets its target with regard to service delivery and poverty alleviation (www.southafrica.info). Presently, a key challenge is that these two resources are not working together as expected. Firstly, CDWs are appointed by the provincial government and therefore see themselves as accountable to that sphere of government rather than to the Speaker's Office – which is

located in local government – as required. Secondly, Ward Committee members are only given a meetings-related transport allowance. While councillors and CDWs are paid for the work they do, Ward Committee members are deprived of similar benefits. Presently, political glitches impact negatively on the relationship between these three structures.

CDWs' role is to maintain a direct contact with the people who are where they live and to ensure that government dramatically improves the quality of the outcomes of public expenditure. The CDW Programme is an initiative of the National Executive. CDWs are employed and paid by their relevant provinces. They are deployed locally, although they are not under the direct control of government.

In a media briefing of the Cabinet Lekgotla, in 2005, the then President of South Africa, Mr Thabo Mbeki, noted instances in some municipalities where basic services are not provided to citizens. He stressed that this was not on account of a lack of resources, but because of poor planning. For instance, some new settlement projects with formal housing, water, and electricity lack sanitation facilities; while others suffer from ageing electricity networks and unreliable refuse removal services. These challenges call for a close monitoring of the content of IDPs and their implementation, including support to Ward Committees and speedier roll-outs of CDW Programmes.

Although CDWs are not a public participation institution, they are important in terms of how they relate to existing public participation structures and mechanisms, especially Ward Committees. Thus, could potentially assist in furthering the development of public participation. Clearly, the CDW Programme is a very important and strategic initiative. Indeed, it provides grassroots government staff who can support Ward Committees and strengthen the communication links between communities and government.



Community-based planning is a form of participatory planning designed to promote community participation and linkage with the IDP. Community-based planning empowers communities to plan for themselves and enable local government to better understand community needs so as to improve its planning. Community-based planning encourages a bottom-up approach to planning, as opposed to the customary top-down approach. Only an informed community can choose its own destiny. Community-based planning is underpinned by the view that people who form part of a community should have the right to set the course of their future. In addition to creating community involvement, community-based planning also creates a sense of community ownership of service delivery and development. More

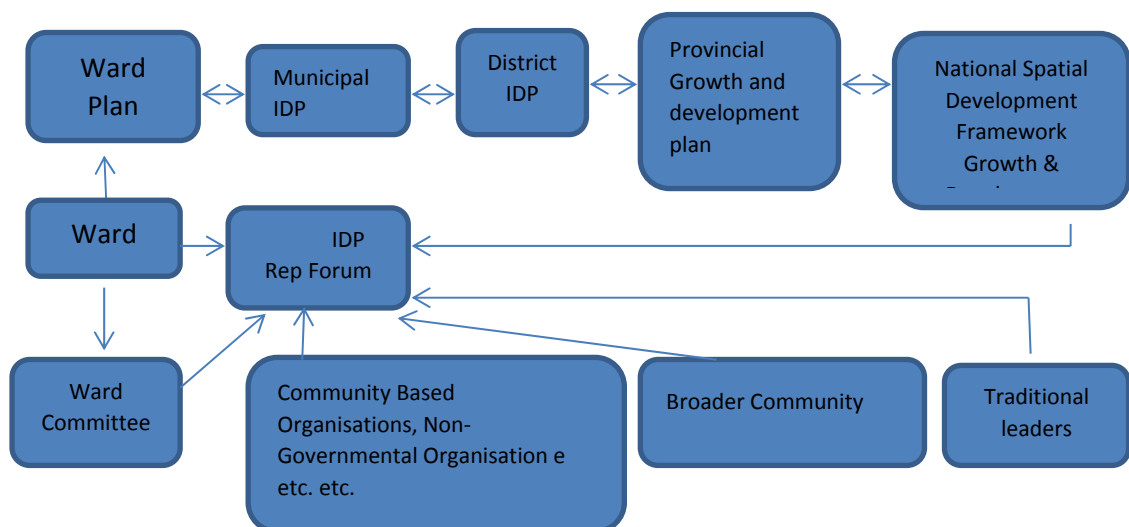
importantly, community-based planning ensures that the poorest of the poor and the marginalised sectors of society partake in local governance. It is only when the people are empowered that they can make local government accountable (Community-based Planning and the IDP Guide 2, 2005: 4).

The previous section on the legislative framework reflected the centrality of public participation in local government legislation and the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Public participation is also emphasised in key policy documents, most notably the Freedom Charter and the 1998 White Paper on Local Government. Community-based planning, therefore, provides a mechanism for achieving and entrenching community participation in planning and management at Ward level. Community-based planning strengthens all other participatory approaches. It closes the gap between municipalities, communities and Ward Committees on the one hand, and between Ward Committees and communities on the other hand – in key policy decisions – thereby institutionalising structured public participation. This has an impact on the IDP and budget (Community-based Planning and the IDP Guide 3, 2005: 7).

2.21.2 Integrated Development Planning and Public Participation

Prior to the implementation of the integrated development planning, most of the stakeholders involved in development were technical personnel. According to Holmes (1991: 24), development management's roles should be designed to compensate people. IDP processes – together with budgetary processes – are agents for community action (DPLG, 2005: 7). Planact (1997: 41) stresses the lack of a standard recipe for community participation, but acknowledges the importance of participation in local government. Indeed, he states that in order to reconstruct and develop South Africa, there is a pressing need for popular participation. According to Held (1996: 98), the 1998 White Paper on Local Government

requires Municipal Council members to involve communities in the design and delivery of municipal programmes. The 1998 White Paper on Local Government also encourages public involvement in development at local government level through the following: a community representative forum, which allows for community participation at local level; an effective communication system between the different departments' directorates within the administration on the one hand, as well as between the administration and the public on the other hand; municipalities must recognise the legitimacy of newly-formed community-based organisations (CBOs) and enable them to be actively involved in municipal decision-making processes and structures; the establishment of a capacity-building and mediation fund, especially regarding participation in programmes and activities; and avoiding the duplication of participatory structures (various sectoral committees). Community participation must not be a once-off activity intended to fulfil legislative requirements in order to produce an IDP, but should rather be a continuum (Planact, 1997: 41-43). The linkage between Ward plans, IDPs, provincial growth and development plans, and the National Spatial Development Framework is diagrammatically represented below:



2.21.3 Traditional Leaders

Traditional leadership is indigenous to South Africa and the rest of Africa. Its existence predates the colonial conquests and Apartheid. Another important way in which communities, particularly traditional ones, can participate in local government is through traditional authorities. Chapter 12 of the South African Constitution makes provision for the formulation of national legislation that affords traditional leaders a role at local level. Thus, they play a part in community participation and are an important component of most constituencies, as they have a protracted record of facilitating community consultations. Both the traditional leadership and the Governance Framework Act (No. 41 of 2003) recognise the tribal level as a link between communities and local government.

The ANC-led government amended Section 81 of the Local government: Municipal Structures Act to provide for and enhance the representation of traditional leaders in Municipal Councils to 20%, as it stands now. This Act further puts traditional leadership at the centre of development. Section 4 of the 2003 Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act defines the primary functions of traditional councils. These include facilitating the involvement of the traditional community in the development of municipalities' IDP, and recommending to government appropriate interventions that will contribute to development and service delivery within their jurisdictions.

This system of leadership is, however, still faced with challenges that deter community participation. It remains a big task to forge the coexistence of two conflicting systems of governance (modern democracy versus traditional authority). The party politicisation of tribal structures invariably compromises the credibility and autonomy of this traditional institution and its leadership. Indeed, partisan traditional leaders bar the efforts to spearhead community participation. For instance, the traditional leadership of 'Amakhosi' is flawed by a lack of

clear-cut roles and functions. The 2003 Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act – which was enacted to redeem these problems – has been lambasted by the Amakhosi for being westernised in its provision and consultation. This has exacerbated the mistrust between traditional and modern authorities. There is also an ongoing dispute over traditional authority's boundaries and the merger of tribes.

2.21.4 Focus Groups

Groups that share the same principles and interests usually organise themselves and lobby their municipality on issues of their choice. They motivate the inclusion of their problems in their municipalities' policy decisions. Although environmental groups are the most common, other groups have recently emerged. These include those dealing with specific issues affecting the youth, gender and people with disabilities. These groups advocate for the inclusion of their issues in local government's agenda (www.idasact.org.za).

It suffices to note that service delivery satisfaction surveys, as well as complaints and suggestion boxes/schemes have become well-established in local government. Fully developed website can also play an important role in improving communication with communities, thereby promoting their involvement (www.idasact.org.za).

2.21.5 Public Hearings/Meetings

Public meetings are the most common form of public participation. The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000) provides for Council meeting to be held in public. Notices announcing these Council meetings must be published, stating the date, time and venue. Public hearings are usually held to give the community a fair and open opportunity to

state its position on a matter. They are commonly used by national and provincial legislatures as part of the law-making process. Municipalities also embark on the same process during the drafting of by-laws, budgeting processes, as well as IDP and Performance Management reviews. Public hearings/meetings enable communities to own their areas' development processes (www.idasact.org.za). Public meetings could be an optimal platform for municipalities to share information about the needs of their communities and provide clarity on issues that are misunderstood. Integrated development planning could be promoted in this way. Community members and their leaders could use the provided opportunity to interact with officials during breaks and after meetings. The existing political structures, which may include local activities and local council members, could use these meetings to promote interaction between the Council and the community regarding developmental issues or matters of mutual concern (Meyer & Theron, 2000: 40; Sewell & Coppock, 1997:36).

2.21.6 Feedback Sessions

It is essential that members of the public be involved and informed of decisions taken by Council, on a regular basis. Some of these decisions could affect them directly, such as those relating to service delivery and finance issues (www.idasact.org.za). Furthermore, all municipalities are required to develop an IDP every five years. In this regard, different communities are expected to communicate their priority projects for a specific financial year, through interaction with the municipal leadership. In preparation for budget processes, it is critical that, following the adoption of a request, report-back meetings are held. These serve to explicitly inform communities as to which of their priorities will be implemented in a given financial year. Report-back meetings are crucial for public participation as they enable municipalities to inform residents of adopted resolutions and selected projects.

2.22 GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Theron, (2000: 29) define governance as a process in which power and authority around the allocation of resources are exercised between and within state institutions and civil society. Good governance, as explained by Gildenhuis and Kinpe (2000: 9), is the attainment by government of its ultimate goal to create conditions for a good and satisfactory quality of life for each citizen. Attention has to be drawn to the compatibility of public participation with democracy in general, in accordance with the ethos of representativeness. This is very relevant in the South African context, where public participation is regarded as not only playing a pivotal role, but also enhancing local democracy.

For the past twenty-one years of South Africa's democracy, different expectations have been raised concerning policy and how government should relate to communities. However, there is general agreement that participation is key to the success of local development processes. This implies that there has to be a representative and administrative system through which the views of citizens are heard and fed into policy formulation. In the South African context, it is therefore essential to ensure that control over local municipalities and civil society is not restricted to the new urban elite.

Fox and Meyer (1995: 32) advise that the new type of government should promote exclusivity around development planning. Conversely, Atkinson (1992: 43) emphasises the notion of "popular sovereignty" which maintains that governance is not an entity that is separate from its citizenry: the two are inextricably intertwined. Implicit in his form of governance is the notion that the government is accountable to the community. This form of democratic and good governance gives the impression that governance is owned by the community. Such a contextual analysis is in line with the shift from the concept of 'government to governance' (Gildenhuis & Fox, 1997: 34).

From a South African perspective, Gildenhuis (1992: 23) provides a broad understating of political leadership in governance: the management of the relationship between the government and civil society. If good democratic governance entails working with and listening to the citizenry, interest groups, and society as a whole, active co-operation and on-going engagement – in the process of policy formulation and implementation – between politicians, public officials, and community members is required. Thus, the government has to ensure that all its structures enable the public to make a meaningful contribution. Governance, as a process of facilitating and ensuring the delivery of goods and services through the management of social power and power relations, represents a means of achieving social stability, well-being and deepened democracy.

Governance has been described as both a broad reform and a particular set of initiatives aimed at strengthening the institutions of civil society. The objective of governance is to make government more accountable, more open and transparent, and more democratic (Hughes, 1999: 37). For other authors, governance represents a change in the meaning of government; it refers to the process of governing. Governance is a change in the conditions of ordered rule; it is a new method through which society is governed (Holmes, 2000: 123).

2.23 ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

According to Holmes (2000: 41), knowledge will forever govern over ignorance; and, people who intend to be their own governors must harm themselves with the power that knowledge provides. Knowledge as power can only be acquired through access to information (www.parliament.gov.za). it must be stressed that communication is a two-way process which benefits both members of the public and the authorities. Interactive communication enables each party to learn about and better understand the views and position of the other.

According to Hughes (1991:87), an open, transparent and accountable government is an imperative prerequisite for community-orientated public service. Through communication with citizens, the government gathers information on the needs, opinions, values, and perspectives of the broad public. This enables government to make better and more informed decisions (www.ci.doe.gov.za).

2.24 LIMITATIONS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Greyling (as cited in Bradshaw & Burger, 2005: 48) points out that participation is not necessarily aimed at building consensus, but rather at ‘generating a diversity of opinions and views’. This in itself presents a significant challenge. Furthermore, public participation is too often undertaken as a type of therapy for stakeholders, after the crucial decisions have already been taken. Jansen (2002: 208) notes that internally, the “processes of participation have a number of significant limitations: not all groups are able to participate equally due to differentials of access, power and expertise; and the views expressed in various final reports often did not reflect exact opinions of stakeholders and participants”.

Creighton (2005: 2) emphasises that there are still challenges in converting the concept of public participation into the different reality of everyday interaction between the state, companies, and the public; for example, the reality of budget and legal constraints. There is sometimes a need to make quick decisions which should be based on the best available scientific and technical information. These are some of the external political realities that compound the challenges relating to public participation. It is important to note is the existence of a negative attitude toward participation. The latter stems from two chief sources: lack of clarity in the definition of public (or citizen) participation and the use of inappropriate strategies to achieve it (Theron, Ceaser & David, 2007: 2).

Nevertheless, participatory governance should not permit interference with a Municipal Council's right to govern and exercise the executive and legislative authority of the municipality. Indeed, as the product of representative democracy, the municipality alone has the legal mandate to govern. More importantly, it has the political legitimacy to do so, since it is brought about through the will of the people. However, the people's will is not a blank cheque that the Council fills as it pleases (www.idasa.org.za). Participatory democracy complements politically-legitimate and legally-responsible structures. A community participatory structure, such as a Ward Committee, for instance, may add to the formal structures of government but may not replace or substitute them (www.idasa.org.za).

Public participation has other limitations, apart from the legislative ones mentioned earlier. Bekker (1996: 71-73) has identified the following limitations:

- (a) Government normally involves citizens in areas in which a positive response is certain;
- (b) The general apathy in local government results in the fact that only a handful of citizens participate;
- (c) Inflexible institutional arrangements and work procedures – which are designed for efficiency rather than responsiveness to public participation – usually hamper public participation;
- (d) Members of the public's perception that it is not worthwhile to participate, since their views will not be considered, leads to apathy and limited public participation;
- (e) The general lack of government response to or feedback on issues raised by communities renders the latter despondent and discourages them from further participation in local government; and

- (f) Often, citizens are not provided with sufficient information to enable them to participate.

It must, however, be noted that regardless of these limitations, current participation channels and approaches at local government level in South Africa reflect a shift from participation by the elite towards a community-orientated, “bottom-up” approach. It must be noted that for many years in South Africa, the disadvantaged were marginalised and had no say in the shaping of their destiny. Although progress has been made, many challenges are still encountered with regard to community participation. However, with time and community empowerment, the ideals of community participation will be realised (Bekker, 1996: 41).

2.25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MODELS

Public participation models can be defined as formats for participation that can be implemented in a variety of imaginable problem context from those that are unique experiences. A model, in the context of this study, implies a substantial capacity to resolve a public issue. There are two specific approaches to public participation: “the bottom-up approach” and “the partnership approach”. Each approach can be applied in different ways and in different community conditions. When people are able to articulate their own problems and have the ability and capacity to solve them through self-organisation and participation, the bottom-up approach to community development could be developed. However, when people lack the ability and capacity to take action in developing their own communities, the relevant government agency should take over the development process over some period of time in order to upgrade their awareness, knowledge and skills – for self-reliance. In this case, a top-down approach to community development could be developed.

2.25.1 Populist Model of Public Participation

According to Harris (1990: 51), Abraham Lincoln defines democracy as “government of the people by the people and for the people”. Thus, it becomes appropriate to outline the different types of democratic models of public participation. The first model is populist democracy, also known as people’s democracy or populism. It is based on the assumption that all people are equal and must be treated as such. Populist democracy means that there should be no inequalities and that all people must be treated alike, regardless of their varying contributions to the general welfare (common good). Proponents of populist democracy have always been sympathetic to workers, small-scale traders and farmers – who constitute the majority in every society. These groups are often referred to as the poor (common people), in contrast to the leaders, who may have been in public office for lengthy periods and could seem arrogant, aloof and difficult to reach. According to Cloete (1993: 9), supporters of populist democracy explain that being in government “for the people” means “government for and by the majority”. Proponents of populist democracy tend to justify this model through mass movements which create the impression of participatory democracy. Mass movements could, however, result in mob rule and may become an instrument of tyranny. To make the most of mass movements, supporters of populist democracy will search for charismatic leaders or “heroes” who will be able to exercise constructive leadership, once the majority comes into power. They also assume that leaders voted into power will govern effectively – to the satisfaction of all. Hence, little attention is given to the need for constant control and the replacement of the elected rulers – which could degenerate into dictatorship.

2.25.2 Liberal Model of Public Participation

The liberal public participation model claims that all people should be politically-accepted as equal, but also acknowledges that individuals differ in their personal capacities and ability to

provide for themselves. Therefore, the proponents of liberal democracy can only demand that every person be given the opportunity to develop and reap the fruits of his or her own potential. Liberal democracy demands the protection of equal rights, which will ensure that some persons do not have special rights or that others are disadvantaged. A liberal constitutional democracy requires regular elections and the presence of representatives of opposing political parties in the legislatures. Thus, majority rule could remain acceptable (Cloete, 1993: 8-9).

2.25.3 Representative Model of Public Participation

Cloete (1993: 7) notes that representative democracy is applied in many states to obtain the majority rule. The usual arrangement is to divide the state into geographical constituencies (also known as electoral districts or divisions) and to allow for one or more representatives to be elected by the electorate in each constituency. However, a system of proportional representation could also apply for the election of representatives. In terms of this model, the electorate or members of the public elect their representatives. The latter pass laws in the legislature and oversee their implementation by the executive branch of the government. As it becomes apparent, in a representative model, the participation of members of the public is essentially limited to election time (IDASA, 2005).

2.25.4 Realism Model of Public Participation

It is often argued that the “realism model” is the most effective form of public participation. Such an argument is based on an essentially corporatist model of political interaction, where consensus is reached around a “round table” consisting of the primary interest groups. The key public actors in the legislative process consist of the general public or electorate, represented by their elected representatives, and the various key interest groups or stakeholders. The public participation process arbitrates the exchange between these two

groups. The successful balancing of their interests depends on a dynamic relationship between elected representatives and their constituencies. This relationship is characterised by constant interaction and clear communication. Such engagement depends, however, on the capacity of and resources available to the representatives.

In South Africa, not only are capacity and resources extremely limited, but they are also compounded by enormous infrastructural/developmental backlogs, especially in ex-homeland areas. The other challenge derives from the adoption of a system of political party representation, instead of direct constituency election. This weakens the link between the electorate and individual representatives. Clearly, this model contains many of the weaknesses of the “pure” representational model, particularly in the fact that it limits the broader public’s influence exerted during elections. According to IDASA (2005), given the numerous constraints to public participation in South Africa, the realist model is the best option available. However, it is not the system favoured by the government or the legislature itself.

2.25.5 Ladder Model of Public Participation

Arnstein (1969) developed a ‘ladder’ model comprising of eight possible levels in an approach to public participation. This model has shaped much of the dictate on participatory processes, as shown in Figure 1 and Box 1. The degree of involvement ranges from manipulation to citizen control. While Arnstein’s model describes the degree of citizen participation corresponding to varying levels of involvement, it does not suggest ways of evaluating performance at any particular level.

Box 1

Ladder of participation

Citizen control – People participate by taking initiatives, independently of external institutions, for the resources and technical advice they need, and thus retain control over how resources are used. An example of citizen control is self-government – the community makes all the decisions.

Delegated power – The government funds and runs the decision-making process; however, communities are given some delegated powers to make decisions. People participate in joint analysis, the development of action plans and the formulation of strategies for the strengthening of local institutions. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and use systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take over local decisions and determine how available resources are to be used, they have a stake in maintaining existing structures or practices.

Partnership – In the partnership approach, of which joint projects are examples, the community has considerable influence on the decision-making process, but the government still takes responsibility for the decisions made. Participation is regarded by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups that aim to meet predetermined objectives related to a given project. Such involvement tends to arise only after external agents have already made major decisions. Participation may also be motivated by material incentives, where people participate by contributing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash, or other incentives.

Placation – The principle of placation is to ask the community for advice and make token changes. In other words, the community is given information about the issues relating to a project; although, the public's advice and comments may be sought, they may not be reflected in the final decision.

Consultation – The community is given information about a project or issue and is asked to comment, for example through meetings or surveys. However, the views expressed may not be reflected in the final decision and no explanation may be provided. External agents define problems and information gathering processes and thus control the analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any sharing of decision-making.

Informing – Informing consists in telling the community about a project, for example through meetings or leaflets. Although community members’ opinions may be solicited, these may not be taken into account.

Therapy – People are told what has been decided or what has already occurred. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management – with no attention being paid to people’s responses.

Manipulation – Participation is simply a pretense. An example of this is when “people’s representatives” on official boards are not elected and have no power, or when a community is selectively told about a project according to an existing agenda. Consequently, the community’s input is only used to further this agenda.

Depending on the objectives of public participation, the preferred approach will differ. Nevertheless, Arnstein’s classic ladder of citizens’ participation shapes much of the discussion on participatory processes. As a matter of fact, public participation in the IDP rests on Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation and informs the criteria the former uses to distinguish between the various degrees of public participation and the normative ranking of public participation activities that this allows. Arnstein’s ladder of public participation remains a useful tool, mainly because it is widely used internationally to understand and measure participation.

2.25.6. Imbizos as a Model of Public Participation

Imbizo is an isiZulu word for a traditional community gathering called by a chief – to solve pertinent community issues. In African indigenous communities, it is common practice for a chief, headman, or other community leaders to convene a community meeting – with a view to discussing issues of common concern or interest. The concept of ‘government imbizo’ became prominent in South Africa when the ANC came to power. The idea of a gathering of the people was introduced in the Congress of the People in 1955 and in the People’s Forums, prior to the transition to democracy, in 1994. In 2001, the South African government took the decision to adopt the imbizo as a model of communication and governance, to deepen participatory democracy and public participation, especially for the poor. An imbizo is thus used as a platform to resolve pertinent community challenges – through honest engagement between the subjects and leadership. An imbizo is also used by the South African government for the attainment of four interrelated ideological objectives: it articulates the African Renaissance paradigm; it expresses the ideology of African unity; it is a vehicle of the advancement of the political strategy of the African National Congress (ANC); and it is used as a manifestation of participatory democracy.

This gathering, in which members of a given neighborhood and their community leadership meet, is called an Imbizo. Guire (2007: 103) argue that Imbizos are folk media used by both the leadership and community members to engage in a dialogic exchange of views on matters related to development. Realising the power of this method to unite communities, the ANC-led government appropriated Imbizos as a model of communication and governance – taking advantage of their status as cultural communication channels. Clearly, an imbizo symbolises a value system based on solidarity, cooperation, and unity in action. Through imbizos (community meetings), the government and communities interact directly. Imbizos provide

the public with the opportunity to hear directly from government about the programmes being implemented to create a better life for all. Imbizos give the government a chance to listen to the concerns of communities and their ideas on how to overcome problems and speed up implementation. Imbizos help to build a partnership for development and growth between the government and communities ([/www.info.gov.za](http://www.info.gov.za)).

At an imbizo in Mpumalanga, in October 2004, former President Thabo Mbeki stated that while some councillors were doing their work, others were not in touch with their constituencies and were not giving regular reports to their communities. He stressed the need for public representatives to be held accountable to the people and for them to address the core problems facing communities. At all times, communities should be informed of the steps taken to address whatever challenges they may be confronting. Partnerships should be formed so that the resolution of problems would become the collective effort of government and communities (www.sacities.net)

Presidential Izimbizos, like any other broader government izimbizo initiatives, provide a platform for face-to-face interaction and engagement between the President and citizens. Through these izimbizos, communities are offered an opportunity to raise their concerns and make suggestions directly to the President – in the presence of the President himself/herself, the relevant Premier, MECs, and Mayors. In this way, ordinary people are able to hold the three spheres of government accountable and thus influence governance and service delivery (www.info.gov.za).

One of the lessons learnt from izimbizos is that it is often very difficult from people to contact government offices that can address their needs. This is particularly relevant to those who are poor and unable to afford the cost of travelling to government offices. It must be noted that an imbizo is open to everyone, even foreign nationals, irrespective of age, gender,

colour, creed or standing in society. However, there are important steps that must be followed in the imbizo process. According to the Government Communicators' Handbook (GCI) (2005: 39,40-43), these steps involve planning, the establishing a national task team, role clarification, establishing a provincial coordinating task team, budgeting, consultation with the province and the local municipality, developing the imbizo, assessment, and follow-up research. Whether or not all these phases and steps are followed at present, increased attention must be paid to proper coordination and consultation in the areas to be addressed. This is central in dealing effectively with the developmental needs of specific communities.

IDASA has identified four Additional models which suggest ways in which public participation in legislative and policy-making processes may be facilitated. The following discussion focuses on these three models, which relate to governance in local government: the Legislative Model, the Citizen Participation Model, the Community Empowerment Model, and the Managerial Model.

2.25.7 Citizen Model of Public Participation

The goal of the Citizen Participation Model is to increase the participation of citizens in local government's decision-making processes and to provide an environment that is conducive to the creation of a civic society. Such participation will contribute to strengthening democracy and improving public service delivery. The Citizen Participation Model helps to achieve a more meaningful democracy in its community, leading to a more active engagement of citizens in local governance; it ensures that local government benefits from a more effective management, and that consensus on its activities is reached; and it ensures that improvements in citizen participation create resources for development – through private-public partnerships.

2.25.8 Managerial Model of Public Participation

The Managerial Model or traditional model is the most common of the abovementioned four strategic planning models. It is closely related to the strategic planning models found in the private sector. It is based on a top-down approach, and follows fairly rigid prescribed steps. Thus, it is very linear in its application, and provides very little room for meaningful stakeholder participation. The top-down approach to community development is initiated by the government or the authority. In fact, in this approach, everything is managed by the government, community members are passive. The top-down approach emphasises central planning. This form of strategic planning is used most frequently in six to nine months, following a change in an organisation's administrative leadership, or any time after there has been a substantial turnover in key members of the organisation's administrative staff. This is the model that the government tried to change by introducing integrated development planning, because planners were developing areas – especially township areas – without any consultation with the communities. The Managerial Model is most effective when an organisation exists in a very stable or stagnant operational environment that provides little motivation to search for innovative approaches to problem-solving.

2.25.9 Legislative Model of Public Participation

The Legislative Model is widely used in some countries. It is usually initiated to develop an action agenda, to guide and direct the decisions of an organisation's governing body and administrative team. It is most effective if used when organisations exist in an operating environment that is experiencing either rapid growth or significant decline, yet these organisations lack an agenda for action. This model of local government strategic planning is initiated to accomplish any combination of the following seven goals: to develop a common agenda; to explore operational styles and establish operational guidelines; to create understanding between organisations' governing bodies and their chief administrative

officers; to develop greater interaction and communication between members of organisations' governing bodies and their chief administrative officers; to develop and enhance teamwork; to develop community acceptance of an agenda for use by organisations' governing bodies and administrative teams as a guide for making decisions and distributing resources; and to reaffirm and further legitimise an already-existing agenda.

2.25.10. Community Empowerment Model of Public Participation

The Community Empowerment Model is built around extensive community participation. It is designed as an empowerment process that helps to develop a community agenda and engage the residents forming a community over a long period of time. Usually, the process is initiated by a proactive governing body. The organisation's administrative team may be involved, but only at the request of the governing body. The Community Empowerment Model is most effective if used when the community is not under significant stress and when there are no "open wounds" in the body politic. Also, its effectiveness is greatest when the community is broadly represented and when the governing body legitimises the process without exercising tight control over it. The bottom-up approach to community development is initiated and managed by the community, for the community. Government and service providers merely play a supportive role as facilitators and consultants. In other words, the active role in the process of development is played or initiated by the community itself. According to Finger (1994: 17), the bottom-up approach emphasises community participation, grassroots movements, and local decision-making. It argues that community participation and grassroots initiatives that promote participatory decision-making and local self-reliance ultimately pay dividends.

This type of application typically produces the following results and outcomes: a community agenda; a lengthy report that takes the governing body several work sessions to discuss and

consider; and the achievement of community cohesion through a greater understanding of important community issues and processes. In the most successful cases, an institutionalised process to ensure continued participation by residents is established. A review board or similar institution is created to ensure regular monitoring of the progress towards the goals established during the process.

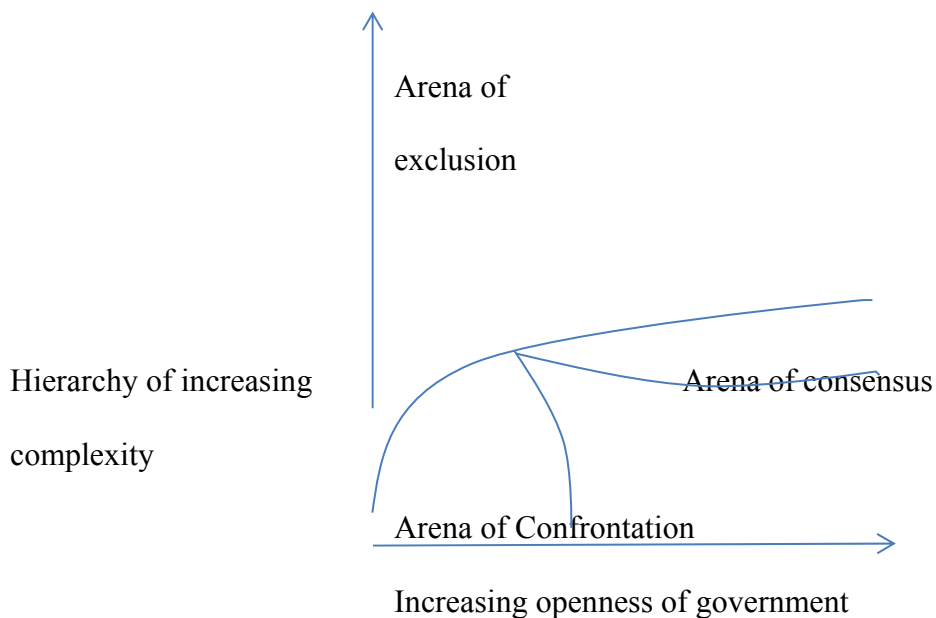
Community development evolved into a branch of social work which provides limited social support, through the medium of individual Community Development Workers. Its aim was to improve the personal well-being of people in impoverished working class communities. This was exported to the colonies and achieved reasonable success within the paternalistic structure of the colonial administration – until the emergent independent nations began to redefine the role of community development and articulated it in terms of wider social and political goals, rather than specific community needs. In this regard, Bayat & Meyer (1994: 44) notes that different approaches to community participation exist and contribute an original and rather interesting framework to participation. However, Berner, (2006: 124) suggests that the surrounding or context in which participation occurs determines the most appropriate participation model. He identifies six such types of community interface models.

The characteristics of the most appropriate models are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

	Model		
<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Community development</i>	<i>Empowerment</i>	<i>Negotiated development</i>
Role of government	Open	Closed	Open
Nature of decision-making	Small programmes and projects with defined/concrete and single outputs	Political/economic targeted programmes with clearly-defined agendas/outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex, multi-variable and multi-faceted programmes. • High level of complexity
Community dynamics	Focused through project selection	Focused through strength of needs/issues	Diffuse and heterogeneous; requires some level of moderation
Primary purpose of participative process	Limited	Centred around a dispute between a community and the government	Integrated-systems approach; wide-ranging interaction

Table 2.1: Most appropriate models and their characteristics. Adapted from Abbot (1996).

Clearly, each of these modes of participation has its own dynamics. However, Abbot outlines four types of contexts, along a two-variable axis. Abbot connects each of the arenas/participation contexts to associated participation responses. The first sector is situated on the left-hand side of the surround, where the government is closed to the involvement of the community in the decision-making process. The boundary of this sector moves to the right, as the complexity increases. The reason for this is that it becomes easier for governments to maintain a non-participatory stance, when there is a high degree of project complicity, as this makes community cohesion difficult.



The government, with its structures, is in a very strong position to control the flow of information, which is an essential part of decision-making on complex issues. This sector is defined as the arena of exclusion, where community participation is extremely difficult, if not impossible. The response of community organisations in this situation is to exploit specific windows of opportunity. The state may be oppressive, but it will often encounter difficulties in maintaining hegemony in all spheres of activity. Hence, it remains closed to community

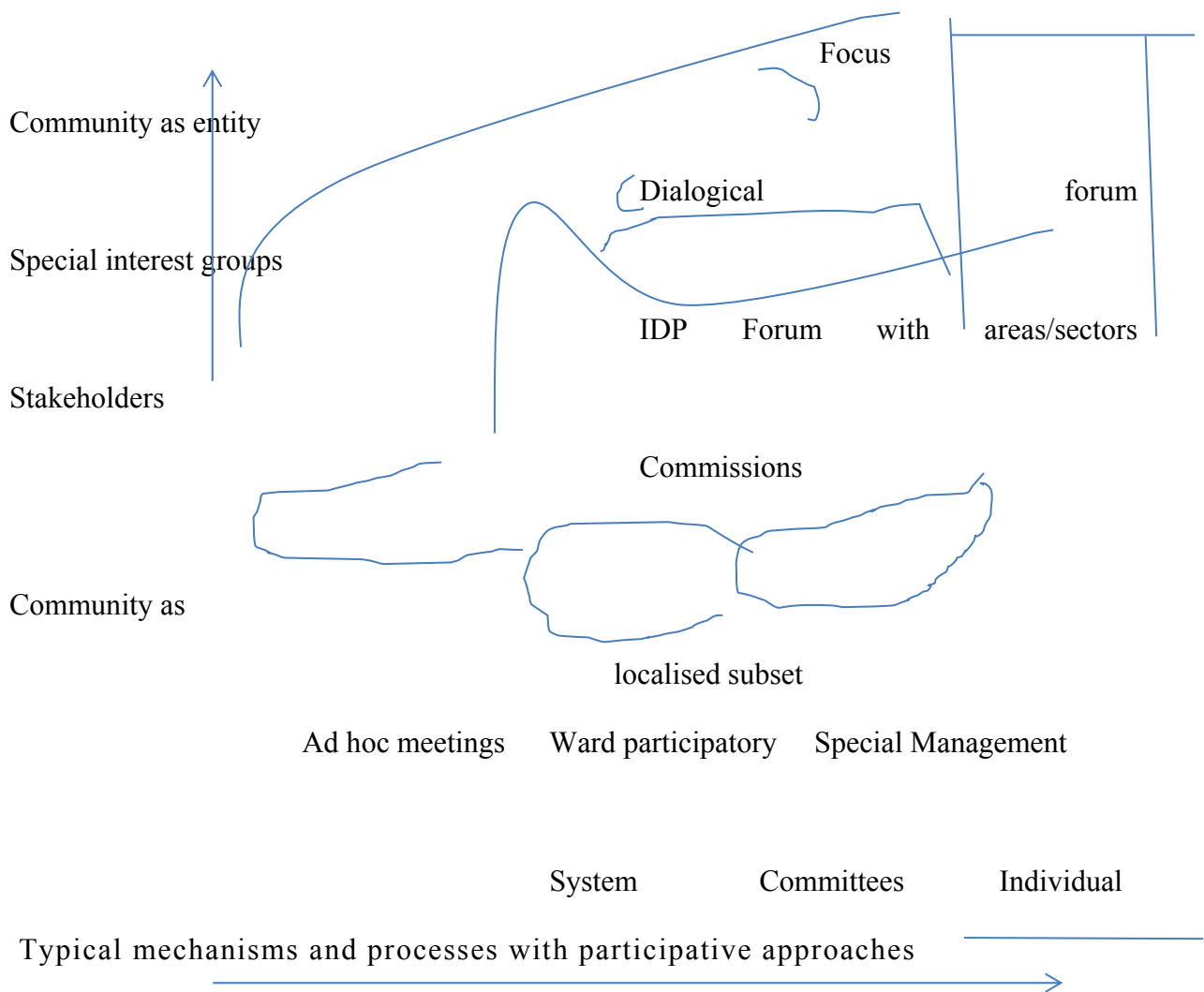
involvement generally, but there are specific sectors or activities where some engagement is possible. This is the sector into which political empowerment falls. However, community participation is possible in spite of government opposition, only because the issue is a simple, straightforward one around which community cohesion and mobilisation can occur. In terms of community participation, this sector is defined as the arena of confrontation.

Further to the right lies a sector in which the project is simple, but where the government is now open to some degree of community involvement in the decision-making process. The community development approach falls into this sector. Here, the government supports community involvement, provided that it takes place within a government-defined framework. In terms of community participation, this sector is defined as the arena of inclusion.

Moving upwards and further to the right leads to the fourth and final sector. In the latter, the project is complex, yet the government remains open to the involvement of the community in the decision-making process. Negotiated development, as a form of community participation, falls within this sector, which is defined as the arena of consensus. Because the decision-making is more complex and forms part of a wider system, the outcome is different to that of the arena of inclusion. Essentially, neither party is able to take complete control. At the same time, however, both parties cannot always make decisions together, because there may be other factors that bring in other actors. There may also be deep-rooted differences between the parties. The result is a move toward new forms of decision-making, which revolve around different forms of consensus – of which the negotiated development approach is just one.

The sitting of activities in different sectors of the surround makes it possible to view community participation as a dynamic process. The political, social and economic conditions

surrounding an activity may be examined – to see the way in which changing conditions of government’s openness and the changing complexity might push the activity in the direction of another sector, thereby changing the arena of community participation (Abbott, 1996: 12405). The following is a sketch of Abbot’s typical participation mechanism and the associated processes within each participatory approach.



Abbot (1996) also demonstrated that empowerment would be achieved through participation as an end. This is because where participation is used primarily as a means of conscientisation, its role is largely of a political tool. As such, it involves a significant

reduction in the number and quality of development issues that can be addressed. Citizen participation is at the heart of local government's developmental endeavor in South Africa. It aims to find long-term ways to meet the social, economic and material needs of citizens and improve their quality of life.

2.26 CONCLUSION

Public participation is one of the key means of decreasing tension and conflict over public policy decisions and service delivery. It is clear, from the many attempts to define this concept, that there are different interpretations – with unique applications in different states or spheres. Community participation is an integral part of local government's developmental efforts. Local government's developmental mandate cannot be realised in the absence of effective public participation. Thus, communities should be made part of new initiatives – particularly their planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Planners and participants can derive a number of tangible benefits from an effective public involvement process. However, the expectations of both planners and members of the public must be roughly equivalent, for the process to be effective. Recent planning models, such as the interactive planning process described by Lang, incorporate public input in all phases of the planning process. Theoretically, involving interested publics in all phases of planning and decision-making will lead to better decisions. However, communities should not merely be consulted, they should take an active part in matters of governance. Although public participation is a legal requirement for local government and all the other spheres of government, it encompasses more than issues of legislation: it necessitates innovation and extra effort. Therefore, it is crucial for both councillors and officials to consider it their moral

duty and responsibility to always involve local communities in decision-making. Political and administrative will is necessary to improve and extend community participation.

Despite the constitutional and legislative imperatives that demand open and accessible public participation processes, insufficient and unfavourable public participation conditions defeat this noble requirement. Public participation necessitates the creation of a conducive climate and provisions which help to maximise its impact. Although elections are part of the public participation process, on-going public participation is vital to enhancing democracy in government. This, in turn, leads to quality service delivery, sound community relations, and improved decision-making. It further allows citizens to check and monitor if the governing party is honouring its election manifesto.

Much debating has occurred on the optimum public participation level needed to guarantee a functional democracy. However, the key dictum remains that public participation is essential to successful democratic societies. Poor public participation provides a recipe for lack of legitimacy in terms of decisions and actions and leads to civic disobedience, and riots, as evidenced by the recent spate of service delivery protests throughout the country. Public participation strikes directly at the core of the structuring of the relationships between citizens and their government. Public participation needs to be institutionalised – to make it the normal process of the government. Based on the rationale discussed in this chapter, public participation can be regarded as an essential element of modern democracies that needs to be explored comprehensively in order to ensure its practical effectiveness.

The challenge to maximise public participation, which is a feature of local government's development plan, was pursued further in this research and possible solutions will be proposed. In the chapter that follows, an overview of the research framework that will be used to solicit an appropriate data collection method is provided. The empirical study will be discussed, as well as how the sampling of the Capricorn District Municipality, councillors, officials, and Ward Committees was undertaken.

CHAPTER 3

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, CONSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPING, AND COURT RULINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the constitutional obligation which compels public officials to perform public administration efficiently and effectively. The chapter further describes the relationship between the constitutional obligation, entrenched fundamental rights, and other policy matters such as the National Development Plan and the Back to Basics document which have sections related to public participation and service delivery. In addition, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa – which does have instructions on the exercise of public administration, namely, transparency, accountability, and the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution (1996 Constitution, section 195 (1)) will be considered.

The issue of public involvement in legislative processes and service delivery is receiving increasing attention in South Africa, from both government and civil society sectors. The government and its wide range of institutions acknowledge and accept that insufficient consideration has been given to public participation and service delivery, hence the high rate of service delivery protests in some municipalities in South Africa. It is very clear that existing policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and programmes or interventions are failing to comply with government's constitutional and statutory obligations regarding public participation and service delivery. Indeed, South African legislative and policy frameworks provide spaces for members of the public to be involved on issues of service delivery in

governance – beyond casting their vote once in five years. Structures such as school governing bodies, Ward Committees, Community Policing Forums, as well as clinic and hospital boards create spaces and opportunities for members of the public to shape the institutions closest to them.

Thus, this chapter examines aspects or elements of the notion of democratic constitutionalism that have been incorporated as founding provisions of the new dispensation in South Africa.

This chapter will begin by providing an overview of the constitutional obligations of Parliament, Provincial Legislatures, and municipalities with respect to public involvement on issues of service delivery. Through an examination of case law, the chapter also reflects on how the courts (and the Constitutional Court in particular) have interpreted the imperative imposed on the legislatures to promote and facilitate public participation processes. The question that this research asks, especially in this section of the study, is very critical: ***"What makes the Constitution or any other piece of legislation work?"*** The answer to this question, if there is one, is 'accountability or transparency'. Indeed, a society which has the democratic, political zeal to exact accountability from those in leadership is one whose Constitution has a better chance to flourish.

The concept of accountability can be defined as the responsibility of the ruling party or those with power and authority to explain and outline how they will roll out their performance programme of performance. It relates to their ability to justify their decisions with conviction to the extent that the members of the public understand and gladly accept the provided explanations without being manipulated.

Members of the public can be involved in crafting plans for their municipalities, through such legal structures as Ward Committees. Nonetheless, despite these avenues, there is a growing distance between members of the public and the government. Outbreaks of violence in some communities and service delivery protests reflect frustration not only over the pace of service

delivery, but also concerns that members of the public are not taken serious on issues that affect them. Hence, legislative frameworks should be regarded as critical ingredients of proper democracy, because they create the opportunity for members of the public to advocate for their space to make inputs in the governance – which contributes to the development of a vibrant democratic society. Legislative frameworks further provide an opportunity and create conditions that are conducive to members of public’s engagement in political life – on a regular basis, not just during elections. The public’s involvement makes the work of authorities more transparent and brings them closer to their constituencies (Carothers, 2005: 131).

3.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS, CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS, AND OTHER POLICY DOCUMENTS ON ISSUES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

It seems appropriate to introduce this section by asking a few critical questions that are relevant to all public officials who are responsible for serving members of the public. Thus, the following questions are posed:

- *Do local municipal officials know Section 195 of the 1996 Constitution of South Africa and the other relevant pieces of legislation which state that public administration must be governed by democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution?*
- *Do local municipality officials know the Bill of Rights contained in Chapter 2 of the 1996 Constitution of South Africa?*
- *Have local municipality officials been formally inducted, informed or trained about the significance of the Constitution, other relevant pieces of legislation, and their role in how public participation and service delivery should be exercised?*

It should be noted that public officials are instrumental in ensuring that the Constitution of South Africa is complied with. Therefore, it is essential that local municipal officials be formally inducted, and adequately informed of all the issues related to their role as well as the way in which they are expected to service members of the public in terms of the current constitutional directives, their mandates, and their obligations. This enables them to comply with all legislations and policies applicable to the Capricorn District Municipality. The following are some of the relevant legislations and policies. However, a selected few will form part of the discussions in the subsequent pages of this chapter.

LEGISLATION	SCOPE
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and Regulations	To introduce a new constitution for the Republic of South Africa and to provide for matters incidental thereto.
Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, (Act 32 of 2000) and Regulations	To give effect to “developmental local government”; To set principles, mechanisms, and processes to promote the social and economic upliftment of communities, and to ensure access to affordable services for all; and To set a framework for planning, performance management, resource mobilisation, organisational change, and community participation.
Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, (Act 117 of 1998) and Regulations	To provide for the establishment of municipalities in accordance with the requirements relating to the categories and types of municipality, the division of functions and powers between municipalities, and the appropriate electoral systems; and

	To regulate internal systems, structures, and office-bearers.
Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 56 of 2003) and Regulations	<p>To regulate financial management in the local sphere of government: to require that all revenue, expenditure assets and liabilities of municipalities, and municipal entities be managed efficiently and effectively; and</p> <p>To determine the responsibilities of persons entrusted with financial management at local level, to determine certain conditions, and to provide for associated matters.</p>
Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (Act 5 of 2000)	To give effect to Section 217(3) of the Constitution by providing a framework for the implementation of the procurement policy contemplated in Section 217(2) of the Constitution; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act, (Act 6 of 2004) and Regulations	To regulate the power of a municipality to impose rates on property; to exclude certain properties from rating in the national interest; to make provision for municipalities to implement a transparent and fair system of exemptions, reductions and rebates through their rating policies; to make provision for fair and equitable property valuation methods; to make provision for objections and appeals process; to amend the 2000 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, so as to make further provision for the serving of documents by municipalities; to amend or repeal certain legislation; and to provide for related matters.
Local Government:	To provide criteria and procedures for the determination of

Municipal Demarcation Act (Act 27 of 1998) and Regulations	municipal boundaries by an independent authority; and to provide for matters connected thereto.
Development Facilitation Act (Act 67 of 1995)/Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (Act 16 of 2013)	To provide for Integrated Development Plans, reflecting current planning; and to institutionalise development tribunals for the evaluation of applications.
White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper of 1997)	To provide a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery.
White Paper on Local Government (1998)	Establishes the basis for a new developmental local Government system
Traditional Leadership and Government Framework Act (Act 41 of 2003) and Regulations	To recognise traditional communities; To establish and recognise traditional councils; and To provide a statutory framework within which traditional leadership will operate.
Inter-Governmental Relations Framework Act (Act 13 of 2005)	To establish a framework that enables the national government, provincial governments, and local governments to promote and facilitate intergovernmental relations; to provide for mechanisms and procedures to facilitate the settlement of intergovernmental disputes; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
Local Government:	To regulate municipal elections; to amend certain laws;

Municipal Electoral Act (Act 27 of 2000) and Regulations	and to provide for associated matters.
National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998)	To provide for co-operative environmental governance by establishing principles for decision-making on matters affecting the environment; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
National Environmental Management Act: Air Quality Act (Act 39 of 2004)	To reform the law regulating air quality in order to protect the environment by providing reasonable measures for the prevention of pollution and ecological degradation and for securing ecologically-sustainable development, while promoting justifiable economic and social development; to provide national norms and standards for regulating air quality monitoring, management and control by all spheres of government; provide specific air quality measures; and make provisions for matters incidental thereto.
National Environmental Management Act: Waste Management Act (Act 59 of 2008)	To reform the law regulating waste management in order to protect health and the environment by providing reasonable measures for the prevention of pollution and ecological degradation and for securing ecologically-sustainable development; to provide for institutional arrangements and planning matters; to provide national norms and standards for regulating the management of waste by all spheres of government; to provide specific waste management measures; to provide for the licensing and control of waste management activities; to provide for the remediation of contaminated land; to provide for a

	national waste information system; to ensure compliance and enforcement; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997)	To provide for the rights of access to basic water supply and sanitation, national standards and norms for tariffs and services development plans.
Disaster Management Act (Act 57 of 2002)	To provide for an integrated and coordinated disaster management policy that focuses on preventing or reducing the risk of disasters, mitigating the severity of disasters, emergency preparedness, rapid and effective response to disasters and post-disaster recovery; the establishment of national, provincial, and municipal disaster management centres; the recruitment of disaster management volunteers; and the resolution of matters incidental thereto.
Fire Brigade Services Act (Act 99 of 1987)	To provide for the establishment, maintenance, employment, co-ordination and standardization of fire brigade services; and for matters connected therewith.
Division of Revenue Act (Act 10 of 2014)	To provide for the equitable division of revenue raised nationally among the national, provincial and local spheres of government; the determination of each province's equitable share and the allocations to provinces, local government, and municipalities from national government's share and the responsibilities of all three spheres pursuant to such division and allocations; and to

	provide for matters connected therewith.
Employment Equity Act of 1998	To provide for employment equity; and to provide for matters incidental thereto.
Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997	To give effect to the right to fair labour practices referred to in Section 23(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa by establishing and making provision for the regulation of basic conditions of employment, thereby, to comply with the obligations of the Republic as a member state of the International Labour Organisation; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000	To give effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by the State and any information that is held by another person and which is required for the exercise or protection of any rights; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
Promotion of Administrative Justice Act of 2000	To give effect to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally-fair and the right to written reasons for administrative action as contemplated in Section 33 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; and to provide for matters incidental thereto.
Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993	To provide for the health and safety of persons at work and for the health and safety of persons regarding the use of plant and machinery; the protection of persons other than those at work against hazards to health and safety arising out of or in connection with the activities of persons at

	work; to establish an advisory council for occupational health and safety; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
Skills Development Act of 1998	To provide for the imposition of a skills development levy; and for addressing matters connected therewith.
National Health Act of 2003	To provide a framework for a structured, uniform health system within the Republic of South Africa, taking into account the obligations imposed by the Constitution and other laws on the national, provincial, and local governments with regard to health services; and to provide for matters connected therewith.
Tourism Second Amendment Act of 2000	To make provision for the promotion of tourism to and in the Republic of South Africa.

Table of the list of legislations applicable to the Capricorn District Municipality (Capricorn IDP: 2014/15)

The table below outlines the policy frameworks that are applicable to the Capricorn District Municipality.

POLICIES
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
Ruling Party Key Manifesto priorities
Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)
National and Provincial Policy Statements (State of the Nation Address (SONA), State of the Province Address (SOPA), State of the District Address (SODA), and Budget Speeches)

Local Government Strategic Agenda
National Development Plan (Vision 2030)
New Growth Path
12 National Outcomes (in particular Outcome 9)
National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP)
Limpopo Spatial Rationale
Limpopo Development Plan (LDP)
Provincial Integrated Development Framework (under review)
Local Government Back-to-Basics Strategy
Municipal Integrated Development Plans
Municipal Spatial Development Frameworks
Capricorn District 2030 Growth and Development Strategy
Government Programmes (e.g. Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs))

List of policy frameworks applicable to the Capricorn District Municipality (IDP 2014/15).

3.2.1 Freedom Charter

The Freedom Charter is the African National Congress's (ANC) source document for policies. It was crafted on 25 and 26 June 1955 at Kliptown in Soweto, Johannesburg, Gauteng. This document remains relevant to issues of public participation. It has a very important clause which stipulates that "the people shall govern". This clause implies that all the people within the borders of South Africa shall be entitled to participate in the administration of the country and that the rights of the people shall be the same regardless of race, colour, or sex. The above clause calls for the involvement of members of the public on municipal issues that affect them. It implies that there should be communication and sharing of information between members of the public and the legitimate authority. It further encourages openness and the respect of the accountability processes through which

individuals and groups within the affected communities can exchange notes and views and participate in decision-making.

3.2.2 The South African Constitutional Imperatives

Prior to 1994, South Africa's constitutional dispensation was based on the culture of authority (Van De Waldt, 1994: 31). The parliament was sovereign and commanded law, which means that it could adopt any laws, no matter how unfair or discriminatory they may be. Such laws were very biased toward non-white South African citizens; hence, many people – notably blacks – were denied freedom, equality, and human dignity. As it becomes evident, the pre-1994 South African Constitution trampled on the fundamental rights and freedoms of the black majority. Government policies were exercised in an arbitrary and bureaucratic way, and the lives of the black majority were regulated and dictated in the finest detail. The system was crafted in such a way that there was very little space for anyone to challenge such bureaucratic actions (Van Heerden, 2001: 3). Conversely, the 1996 Constitution obliges all spheres of government to perform public administration in an effective and efficient way, in accordance with particular constitutional prescriptions and the Bill of Rights. However, it is critical for both government officials and members of the public to know that the existence of a democratic Constitution – with all the relevant sections – does not necessarily mean that public officials actually apply them in their daily activities so as to exercise public administration according to the constitutionally-prescribed approach. Thus, the question one asks is “Do officials know the sections of the Constitution that provide for the ways in which services should be rendered to members of the public, or are they well conversant with the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?”

The above question poses a serious challenge, because lack of sufficient knowledge of constitutional directives and training on them could be an obstacle which might lead to a failure to adequately render good and sustainable services to communities. Indeed, the knowledge gained through training can assist public officials to discharge their constitutional responsibilities. In other words, it will reinforce the need for them to be accountable and deliver effective and efficient public services. The consequences of the lack of such knowledge are poor service delivery and a fragmented public service.

South Africans, especially media houses, constantly generate verbal or written negative reports on the serious deficiencies that exist in public service delivery (Howlette, 2005: 89; *The Citizen*, 10 July 2008). This is due to the fact that all government activities and programmes, including those of local government, affect members of the public. Consequently, where their needs are not addressed, they experience inconvenience and even hardship which may then lead to more service delivery protests (Bell, 1998: 122). For any government administration to be publicly acceptable, its programmes and activities should be aimed at service delivery and be available to members of the public – when they need them. Government programmes should evoke a positive response from members of the public, if well-implemented. Those responses should promote such values as consultation, justice, fairness, equality, sensitivity, and accountability (Carney, 1998: 131).

The credibility of any government administration depends, to a large extent, on the way it executes its service delivery programmes. It should be stressed that democracy, as reflected in Section 195 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, demands that government programmes be reflective of the following critical elements, when rendering services to the people: transparency, responsibility and accountability; and, all these programmes should be executed by honest officials. Members of the public need to trust that

governance systems will be able to deliver the services needed in time. Government officials should know that people's trust and confidence are hard-won and difficult to restore once dishonoured. More than ever, South Africa needs efficient, effective and well-coordinated government programmes; hence, the voices of members of the public constitute a high calling for the government to respond to the need for good and sustainable services. Hence, based on its constitutional mandate, the South African government envisaged a municipality which is people-centered and responsive to the needs of the public. Implicit in this view is the development of a legislative system which facilitates the participation of all South African people – irrespective of their social standing or educational level – in ways that meaningfully influence their quality of life (Manor, 2004: 5).

The specific rights, duties and obligations of both citizens and the state are enshrined in South Africa's constitutional democracy. Their purpose is to ensure a 'living' democracy in terms of the way citizens perceive their political agency to influence governance (Held, 1996). South Africa's Constitution has a number of sections which deal directly with public involvement on issues of governance.

3.2.2.1 Promotion of participation as a constitutional imperative

While the concept of a 'democratic state' refers to diverse forms of public participation and representation in the political sphere, the specific rights, duties and obligations of both members of the public and the state are enshrined in South Africa's constitutional democracy. The ambition to move from simple representative democracy (mere participation in elections) to a more complex participatory democracy framework results from the constitutional provisions intended to encourage members of the public to engage authorities in a number of direct ways – to ensure oversight and accountability.

3.2.2.2 The right to participate

Some sections of the Constitution of South Africa deal directly with issues of public involvement. Section 17 of the Bill of Rights makes provision for members of the public to participate and protest; thus, asserting "the right, peaceful and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions". Sections 59(1) and 72(1) of the Constitution further affirm the general right of members of the public to participate in governance and assert that the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces must "facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the Assembly/Council of Provinces and its committees" (Constitution). Sections 70(b) and 115(a) extend this obligation to the provinces and, respectively, refer to the need for the "National Council of Provinces to make rules and orders concerning its business with due regard to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement" and for the "Provincial Legislature or its committees to receive petitions, representations or submissions from any interested person and institutions". The broad democratic benefits of these to members of the public are explicit in that they ensure, in statute, a right to direct input into lawmaking (O' Hare, 2012: 12).

The Constitution also provides for specific forms of participation with respect to legislative (lawmaking) processes at provincial level, thereby giving meaning to the ideal of bringing Parliament and Legislature to the people. As a matter of fact, Section 118(1) of the Constitution clearly spells out the obligation imposed on parliamentary legislatures as follows:

"Provincial Legislatures must:

- Facilitate public involvement in the legislative and other processes of the legislature and committees; and

- Conduct its business in an open manner, and hold its meetings or sittings and those of its committees, in public, but reasonable measures may be taken to:
 - Regulate public access, including access of the media, to the Legislature and its committees; and
 - to provide for the searching of any person and where appropriate, the refusal of entry to, or the refusal of, any person".

More importantly, from a legal point of view, Section 118 states that "(a) Provincial Legislature may not exclude the public, including the media, from a Sitting of a committee unless it is reasonable and justifiable to do so in an open and democratic society". Thus, unlike in other – older – democratic states, such as Germany and Denmark where the Legislature may deem it appropriate to exclude the public under certain circumstances, in South Africa, the right of inclusion is a constitutional obligation which may only be withdrawn within the parameters of 'reasonableness' within the context of an open democratic society (Buccus & Hicks, 2003: 5). Section 151(1) (e) of the Constitution of South Africa obliges municipalities to encourage the involvement of community members and community organisations in local government matters. Section 152 indicates that the objects of local government are to encourage the involvement of members of the public and community organisations in matters of local government. Section 195(e) notes that, in terms of the basic values and principles governing public administration, people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in decision-making on any aspect of service delivery.

3.3 THE 1998 WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The 1998 White Paper on Local Government is depicted as the 'mini-constitution' of municipalities. It interprets the constitutional provisions for the local government system and

is central in envisaging the transformation and developmental role of local government. Developmental local government is manifested in municipalities that maximise social development and economic growth through an effective utilisation of their resources (www.cogta.gov.za). Central to the developmental project is an attempt to 'democratise development', build 'social capital' through the provision of 'community leadership' and 'vision', and 'empower[ing] marginalised and excluded community groups' (www.salga.org.za). In short, the 1998 White Paper on Local Government envisages a local government 'committed to working with members of the public and community groups to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs so as to improve the quality of their lives' (www.iclg.in.th).

In order to realise this vision, the White Paper on Local Government proposed that structures and strategies be developed to facilitate engagement between elected leaders, civic organisations, and members of the public. In this regard, it outlines the function, composition, and role of these fora. Citizen participation is envisaged on four levels: as voters, citizens, consumers or end-users, and organised partners. Nevertheless, there are several problems related to the White paper on Local Government, despite its 'noble sentiments' and 'visionary dimension'. Indeed, it has been accused of being overly optimistic and ambitious in construing municipalities as the driving agents of economic and social development, effective service delivery agencies, and facilitators of local level democracy. In addition, its one-size-fits-all approach to municipal governance is considered unsustainable and unrealistic. Like the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP), it links empowerment, inclusive development and participation with the redistribution of resources, and suggests that participation should be facilitated by government – in inviting spaces.

The White Paper on Local Government identified levels of citizens' participation: calls for political leaders to remain accountable and work within their mandate; members of the public to have continuous input into local politics; service consumers to have input on the way services are delivered; afford organised society an opportunity to enter into partnerships with municipalities/local government; municipalities should develop programmes/mechanisms to ensure public participation in policy initiation; and the monitoring and evaluation of decision-making and implementation through relevant fora, stakeholder involvement, participatory budgeting initiatives, focus groups and so forth.

These principles provide a useful conceptual lens and framework for understanding the successes or lack thereof in advancing participation and accountability within municipalities. The practical enactment of these principles has seen other municipalities within South Africa adhere to the following: code of conduct and guidelines for service standards and delivery (Batho Pele); wall-to-wall Ward Committees as structured and legally sanctioned forms of neighbourhood participation; regularly convened fora for the involvement of citizens in planning – IDP fora; budgeting cycles that legally oblige municipalities to seek citizens' input and scrutiny; and public meetings or Indabas convened around key municipal events.

The 1998 White Paper on Local Government contains an extensive range of principles – related to public participation – that are entrenched in the Municipal Systems Act and the Municipal Structures Act: citizens' input on policy matters and monitoring of decision-making processes ; certain temporary committees and specific issues are to be accessed by identified stakeholder groups; municipal budget would become the subject of participatory initiatives that would allow community priorities to be linked to spending and investment programmes; communities' needs and priorities would be identified in partnership with non-

government organisations and Community-Based Organisations by using focus groups and participatory research techniques; and citizen associations, particularly in deep rural municipalities, would be assisted to develop organisational in order to enhance the skills and resources necessary for participation. As the consumers and users of municipal services, citizens could expect services that remain consistent – with the implementation of the Batho Pele White Paper. Thus, municipal services should be based on consultation, quality service standards, accessibility, courtesy, openness and transparency, redress, and value-for-money. In addition, the Batho Pele principles affirm, with regard to the service delivery, that members of the public should be treated as a customer.

In the context of limited resources for service delivery, the White Paper on Local Government also urges municipalities to mobilise "off-Budget resources", for example, those that businesses and non-governmental organisations would contribute toward addressing development challenges. Various service delivery partnerships were outlined: public-private partnerships, public-community partnerships, and sector-based partnerships (e.g. local economic development joint ventures, stokvels, and social housing ventures). Moreover, job creation strategies were linked to more innovative ways of performing municipal responsibilities.

3.4 THE 1998 MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES ACT

The 1998 Municipal Structures Act establishes the categories and types of municipalities and establishes the various structures of local governance. Section 19 outlines the objectives of municipalities and emphasises that they must develop mechanisms to consult members of the public in performing their functions and exercising their powers. The above-stated Act provides a number of invited spaces related to public participation, for example, Ward Committees, IDP, and traditional leaders.

3.4.1 Ward Committees

Ward Committees first emerged in the eighteenth century in the Cape Colony. Later, they were used by the Apartheid system, but were rejected as illegitimate by the majority of Africans. The ward system was revisited and revised in the post-Apartheid era. The main objective of the ward system is to 'enhance participatory democracy in local government'. It is meant as a 'formal, unbiased communication' channel which helps to convey service delivery issues and complaints from members of the public to the council, to communicate decisions and plans from the municipal council to communities, and to mobilise the community to attend meetings and participate in municipal processes (Hyden & Venter, 2012: 3).

The 1998 Structures Act provides for the establishment of Ward Committees. It outlines the latter's power and functions, as well as the processes and procedures associated with their running. Ward Committees are advisory and representative structures which are chaired by ward councillors. Ten members elected from the ward represent various interest groups. A Ward Committee should have an equitable gender representation (Structures Act, 1998). The election of Ward Committee members is determined by each municipality, and may be based on sector or area models. Members serve on a voluntary basis, although reimbursements for direct expenses have been introduced recently. Ward Committees must be open, transparent, and accountable to the broader members of the public, irrespective of their political affiliation (Guidelines for the establishment and operation of municipal Ward Committees). The 2005 Notice reiterates that no executive powers can be delegated to Ward Committees. Yet, Ward Committees are considered as the official public participation structures. As such, they have 'exclusive legitimacy' as the invited space for participation. Thus, they are the 'proper' spaces, although powerless. The abovementioned Notice encourages 'constructive' and 'harmonious' interaction between municipalities and communities, because they are viewed as non-partisan

spaces where conflict and party politics should be absent. Thus, the Ward Committee system is regarded as the most tangible and significant structural initiative for the advancement of citizens' participation to emanate from the White Paper and the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 (Part 4 of Chapter 4).

In terms of Section 73 (1), councils of a specific type may decide whether or not to have Ward Committees. Should they decide in favour, a committee should be established in each ward. The Council is compelled, in terms of Section 73 (4), to make administrative arrangements to enable Ward Committees to perform their functions and exercise their powers efficiently. According to Section 74, the role of a Ward Committee is to make recommendations to the councilor or through the ward councilor to the council on matters affecting its ward. In general, Section 72 and Section 74 of the Act clarify that the objective of a Ward Committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. According to Section 74, Ward Committee members are expected to discharge their responsibilities by making inputs on any matter affecting the ward, in the form of recommendations to council, via the councillor. Ward Committees can also advise ward councilors. The Ward Committee may not incur expenditure on behalf of council. The latter reserves the right, whenever it deems necessary, to amend or revoke any power or function delegated to a Ward Committee (www.ggin.org.za). Problems and challenges experienced by Ward Committees can be classified into three categories: political challenges,

3.4.2 Political Challenges

Although Ward Committees are meant to be non-partisan, they are often characterised by local power struggles and party politics. These structures are often considered as extensions of party branches, or a means to further a political party agenda. This politicisation also acts to reduce the representativeness of the committee and erodes its potential to advance

communal welfares over party interests. Conflicts exist between Ward Committee members and traditional leaders – especially over the allocation of residential sites to members of the public. Ward Committees are overly dependent on (1) the performance of ward councillors, (2) the political will of the local ruling party, and (3) support from the municipality. It must be noted that Ward Committees are the main fora for involving the public in governmental Performance Management Systems. However, councillors and officials are often resistant to being assessed by their 'underlings', the Ward Committees. Thus, councillors tend to be hostile, frustrating the efforts of Ward Committees.

As it becomes evident, Ward Committees lack legitimacy and credibility. This is partly as a result of an interesting trend whereby traditionally voiceless and disadvantaged people are over-represented on Ward Committees. It seems that those who are more economically powerful do not take the Ward Committee system seriously, which undermines its effectiveness (Local Democracy in Action, 2002: 62). Clearly, there is a lack of voluntary participation by professionals who could potentially help to build the strength and capacity of Ward Committees. Often, the implementation of Ward Committees is 'the beginning and the end of the discussion about participation'. There is no real engagement on the appropriate structures and mechanisms to facilitate meaningful participation.

It was found that many Ward Committee members – who have personal aspirations to become councilors themselves – willfully mislead the community. Indeed, Ward Committees are accused of being subject to corruption, clientelism and nepotism. Consequently, they appear to have failed to enable participation. They seem to be 'talk shops' with little authority and power for real influence. Piper (2003:56) argues that Ward Committees are 'another form of tax on the poor, this time their time and energies', since they have very little impact. Ward Committees are often under-resourced and lack administrative and logistical support. Their

members lack extensive training in municipal processes and the technical details of budgetary, IDP, and performance management processes. Skills and support are also needed in order for members to engage with the communities. Moreover, municipal officials are often unprepared to engage with Ward Committees and are unreceptive to participation. Clearly, they also need training (Hicks, 2005: 38).

3.5 INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Integrated development planning (IDP) has been depicted as the 'cornerstone of developmental local government' in South Africa. First introduced in 1996 by an amendment to the LGTA, it has been described as:

The planning efforts of not only various sphere and sectors of government and other institutions, but, also, of the various economic, social, environment, legal, infrastructural and spatial aspects of a problem or plan are integrated-brought together- in a way that enhances development and provides for sustainable empowerment, growth and equity for the short, medium and long term (Integrated Development Planning: Participant Handbook, 1998).

This 'overarching fulcrum around which local government developmental and regulatory responsibilities revolve' aims for more strategic decision-making, a deeper level of local democracy, more goal-oriented budgeting, more developmental and transformative outcomes, changes in spatial configurations, and better-coordinated and prioritised on-the-ground delivery (P. Harrison, 2008:321). Central to IDP is the role of public participation. There is a legislative insistence that the process include the participation of local members of the public in assessing and prioritising needs, implementing programmes, and monitoring existing systems (Visser, 2006: 65).

The Systems Act outlines the objectives and procedures for the IDP. An IDP Process Plan should be elaborated and made accessible to the members of a municipality. This plan is a 'schedule detailing all planned events and activities; it leads to the drafting and completion of a Five Year Plan (Integrated Development Plan, 2008). An IDP Plan includes an outline of how, when, and in what way the public can participate in the IDP (Davids, 2005: 19). It is difficult to generalise about IDP fora, as their participatory processes and effectiveness differ from one municipality to another (De Visser, 2006: 66).

Hemson (2004: 66) argues that participatory fora should be judged on citizens' level of engagement in their fora and the effectiveness of this engagement. Insights into the levels of engagement are provided by a 2007 survey of Western Cape municipalities. A surprising 77% of the respondents from all metro districts reported that they have no knowledge of an IDP, and 78% were unaware of their city's municipality budget. With regards to the perceived effectiveness of IDP fora, the results were equally grim: 82% of the respondents believed that their needs are not reflected in the IDP (Report on survey conducted by the Western Cape provincial government on public participation, 2009: 15).

IDP problems can be summarised into three main categories. There is a considerable overlap between these problems and those of Ward Committees, as the latter are regarded as the 'primary channel' through which members of the public can participate in IDP forum. Section 81 (1) of the Municipal Structures Act, for instance, provides that traditional leaders, who have been recognised by the Members of the Executive Council for Human Settlement in the province, may participate in the proceedings of the Council. In terms of Section 81 (2) of the Act, the number of participating traditional leaders is limited to 10% of the overall number of elected councillors. According to Section 81 (3), Council must consult traditional leaders or a traditional authority before making a decision on a matter that would affect the given area.

3.6 THE LOCAL ETHICAL ENCOUNTER

The main question remains whether or not the abovementioned invited spaces are enacting ethical encounter. From the situations in the different municipalities, it seems that people do not believe or trust that these spaces have the potential to make a real impact or encourage meaningful participation. Indeed, the existing fora are structurally-disempowered and fraught with implementation, capacity and power problems. Certainly, power seems to be monopolised by councillors and top officials. The power of the fora is restricted by institutional and administrative barriers. Hence, the notion of *power with* is retarded by politicians and internal struggles within the committees. Furthermore, the *power in creating knowledge* is usurped by external consultants and officials who speak for communities (Buccus, 2007).

Enabling an ethical encounter would thus require that invited spaces are considered legitimate and useful. Citizens and state actors should enter these spaces as equals, for them to be what they were meant to be: a 'consensual bargaining platform' where there is a shared power to make decisions.

3.7 THE 2000 MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT

The 2000 Municipal Systems Act outlines the principles, processes and mechanisms that enable municipalities to pursue 'the social, economic and political involvement of members of the public in the provision of quality services to all people'. The active engagement of communities is considered as a 'fundamental aspect' of the local government system. Interestingly, the legal definition of a municipality includes the local community. This emphasises that residents 'own' the municipality, and are part of the development process. However, this seems to have no immediate practical implications on public participation, except perhaps to suggest that people should share in the costs of development. Thus, Section

5 outlines the rights and duties of community members, which are important because they indicate what people should expect from municipalities, and provide the framework to make claims against municipalities and hold officials accountable. It suffices to note that rights are balanced with duties and responsibilities, although these are limited.

This legal framework has a number of sections that address public participation within municipalities. Section 16 (1) on participatory local democracy compels local government to promote a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance. Section 4 (2) on service feedback requires municipal councils to involve members of the public in discussions about the level, quality, range and impact of services to be rendered within the jurisdiction of their municipality. Section 16 (1) (a) (iii) on the monitoring and review of performance calls for the assessment of the impact of municipalities in relation to their mandates which, among other things, include the involvement of members of the public on issues that affect them. Section 16 (1) (a) and (c) on the preparation of the budget and the deployment of resources requires that municipalities embark on building capacity for their community participation programmes.

Planning and decision-making: According to Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of the 2000 Municipal Systems Act, members of the community have the right to contribute to the decision-making process of their municipality, including the IDP. The latter is the statutory planning system for local, district, and metro municipalities in South Africa – as required by Section 16 (1) (i) and Chapter 5 of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000. The governance attributes of the IDP consist in its participatory provisions and its prescription on intergovernmental coordination and cooperation, which cover and relate to the following four basic planning activities or elements:

- Public involvement in situational analysis and needs identification;
- Stakeholder engagement in prioritisation and strategy development;
- Public input for the setting of performance benchmarks; and
- Participation in the planning review process.

Financial Transparency: A key element of participation is the public's right to access important financial information concerning their municipality. A critical provision in this regard relates to the legal obligation to include the audited report on the municipality's finances in the annual report which must be prepared for each financial year (Section 46 (1) of the Municipal Systems Act). The municipality is required to table the annual report in council, within one month of receiving the audited report. Sections 27 and Section 28 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 require a municipality to comply with the IDP Framework and Process Plan which call for public input.

According to Section 27(1) of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, the district municipality, within a prescribed period after the start of its elected term and after following a consultative process involving local municipalities within its area, must adopt a framework for integrated planning in the area as a whole. Section 27(2) states that the Framework Plan binds both the district and the local municipalities. Section 28 of the Municipal Systems Act provides for the preparation and adoption of a process plan. The latter is an organised activity plan that outlines the process of the elaboration of the IDP which, among other things, requires municipalities to develop appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures for consultation and the participation of members of the public, organs of the state, traditional leaders, and other role-players in the process of drafting the IDP.

3.7 INFORMATION PROVISION WEBSITES

Section 21b (1) requires municipalities with financial muscle and facilities to establish their own websites that should have updated information, to keep members of the public informed of the development and events occurring within their municipality. Section 21b (2) provides for municipalities without financial muscles and facilities to create a website in order to provide information to members of the public, in terms of legislation referred to in Subsection (1) (b), to display their information on an organised Local Government Website sponsored or facilitated by the National Treasury. Section 21b (3) requires the Municipal Manager to maintain and regularly update the municipality's official website, if it exists, or to provide the relevant information required by members of the public.

3.8 THE 2003 MUNICIPAL FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACT

There are several other pieces of legislation that confirm and supplement the abovementioned acts in demanding consultation or community involvement in municipal affairs. According to Section 75, Subsection (1) of the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003, the accounting officer of a municipality must place the following documents of the municipality on its Website :Annual and adjustment budgets and all budget-related documents, for members of the public with Information Technology to access information that is relevant to them so as to make inputs;municipal and quarterly annual reports;all performance agreements required in terms of Section 57 (1) (b) of the Municipal Systems Act;public-private partnership agreements referred to in Section 110;all quarterly reports tabled in the council in terms of Section 52 (d); and any other applicable legislation, as may be prescribed.

Subsection (2) of Section 75 further stipulates that any other document referred to in Subsection (1) must be placed on the website – no later than five days after its tabling in the

council, or on the date it must be made public, whichever takes place first (Government Gazette, 2003).

The Cape Getaway project was launched by the Western Cape Provincial Government in 2001 to drive its e-governance initiative. This project proposed guidelines for the municipal website content that includes:

- The manual of information available to the public and the procedures, systems and costs for accessing such information, as required by Section 14 on the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2002;
- IDPs, annual reports, notices of meetings, municipal by-laws and codes, as well as resolutions and policies on service fees and tariffs, as a required by the Municipal Systems Act;
- Notices and proposed municipal boundary demarcations by the Municipal Demarcation Board, in terms of the Municipal Demarcation Act of 1998; and
- All information described in Section 75 of the Municipal Finance Management Act.

3.9 THE 2004 MUNICIPAL PROPERTY RATES ACT

Section 4 of the Municipal Property Rates Act requires that the draft rates policy be published on a municipality's website – as part of the community participation process – for at least 30 days before a municipality adopts the policy. As for Section 49, it requires that a municipality's certified valuation roll be published on the municipality's website within 21 days of being received from the valuator and that the public be notified of such a posting.

3.10 THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION ACT (ACT 36 OF 2005)

The Electronic Communication Act (ECA) was meant to "provide for the regulation of electronic communications in the South Africa in the interest of the public". It attempts to do so by specifying a wide range of fields that fall within its scope, including communications

infrastructure and licensing issues, security and national interests, South Africa's ownership of broadcast services, and the provision of services to the under-served areas and under-privileged members of the public. The ECA attempts to specifically "promote the empowerment of historically disadvantaged members of public" (Electronic Communication Act). In this regard, it paves the way for competition and pricing regulation, to keep prices low (Sections 37, Section 67, and Section 71). It also focuses on the Universal Service and Access Agency of South Africa (USAASA) as the managing body of the Universal Service Fund (Section 80 to Section 91).

Regarding infrastructure, Section 5 (5) notes that "Electronic communication network services, broadcasting services and electronic communications services that require a class license, include, but not limited to (a) electronic communications networks of district municipality or local municipal scope operated for commercial purposes". Thus, local government is able to provide connectivity to members of the public in terms of the ECA. If local government is to act as a service provider in terms of the ECA, then the following acts also become relevant:

- Regulation of Interception of Communication and Provision of Communication related Information Act 70 of 2002. This Act protects personal privacy of the communicating persons and provides facilities for law enforcement through interception of messages.
- Films and Publications Act 89 of 1998 (as amended by Act 3 of 2009). This Act protects children who may also be affected by the information being broadcast; it overlaps with the ECA in this case.

The Broad Band Policy (BBP) for South Africa (Government Gazette 33363), developed in terms of Section 3 (1) of the above Act, generally promotes the usage of Broad Band (BB) to create an "information society" where access to information is increased, expanded, and made

more equal. Broad Band and ICT should be used more for educational, health service benefits, improving general government efficiency, increasing investment, and reducing communication costs. The BBP outlines the role of all spheres of government.

3.11 COURT RULINGS AND COMPLIANCE

In addition to the abovementioned constitutional imperatives, since 1995, a number of court cases have clarified and given content to both general and specific forms of public participation in legislation processes. These clarifications were based on courts' examination of such international and regional human rights instruments as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and Declarations of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (www.wcl.american.edu). The obligation to ensure participation thus extends South Africa's representative democracy, to include a legally-binding obligation to promote participatory democracy. This legal imperative also ensures that members of the public have recourse to the Constitutional Court, should this obligation not be met in specific circumstances.

The right of members of the public to participate in legislation processes thus imposes a legally-binding obligation at national, provincial, and local government levels. This obligation has been further strengthened in several landmark Constitutional Court judgments. In the case of *Doctors for Life International versus the Speaker of the National Assembly* (2006), the court enforced Parliament's constitutional duty to facilitate public involvement and the right to public involvement as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The latter lists two key duties of a legislature: "The first is the duty to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation in the law-making processes. The

second is the duty to take measures to ensure that people have the ability to take advantage of the opportunity provided" (ICCPR quoted in the South African Legislative Sector, Towards a Public Participation Framework (TPPF), 2012:15). The ICCRP extends this obligation by introducing the need to facilitate "learning and understanding in order to achieve the meaningful involvement of citizens" (reference) as a further legislative structure. While subsequent legal interpretation has emphasised the need for flexibility in the inclusion of public participation in legislative processes, it has also stressed the obligation to view the standard of 'reasonableness' on a case-by-case basis, in order to ensure "appropriate public involvement in the light of the legislation's content, importance and urgency" (Doctors for Life, 2006). Thus, failure to ensure the 'reasonableness' standard, compromises the right of citizens, communities or interest groups to challenge the constitutional validity of legislation. If it can be proven that a municipality or legislature failed to take reasonable steps to ensure public involvement, then the resulting legislation may be declared invalid by the Constitutional Court. The associated judicial sanction is an additional oversight mechanism to ensure reasonable public involvement/participation in law-making processes, and to ensure that those affected by any proposed legislation are included and consulted (Leach, 2000). Further specific aspects relating to the application of the reasonableness criterion include the imperative that "appropriate account be paid to practicalities such as time and expense" . However, the court was explicit that "the saving of money and time in itself does not justify inadequate opportunities for public involvement" (Doctors for Life, 2006). The court also clarified that the 'urgency' of proposed legislation may not be interpreted as a loophole to circumvent participation, as reasonableness must also be predicated upon "the nature and importance of the legislation and the intensity of its impact on the public"(Doctors for Life, 2006). In addition to the Constitutional Court's pronouncements on the legislative obligation to ensure participation, in the case of King and Others versus Attorneys Fidelity Fund Board

of Control and Another (2006), the Supreme Court of Appeal gave practical content to participation understood as public involvement in the legislative process (freecourseware.uwc.ac.za). Meyer (1995: 20) observes that:

"Public involvement is necessarily an inexact concept, with many possible facets, and the duty to facilitate it may be fulfilled not in one, but in many different ways. Public involvement might include public participation through the submission of commentary and representations, but that is neither definitive nor exhaustive of its content. The public may become involved in the business of the municipality [or] Parliament as much as by understanding and being informed of what it is doing as by participating directly in those processes."

It is important to highlight that this legal interpretation of public involvement does not draw a distinction between information sharing and consultative forms of participation, which could have a direct impact on legislative processes. The right to have a direct impact on proposed legislation or by-law implies that citizens must be granted meaningful opportunities to influence decision-making, a view affirmed by Judge Sachs in the Doctors for Life Constitutional Court case wherein he states:

"all parties interested in by-laws or legislation should feel they have been given a real opportunity to have their say, that they are taken seriously as citizens and that their views matter and will receive due consideration at the moments when they could possibly influence decisions in a meaningful fashion. The objective is both symbolical and practical: the persons concerned must be manifestly shown the respect due to them as concerned citizens, and the councilors and legislators must have the benefit of all inputs that will enable them to produce the best possible laws" (Doctors for Life, 2006).

Judge Sachs adds that "... by promoting a sense of inclusion in the national polity, (this would) promote the achievement of the goal of transformation". Read in conjunction with one another, these Supreme Court of Appeal and Constitutional Court rulings on what might constitute public involvement give far greater depth to the interpretation of the meaning of participation. The clarity afforded by the Constitutional Court with respect to the right of citizens to participate in municipal by-laws or legislative processes, in particular, leaves no room for a misinterpretation of the rights of specific communities or interest groups to participate in the formulation of legislation which will directly affect them. In that respect, by-laws or legislation can be declared invalid if "... an affected person or groups can show that it was clearly unreasonable for Municipality, Parliament or a Provincial Legislature not to have given them an opportunity to be heard" (Doctors for Life, 2006, in Draft Report on the Review of Constitutional Prescripts (RCP), 2012: 13).

It is thus important to distinguish between the different legal requirements with regard to participation in legislation processes. As this section on constitutional obligations has highlighted, there are both general and specific constitutional provisions, which have been clarified through cases brought before the Supreme Court of Appeal and the Constitutional Court. These courts' rulings establish strong legal norms with regard to the form and content of participation in legislative and municipal processes generally and in law-making specifically (Babbie & Mouton 2008: 313-323). The Twelfth Amendment of the Constitution of South Africa (formally the Constitution Twelfth Amendment Act of 2005) changed the borders of seven of South Africa's provinces. This had an impact on some municipal boundaries. A number of those boundary changes were highly-controversial and led to public violence, popular protests, and court challenges in Matatiele (Kwazulu-Natal and Eastern

Cape), Khutsong (North-West and Gauteng), and Moutse (Limpopo). The boundary changes which resulted from the amendment were as follows:

- the transfer of Carletonville and Khutsong from Gauteng to North-West;
- the transfer of Groblersdal (Elias Motswaledi) and parts of Sekhukhune land from Mpumalanga to Limpopo;
- the transfer of Bushbuckridge from Limpopo to Mpumalanga;
- the transfer of Umzimkhulu from Eastern Cape to Kwazulu-Natal;
- the transfer of Matatiele from Kwazulu-Natal to Eastern Cape;
- the transfer of Moshaweng from North-West to Northern Cape; and
- minor expansions of Gauteng's boundaries at the expense of both Mpumalanga and North-West.

The abovementioned changes caused unhappiness among some communities which did not want to be transferred from one province to another. The people of Matatiele and Khutsong, in particular, were displeased with the new arrangements. The Matatiele Municipality, along with members of the local community and business organisations that were strongly opposed to their inclusion in the Eastern Cape, challenged the validity of the Twelfth Amendment before the Constitutional Court – on the grounds that Parliament had usurped the powers of the Municipal Demarcation Board to alter municipal boundaries, and that the Kwazulu-Natal Legislature had failed to comply with Section 118 of the Constitution, which requires all legislatures to facilitate public involvement or the necessary public participation, before approving this amendment. Indeed, constitutional amendments affecting a specific province must be approved by that province's legislature; and, all legislative bodies are required to facilitate public participation in their decisions.

Thus, on 18 August 2006, the Constitutional Court handed down its decision in the case of the Matatiele Municipality and Others vs the President of the Republic of South Africa and Others. The Court disagreed with the first claim and ruled in favour of the second: that the part of amendment that transferred Matatiele to the Eastern Cape was invalid. This ruling called for the facilitation of public participation by all affected stakeholders (Theron, 2008: 41-75).

As for Khutsong's people, they resorted to protests, boycotts and stay-aways. During the 2006 municipal elections, only 220 valid votes were cast in Khutsong, despite there being nearly 30 000 registered voters. This passive resistance as well as the stay-aways and boycotts forced the Merafong Municipality, of which Khutsong initially formed part, to be transferred back to Gauteng by the Sixteenth Amendment, in 2009.

3.12 POLICY AND PARTICIPATION

The 1997 Batho Pele White Paper on the Transformation of Service Delivery was the first document to include references to participation. Consultation is viewed as a means to make service delivery more responsive and effective. Community participation is considered as instrument, rather than empowerment itself. The 2007 Draft National Policy Framework for Public Participation is the first extensive policy document which outlines the value of participation, the assumptions underlying participation, the various levels of participation, issues that require participation, the strategies for participation, and the forms of participation applicable to local government. This document focuses on Ward Committees as the main means to facilitate community involvement. Nonetheless, the absence of a policy on a structured participation process is considered as a serious impediment to promoting and facilitating public engagement. Thus, the draft document is envisaged as a source of information on public participation. It has, nevertheless, been criticized for being pitched at a

very general level and for framing public participation as consultation, rather than real involvement. Indeed, it does not provide for a transfer of decision-making power to the people and thus enact effective empowerment.

3.13. PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: VISION 2030

The introductory paragraph of the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 stipulates that “No political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remain in poverty (National Development Plan 2014: 23). It suffices to stress that one of the major huddles confronting South Africa is poverty. Yet, poverty should not only be associated with economic or material status, but should also be considered in terms of how the masses on the ground (members of the public) are also excluded socially and, in this particular instance, from political processes. In trying to deal with this issue of people’s exclusion – despite the stipulation that “the people shall govern” –this study emphasises that participation should not be limited to nomination and election of political principals or to securing the legitimacy of their policies and projects. Rather, it must ensure that members of the public, irrespective of their class or colour, are encouraged to move from being passive clients to state services to playing an active role in determining their future.

The National Development Plan ponders whether democracy would not be better served through, for instance, a government focus on the overall environment, with members of the public involved through social housing programmes? In other words, the focus needs to shift from housing to communities. Thus, the 2011 Diagnostic Report, especially its chapter dealing with institutions and governance, emphasises the importance of active participation by members of the public and thus the need for broad consensus to be reached with respect to

the Constitution's stipulation that broad consensus underpins constitutional's legitimacy (NPC 2011(a)).

On issues of public participation in law-making processes, the Diagnostic Report – which forms part of the NPC – notes the value and significance of broad public consultation and involvement. It emphasises that participation does not equal consultation, but envisages much more than consulting members of the public. It proposes a new approach whereby South Africans move from being a passive citizenry, simply as beneficiaries of state goods and services, to championing for their own development (NPC 2011(b): 2).

3.14 BACK TO BASICS: SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES BETTER

The opening remarks of the Back to Basics: Serving our Communities Better document reads as follows: “The core business that local government provides – clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, shelter, waste removal and roads – are basic human rights, essential components of the right to dignity enshrined in our Constitution and Bill of Rights” (Back to Basics, 2014: 2). This policy document stresses that local government has been the primary site for the delivery of services in South Africa since 1994. It also acknowledges that despite the current achievements, much still needs to be done to support, educate and, where needed, enforce the implementation of local government's mandate regarding the delivery of services (Back to Basics, 2014: 3). This document reflects the importance of a view of developmental local government as a building block on which the reconstruction and development of South Africa and its society are grounded, a space in which South African citizens could engage in a meaning and direct way with government and any other institutions of the state. In other words, local government is the space created for members of the public to have good interface with government at a grassroots level; thus, its foundational ethos should be more on servicing members of the public.

The Back to Basics document calls for municipalities to ensure that engagement with the members of the public to be taken seriously. This call is in line with the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act on community participation, which was discussed earlier in this chapter. The Systems Act requires municipalities to develop affordable and efficient communication systems to ensure regular communication with members of the public and to ensure that information is disseminated. Thus, the Back to Basics document proposed basic measures to be monitored in all municipalities: the number of effective public participation programmes conducted by councils; the regularity of community satisfaction surveys undertaken and the existence of the required number of functional Ward Committees.

3.15 PERSPECTIVES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation is underpinned by international, regional, and national perspectives. The following subsections elaborate on the aforementioned three levels.

3.15.1 International Legal Perspective on Public Participation

Public participation is globally viewed as a useful tool to promote the involvement of members of the public in governance and service delivery. The World Development Report indicates that governments at all levels show a better understanding of the importance of inclusive governance. The significance and value of the citizen participation process have been acknowledged not only at the national, but also at the international level by the United Nations, the World Bank, the Council of Europe, and the European Union. One major global task facing all countries in developing the mechanism for public participation is to ensure that they understand where exactly the right to public participation fits into their respective legal systems (Public Participation in Europe, June, 2009).

The Council of Europe's recommendations on the Legal Status of Non-Governmental Organisations in Europe specifically urged all its members to create an enabling institutional environment for citizen participation on issues that affect them (Mohanty & Thompson, 2010).

In 2009, the Conference of International NGOs, which is regarded as the voice of civil society by the Council of Europe, adopted what was called the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process. The latter provides a legal framework and identifies actors and steps to be followed in the process of consultation, to facilitate interaction between citizens and public authorities (municipalities) (Wallis, 1990).

At the level of the European Union, in 2001, the EU wing called European Commission published the White Paper on European Governance. The latter recommended that EU institutions be more transparent, accountable, participatory, and effective. Citizen participation also dominated bigger sections of the Lisbon Treaty of the EU. This treaty re-emphasised the principle of representative and participatory democracy (role of political parties and citizens). This treaty requires EU institutions to engage in consultation and to maintain open and transparent dialogue with members of the public (Vengroff & Johnson: 1987).

Furthermore, some international conventions specifically envisaged the obligation of signatory states: to create a mechanism for citizen participation. A good example in this regard is the United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice Matters (the so called Aarhus Convention). In order to contribute to the protection of the rights of all persons (present or future generations) to

live in an environment that is adequate to their health and well-being, each party shall guarantee the rights to access information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters – in accordance with this Convention (Aarhus Convention, 1998). Consequently, the Croatian government developed and adopted a National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society (2006-2011). The latter states that Croatia is a vibrant, pluralistic society based on participatory democracy, as it allows members of the public to play a major and active role in social and political life. The above strategy also emphasises that a vibrant society needs effective instruments that will ensure and guarantee public participation in all stages of service delivery within the country or municipality (Mawhood & Davey: 1980).

As for the Constitution of Hungary, it obliges the government to cooperate with communities in carrying out its duties and responsibilities. With regard to public participation in the legislative processes, the constitutional obligation for consultation is further elaborated in the 1987 Law on Legislative Procedures. The procedure stipulates that communities shall be involved in the drafting of regulations that impact social conditions and the interests they represent and protect. Similarly, the Romanian government introduced the Law on Transparent Decision-Making by State Bodies and Local Government in 2003, the so-called "*Sunshine Law*". This law obliges state administration and local governments to ensure that they do broad consultation with "citizen and their associations" in the course of adopting general legal acts within their respective purviews. This law defines the right to public participation as an enforceable rather than declaratory right, pursuant to the rules governing the administrative procedures.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, citizen participation is governed by the rules on Consultation in Policy-Making (2006). These rules prescribe the minimum level of consultation between

structures, the public, legal entities, and groups of citizens. These rules provide space for members of the public to make inputs or comments on the Internet and social networks. In the United Kingdom, public participation is governed by the 2004 Code on Practice on Consultation requires government to consult the relevant stakeholders before implementing decisions on any matters that affect citizens.

3.15.2 Regional Perspective

In an attempt to promote good and sustainable governance, many African countries view public participation as a major principle which can promote and uphold good and sound governance. For example, in adopting the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in 2007, the 53 member states of the African Union committed themselves to, among other things, promote conditions that foster public participation and transparency (African Union's Commitment to Human Rights, 2007).

In Ghana, corruption was dealt a blow through more interaction with members of the public or community engagements. The administration conducted several outreach programmes, where many citizens participated in providing strategies to assist government to curb corruption (The World Bank Institute, 2002). Subsequently, the country established groups which had one mandate: ensuring that members of the communities are encouraged to participate on issues that are high concerns to them. The country also encourages public hearing, education, and outreach activities that enable the communities to make inputs towards any government project to be undertaken within a particular community.

In Uganda, efforts to promote community engagement target both policy frameworks and the development of implementation modalities. This approach encourages members of the public to participate when formulating and analysing policies. It further involves relevant

stakeholders in all developmental programmes. The government has taken appropriate steps to elaborate supporting legislative frameworks which encourage public involvement. Clearly, the government plays a major role in facilitating the effective involvement of communities in articulating their needs and influencing programme planning and the implementation of all developmental initiatives.

3.15.3 South African Perspective

Prior to 1994, community involvement on issues of governance was frowned upon by an insular and self-perpetuating administration. The undemocratic Apartheid administration stifled citizens' participation in many government programmes and excluded the vast majority of the South African people from participating in governance and service delivery issues. However; with the dawn of democracy in 1994, the new, democratic government committed its administration to consultation and participation by community as service end-users. The 1996 Constitution of South Africa made public participation a fundamental priority. The country's policy environment was characterised by more legislations such as white papers that clearly articulated government's intent and invited extensive consultation and public involvement on services that are needed by the communities. The Constitution provides for all spheres of government (national, provincial, and local) to create strategies and mechanisms which would make it easy for communities – either as individuals or groups – to be involved in government-led initiatives or programmes (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

One of the principles of public participation, which forms part of the key principles of the Batho Pele White Paper, is consultation. This principle builds on the constitutional provision for public participation and emphasises the need for communities to be consulted on services they receive from any government institution in South Africa. South African strategies and mechanisms on public participation, among other things, include the below.

3.15.3.1 Citizen fora

The citizen fora model is a mechanism to facilitate public participation in service matters. The purpose of the forum model is to evaluate the delivery of particular services throughout the country, and to enable the active involvement of the communities affected by government programmes in service delivery improvement processes (Public Service Commission, 2005).

3.15.3.2 Citizen satisfaction surveys

A citizen satisfaction survey is a methodology used to engage with citizens and establish their views and expectations on service delivery. It calls for the collection of feedback on the quality and adequacy of service, directly from the users of government services.

3.15.3.3 Ward committees

Ward Committees are statutory structures created in terms of the Municipal Structures Act (Act No. 117 of 1998). The purpose of Ward Committees is to assist the democratically-elected representative of a ward (Councillor) to carry out his or her mandate.

3.15.3.4 Public hearings

Public hearings of different types are arranged by different institutions of the state, including Parliament, the National Council of Provinces, and Legislatures, in order to engage with communities on matters of policy and service delivery.

3.16.3.5. Executive authority meets the people

This is the provincial initiative undertaken by the Office of the Premier and Members of the Executive Council, to engage with members of the public on government programmes and service delivery.

3.15.3.6 Izimbizos

The Izimbizo is an initiative of the political leadership of government: the President, the Deputy President, members of the cabinet, Premiers, Members of the Executive Council,

Mayors, Councillors, as well as government and local municipality officials. It enables them to engage with the communities on issues of service delivery and other campaigns.

3.16 CONCLUSION

The existence of constitutionally-entrenched fundamental rights that influence public administration can be practically worthless, unless translated into reality. The 1996 Constitution of South Africa contains such rights; and, if local government officials consider these rights when exercising their administration, then these rights will indeed be translated into a reality. Furthermore, local government officials should not regard their constitutional obligations as ethereal guarantees on statute paper or swords hanging tenuously and threateningly over their heads, but rather as fundamental tenets of democracy.

The previous two chapters dealt with the literature review in terms of four areas of the study: public participation, service delivery, capacity, as well as necessary resources and knowledge to deliver quality services. The sources consulted revealed that local government in South Africa and other sampled international countries, over the past twenty-one years of South Africa's democracy, are trying hard to substantially improve in one way or another on certain areas of service delivery. This is occurring at an unprecedented speed, despite the fact that most South African municipalities face a widening gap between the demand and the supply of the required services. Members of the public in South Africa are still more removed and perhaps alienated from participating in the activities of their municipalities. They contribute less to local development; but, at the same time, demand more and better services. Members of the public are always showing signs of dissatisfaction with the slow pace and lack of quality services; hence, they increasingly display consumerist behaviour and are less

willingness to actively involve themselves in the affairs of their municipalities (Waiserfelder, 1974).

Legislative frameworks and policy documents are calling for the South African government, including local government, to take members of the public seriously. The above discussed frameworks confirm that active public members and social activism are necessary for democracy and development to flourish. Thus, the state cannot merely act on behalf of the people, it has to act with the people, working together with other institutions to provide opportunities for the advancement of all members of the public. Even if the Constitution is not complied with, ordinary voters feel a national debt of gratitude towards liberation movements. Indeed, the latter continue to draw electoral support (both real and contrived) in the most perplexing circumstances and often well after their sell-by date. Robert Mugabe, for instance, just lost a general election in March 2008 – twenty-eight years after ‘liberating’ his country. He is not exceptional. Many of the so-called 'big men' of Africa continue to rule their grateful but oppressed followers long after the stated purpose of the liberation struggle has been achieved.

The promotion of human dignity, the achievement of equality, and the advancement of the various freedoms for which ordinary Africans have struggled are the main casualties of this unfortunate process. In South Africa, the lack of government's compliance with the legislations – together with slow response or unresponsiveness to the needs of ordinary people – has sparked widespread service delivery protests – or demonstration activities disguised as service delivery protests – which are, in fact, the upshot of faction fighting within the political leadership (Van Meter, 1974).

All the legislations considered for this research are calling for all sectors of society, including Parliament, Legislatures, and the judiciary to ensure that the fruits of development accrue to

the poorest and most marginalised, offsetting possible attempts by elites to protect their own interests at the expense of less-powerful communities. Nevertheless, these frameworks require members of the public to take responsibility to dissuade leaders from taking narrow, short-sighted, and populist positions. Robust public discourse and a culture of peaceful protest will ultimately contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges facing members of the public and reinforce accountability among elected officials. If municipalities can comply with the requirements of all legislations, officials will then agree and understand that members of the public's involvement can promote development and community cohesion.

Thus, this chapter concludes by confirming that public participation in shaping and implementing people's needs is still regarded as a critical tool for service delivery and participatory democracy in many countries. Public participation is considered as a critical tool because it provides an opportunity and creates the necessary conditions for citizens to engage in political life; it creates a framework for citizens to advocate for their legitimate interests. Thus, it contributes to the development of a vibrant democratic society and makes the work of public authorities or municipalities more transparent and brings them closer to their constituencies (Smith, 2008).

The sources consulted stress that partnerships between municipalities and members of public should be encouraged. Indeed, partnerships open good platforms for the public to participate in the Local Economic Development (LED) of their municipalities. LED may appear to be less important in this study, but it can influence members of the public's ability to pay for rates and taxes; thus, enabling municipalities to provide better and quality services to the people (Van der Waldt, 2007: 33). The sources consulted also call for councillors to be very consistent in the involvement of local stakeholders in the business of the municipality.

Municipal capacity to deliver services is compromised by inadequate disciplinary procedures and performance management systems.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methodology applied during the study. Given that the latter has both qualitative and quantitative elements, a combination of various data collection methods was required. The process followed in conducting this study includes a literature review of key Capricorn District Municipality documents, and the development of data collection instruments that include interviews with relevant persons and the distribution and administration of questionnaire. Hence, the data analysis limitations that impact on this study are also identified. This chapter further presents the study's research philosophy, design, and methodology. The research philosophy clarifies the researcher's epistemological viewpoint. The meaning of and differences between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are clarified. The research design identifies the design choices made and the strategies used in answering the research questions. The concepts of construct validity and reliability are detailed in this chapter. The relationship between validity and reliability is also clarified for the purpose of this study. In this chapter, attention is devoted to the research methodology.

In short, questionnaire development, research process, selection of sample, research area, piloting of the questionnaire, administration of the questionnaire, data presentation, rethinking subjectivity – using reflexivity, ethical issues, limitations of research, and data analysis are explored in greater details. The fundamental objective of this chapter is to establish the golden thread for Chapter 5 which deals with the research findings and their analysis.

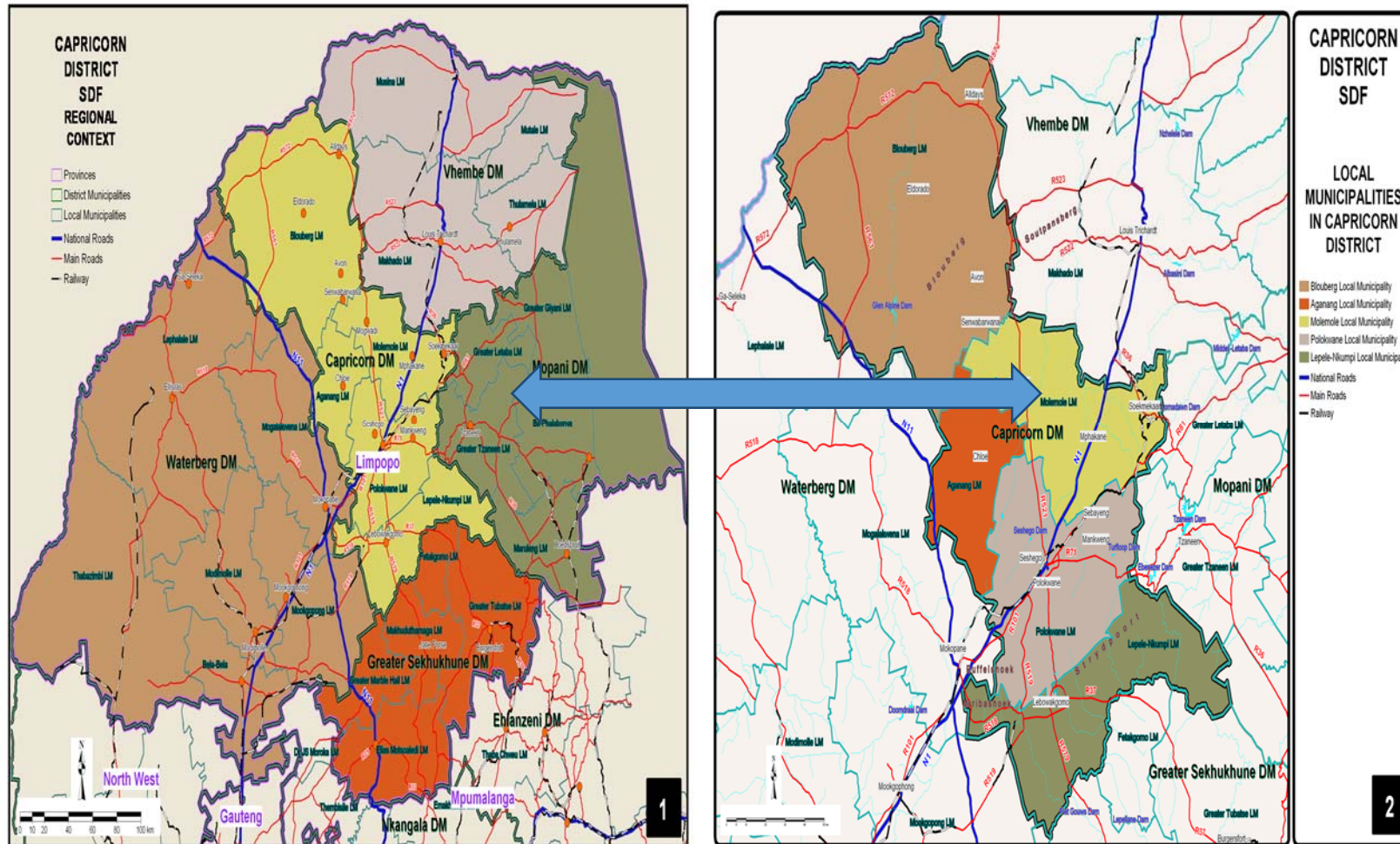
4.2 STUDY AREA

The study area is the Capricorn District Municipality (CDM) which comprises of the following four local municipalities:

- Blouberg Local Municipality;
- Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality;
- Molemole Local Municipality; and
- Polokwane Local Municipality.

The Capricorn District Municipality (DC35) is situated in the centre of the Limpopo province. It shares borders with four other district municipalities: Mopani (east), Sekhukhune (south), Vhembe (north), and Waterberg (west). The Capricorn District is situated at the core of economic development in Limpopo and includes the capital of the province, the City of Polokwane. One national and various major provincial roads pass through the Capricorn District's municipal area, that is, the N1– national road from Gauteng to Zimbabwe and the rest of Africa, the P33/1 (R37) which spans from Polokwane to Burgersfort/Lydenburg, the P94/1 (R521) which runs from Polokwane to Alldays and Botswana, and the P17/1 (R71) which extends from Polokwane to Tzaneen and Phalaborwa.

The double-map below presents the regional content of the Capricorn District Municipality as well as its constitutive municipalities.



Map 1: Locality of the Capricorn District Municipality (Source: CDM SDF, 2011).

4.3. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research in this study means a search for facts – answers to questions and solutions to problems. Research typically seeks to explain phenomena, and clarify doubtful facts.

The philosophical foundation of this thesis has evolved from a predominantly positivist epistemology towards a more naturalistic and interpretive epistemology. This view implies the following:

- understanding and interpreting the phenomenon of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Limpopo Province – particularly in the Capricorn District Municipality;
- being personally and directly involved in the research project; and
- having a practical interest in this research study, to continuously improve real world practice.

The above philosophy is in line with Creswell's (2003) pragmatic, mixed methods approach which is concerned with applications and answers to problems. This research study uses a qualitative approach. In keeping with the exploratory nature of this study, etic and emic data were gathered: etic data from the research survey and emic data from interviews.

4.4 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Research brings out factual data on prevailing situations. There are two types of research: quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research involves the use of structured questions where the response options have been predetermined and large numbers of respondents are involved. In quantitative research, measurements must be objective, quantitative, and statistically-valid. Simply, quantitative research is about numbers,

objectives, and data. Conversely, qualitative research involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. The focus is on observing what the participants do and say. Qualitative research is a field of inquiry that crosscuts disciplines and subject-matters. It involves an in-depth understanding of participants' behaviour and the reasons that govern it. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research relies on the reasons behind various aspects of the participants' behaviour. Simply put, it investigates the *why* and the *how* of policy-making, as compared to the *what*, *where*, and *when* of quantitative research. Qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering data: participation in the setting, direct observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of responses. The present research study is qualitative in nature.

4.5 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Denzin (2000: 3) describes qualitative research as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world”. Qualitative research considerably enhances the scope of public participation research by making it possible to study public participation in the making and implementation of policy at local government level. Because qualitative researchers study local government contexts in-depth and use a set of interpretive, material practices in order to make the world visible, qualitative research has transformative power.

The research questions set out in Chapter One are intertwined with contextual issues of the participants' experiences in the considered local government setting. As such a, detailed, first-hand account of experience – from the point of view of those experiencing – becomes necessary. Three competing paradigms guide qualitative inquiry: post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Guba (1994: 108) defines research paradigms as the basic belief

systems or world-views that guide the investigator, not only in the choice of methods, but also in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. Therefore, in this research, a research paradigm directs the investigator's approach to studying the degree of public participation in the making and implementation of policy at local government level. Specific research methods arise from the researcher's chosen paradigm. Guba (1994: 128) explains qualitative paradigms with reference to the following three questions:

- the ontological question relates to the form and nature of reality; it also deals with what the researcher can study so as to make knowledge claims about;
- the methodological question is answered in terms of the researcher's procedure for establishing whatever he/she believes can be known; and
- the epistemological question encompasses the relationship between the researcher and what can be known.

Apparently, there are two opposing conceptions of reality that researchers embrace. The first is the "foundational" stand which is defined as the assumption that reality is one, knowable, independent of perception, "out there" to be grasped only by the objective eye. The best way to know this "reality" is for the researcher to remain "outside" the situation. The second is the interpretive stance which includes the phenomenological approach and symbolic interactionism. It contends that people's activity constructs their reality by imposing meaning upon their experience, in the course of social interaction and that they act according to their perceptions. Thus, there is not one reality, but many realities. As such, the only way to make meaning of these realities is to be part of them. Hence, the main aim of different adherents of the interpretive approach is not to find one summative truth, but to develop an understanding of local government situation in a manner that takes into account the experience and the interpretation of all those partaking in that situation. This research study discusses, to some

extent, the *how* aspects of the personal experience which underlies the professional experience of the participants. Attention is given to the participants' voices.

4.6 RESEARCH DESIGNS

Parahoo (2006: 183) defines research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected”. Qualitative, descriptive data collection techniques were used for this study. An explanatory design was also used to explore and answer the research questions.

- *Quantitative research design* – Bless and Higson-Smith (2001: 26) describe quantitative research as “a formal, objective systematic process in which numerical data is used to obtain information about the world”. This research method was used in order to describe variables, examine the relationships between them, and determine the cause-and-effect interaction between them.
- *Correlational research design* – Burns and Grove (2001: 30) describe correlation as “the systematic investigation of relationships between or among two or more variables that have been identified in theories or observed in practice or both. Its primary intent is to explain the nature of relationships and not to determine cause and effect”. Walliman and Baiche (2001: 92) identified the following three advantages of correlation:
 1. It allows for the simultaneous measurement of a number of characteristics (i.e. variables) and their relationships;
 2. It produces a measure of the amount of relationship between the variables being studied; and

3. It gives an estimation of the probable accuracy of the predictions made. This research method was used in order to compare the response pattern of the general public to that of the project proponents.
- *Exploratory research design.* Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 154) describe exploratory design as “a method which explores [a] certain phenomenon with the primary aim of formulating more specific research questions or hypotheses relating to that phenomenon”. Wisker (2008: 72) remarks that exploratory design is common used when “new knowledge is sought, or [a] certain behaviour and the causes for the presentation of symptoms, actions or events need to be discovered”.

The term ‘design’ means drawing an outline or planning or arranging details. In this study, research design is defined as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions on the conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. A research design may be quantitative and/or qualitative. The next section elaborates on design choices which are strategies used to answer the research questions.

4.6.1 Design Choices

Janesick (2002: 381) conceives a design as a dance choreography. He states that

“A good choreographer refuses to be limited to just one approach or one technique from dance history. Likewise, the qualitative researcher refuses to be limited; the qualitative researcher uses various techniques and rigorous and tested procedures in working to capture the nuance and complexity of the social situation under study”.

This analogy equates dance and qualitative research to a creative act based on spontaneity, but which is not without direction. Indeed, both choreography and research start with a basic idea that drives the whole process. The specificity of qualitative research is that it is both intentional and reactive; it takes shape only when it is in process. The lines of investigation which are initially defined in broad terms only become more precise as the research process unfolds. However, certain conditions must be satisfied to ensure the validity of the findings. The following section discusses the concept of validity.

4.6.2 Validity

Validity refers to the effectiveness of an instrument in measuring properties like the participants' attitude, behaviour, and morale (Cronbach, 2000: 84). The degree of validity of an instrument is determined through the application of logic. In this research study, construct validity has been applied. Construct validity is defined as a process of investigating various kinds and degrees of relationships between the constructs of public participation. Construct validity is related to generalisation from measures to the concepts discussed in Chapter 2.

In this study, construct validity is ensured through a careful analysis of the construct public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. The constituent parts of public participation were explored in greater details in Chapter 2. Construct validity in the survey questionnaire was enhanced by basing it on validated categories and instruments from the literature. The piloting of the interview schedule enabled the researcher to validate and improve it.

4.6.3 Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which the measuring instrument produces the same results for repeated trials (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000). Delport (2005) construes reliability as the ability of a measuring instrument to yield a consistent numerical result each time it is applied; in other words, the result does not fluctuate – unless there are disparities in the variable being measured. He acknowledges that perfect reliability is rare and suggests, therefore, that the following steps be used to improve the reliability of a measurement instrument:

- *Conceptualise all construct clearly* – This means developing an unambiguous, clear theoretical definition for each construct, and then ensuring that each measure indicates only one specific concept;
- *Increase the level of measurement* – Indicators at higher or more precise levels of measurement are more likely to be reliable than less precise measures, because the latter pick up less detailed information;
- *Use multiple indicators of a variable* – Use two or more indicators (e.g. two or more questions in a questionnaire) to measure each aspect of a variable; and
- *Use pre-test, pilot studies and reapplications* – Develop drafts or preliminary versions of a measure and test these before applying the final version in the hypothesis-testing situation

Several precautions were taken by the researcher to measure the validity and the reliability of the instrument used in this research. To test the validity of the instrument, the different parts of the questionnaire were well-structured, to obtain the required information (data) with regard to the research title, objectives, and hypotheses. The researcher conducted an extensive literature review before designing the instrument. The latter was also designed to

compare the response patterns of the general public and those of the proponents/environmental consultants. As for the reliability of the instrument, the researcher used multiple variables to elicit information on the research objective and the hypothesis to be tested. In addition, a five-point Likert scale was used to enlarge the number of options available to the respondents. Some participants took their questionnaire with them to complete it in their own time; others, however, asked that they be allowed to email or fax their completed questionnaire back to the researcher for the sake of convenience and/or privacy. The questionnaire was distributed during community liaison forum meetings and open days.

Reliability, in this study, means the ability of a measuring instrument to give accurate and consistent result. Reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over time and/or over groups of respondents (Guba, 1994: 130). The different strategies used to answer the various research questions exhibited varying degree of reliability, as discussed below.

The literature review contributed to the taxonomy of factors and the promotion of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. The findings are corroborated by studies reviewed after the synthesis of the taxonomy. The survey questionnaire was piloted and refined for two years, prior to its administration in June 2016.

4.6.4 Relationship between Validity and Reliability

Babbie & Mouton (2001) understands validity in terms of whether or not the instrument actually measures what its intended for, that is, whether the instrument measures what it claims to establish. Wisker (2008: 323) stresses that “validity is entirely central to the whole issue of the cohesion in research study between conceptual framework methods, questions

and findings”. This author further observes that if the methods, approaches and techniques really fit with and measure the issues that are probed, the findings are expected to be valid. Different types of validity were taken into consideration in this study. These include content validity, face validity, criterion validity, and construct validity.

4.6.4.1 Content validity

According to Jackson (2006: 62), content validity refers to “the extent to which a measuring instrument covers a representative sample of the domain of behaviours to be measured. In other words, it measures the extent to which the instrument satisfactorily measures the content being examined”.

4.6.4.2 Face validity

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) indicate that face validity is concerned with the way the instrument appears to the participant. They note that the face validity of a research instrument might be influenced by its level of complexity. They recommend that an instrument be tailored to the need of the subject that it is intended for.

4.6.4.3 Criterion validity

Jackson (2006: 63) construes criterion validity as “the extent to which a measuring instrument accurately predicts behaviour or ability in a given area”.

4.6.4.4 Construct validity

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) describe construct validity as a process whereby the measurement technique is closely linked to a known theory in the area and to other related concepts. According to Delport (2005), construct validity is concerned with the meaning of an instrument, that is, what it is measuring and how and why it operates the way it does. It involves not only the validation of the instrument itself, but also that of the theory underlying it. In summary, asking how valid an instrument is really amounts to posing three questions:

1. How well does this instrument measure what we want it to measure (content validity)?
2. How well does this instrument compare with one or more external criteria purporting to measure the same thing (criterion validity)?
3. What does this instrument mean? What is it measuring and how and why does it operate the way it does (construct validity)?

Validity and reliability, as measurement properties, are significantly intercalated. An instrument that is valid is always reliable'; however, an instrument that is not valid may or may not be reliable. A reliable instrument need not be valid, but a non-reliable instrument is never valid, because a necessary condition of validity is reliability. Reliability is more directly demonstrated logically and statistically, whereas validity is often referred to by a comparison of predicted and measured behaviours of the participants.

4.7 PILOT STUDY

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 155) describes a pilot study as “a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments, and analysis are adequate and appropriate”. This is in line with Walliman and Baiche (2001) recommendation that the instrument be tested on people with similar characteristics to those of the intended sample so as to identify problems of comprehension or other sources of confusion. In this regard, Barker (1994) highlight two advantages of a pilot study. Firstly, it helps to establish whether or not respondents understand the research questions, and if the response categories provided cover the full range of responses. Secondly, it assists to determine if the questionnaire is too long or complex in terms of its ability to sustain the respondents' interest.

To assess the reliability of the instrument, the initial draft of the questionnaire was pre-tested on eight voluntary participants (educated and semi-educated volunteers, as well as volunteers with no formal education). The reason for this selection was that the targeted population was expected to comprise of people of diverse educational statuses. The participants' suggestions were then incorporated into the final questionnaire.

4.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research survey was conducted independently by the researcher between April 2014 and August 2016 in order to gather baseline information on a view of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. Conscious of the nature of the data to be collected, the study followed a descriptive survey research method. The term survey comes from two words, “sur” and “vor”, which – combined – mean “to see” a particular thing from a high place (Guba, 1994: 140). According to Jacobs (1994: 381) a survey is “a research technique in which data are gathered by asking questions to a group of individuals called respondents”. However, data can also be gathered through observation.

4.8.1 Questionnaire Development

A questionnaire is a set of written questions and/or statements to which the research subjects are to respond in order to provide data which are relevant to a research topic (Jacobs, 1996: 341). In this study, data were collected through a survey questionnaire, as indicated in Chapter 1. Samples of the questionnaire submitted to members of the public and Capricorn District Municipality officials are included in the annexure section.

The survey questionnaire was used to gather information from Capricorn District officials. This survey questionnaire began with a covering letter informing the participants about the identity of the researcher and the aim of the study, in order to encourage them to answer all the questions, as well as to assure them of the confidentiality of their answers and their anonymity. This survey questionnaire was administered by the researcher.

4.8.2 Research Process

The research process focuses on how the research preceded from the preparation of the survey questionnaire to its reception back from the respondents. The research process also deals with sample selection, research areas, the piloting of the questionnaire, the administration of the questionnaire, data presentation, and the description of the problems encountered in the survey.

4.8.3 Study Population

Public participation involves communication between the service provider (local municipality and the beneficiaries (community members), including interested and affected parties, with the aim of improving decision-making. The study population refers to sectors or groups (usually of people) about whom the researcher would like to draw conclusions. Du Ploy (2009: 108) remarks that the term population does not refer only to people, it can also be applied to anything or aggregate of individuals, groups, organisations, and social artifacts/objects. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 52) define population as the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. These authors further define population as the study object which consists of individual, groups, organisations, human products and events, or the condition to which they were exposed.

In this research, the study population was drawn from four municipalities within the Capricorn District: Blouberg, Molemole, Lepele-Nkumpi, and Polokwane. The total population for the district is 1 261 463 – with a population density of 58.1/km² and a total area of 21. 705km². The respondents included the following: community development workers, ward representatives, municipal IDPs managers, constituency administrators, traditional leaders, chairpersons and secretaries of civic associations, business organisations, and politicians.

4.8.3.1 Sample selection

Sampling refers to the strategies used to select a sample of participants from the whole population, to gain information about the large group (McMillan & Schumaker, 2006: 13). According to Johnson (2002: 66), sampling is a process whereby a small population or subgroup of a population of interest is selected for a scientific study. As for Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006: 49), they defined sampling as the selection of participants from a population; as such, sampling involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behavior, and or social processes to observe. In this study, the sample group includes community development workers, ward representatives, IDPs managers, constituency administrators, traditional leaders, civic associations, business organisations, and political office bearers.

It suffices to note that there are different categories of sampling: probability, quasi-probability, and non-probability. This study uses purposive sampling techniques (i.e. non-probability sampling). According to Brynard & Hanekom (2006: 32), this technique provides more credible respondents, because purposive sampling involves subjects who are deliberately (on purpose) selected by researchers.

Silverman (2005: 119) stresses elements that should be considered by any researcher as possible means to reduce the costs, namely, sample size, method of data collection, population, accuracy, and statistical analysis. A typical sample size, according to Mouton (2001: 87), for phenomenological research is a minimum of five individuals who have direct experience with the explored phenomenon. The respondents are thus selected to represent the population in which the study is conducted. In this regard, Babbie (2010: 56) suggests the following guidelines for the selection of a sample size:

- For a sample population ($N < 50$), there is little point in sampling. It is recommended that the whole population be sampled;
- If the population size is around 100, 75% should be sampled;
- If the population size is around 500, 50% should be sampled; and
- If the population size is around 1,000, 35% should be sampled.

The total sample population of this study consists of 161 respondents. The sampled groups comprise of the respondents responsible for the coordination of the activities related to council issues within the Capricorn District: 41 community development workers, 48 Ward Committee members, 5 IDP managers; 5 public participation managers, 5 constituency administrators, 10 traditional leaders, 5 business people, 19 executive members of civic associations, 14 municipal councillors, and 5 municipal managers.

The sample unit used in this study was members of the public who lived within the boundaries of the Capricorn District Municipality as well as some municipal senior officials and councillors. Many writers acknowledge the difficulty in determining the appropriate and optimum sample size (Cohen & Manion 1995: 55). The correct sample size is dependent upon the nature of the population and the purpose of the study. In general, it is better to have as large a sample as possible, in order to reach general conclusions. In this connection,

Nwana (1988: 80) highlights that “The larger a sample becomes, the more representative of the population it becomes and so the more reliable and valid the results based on it will become.” From this point of view, Vans (1990: 32) suggests two key factors for determining such a sample size: the degree of accuracy that researchers require for the sample and the extent to which there is variation in the population in regard to the key characteristics of the study. Clearly, there are many ways of determining the sample size required for achieving representativeness for a given population. One way is to select a minimum of 10 percent of the population, or to apply statistical formula. Another way is by using a handy-guide table particularly designed to determine a sample size. In the present study, the researcher used the table designed to help any researcher to know the representative population sample – without using formula or doing any calculation. After obtaining a good, up-to-date list of members of the public from the electoral commission, for all the local municipalities that are under the Capricorn District, the researcher used a purposive sampling method to select the respondents. The benefits of purposive sampling include its effectiveness in generating informative representatives; and greater precision in its survey estimates, compared to other methods.

Through a particular member of the public selected for interview, the researcher obtained the details of other stakeholders from whom he selected people who have knowledge about the district municipality. The survey sample was therefore purposive and included representatives of all local fora. The above-described selection process suggests that the principle of securing representation by rational criteria was pursued. Therefore, it is contended that representativeness was ensured, thereby strengthening the study’s endeavour to achieve a reasonable reflection of the sample in the whole Capricorn District Municipality.

In addition to members of the public, the researcher also selected a sample of municipal councillors and senior officials, community development workers, Ward Committee members, traditional leaders, and civic associations from the Capricorn District. This selection was based on the assumption that such officials know the internal functioning of the municipality very well. As mentioned in Chapter 1, each respondent was given a questionnaire to read before deciding whether or not he/she is willing to participate.

Interviews were then conducted at the respective residences of the members of the selected public. A total of 50 interviews were conducted.

4.9 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Data collection is a term that most students use in trying to describe a process of preparing for and collecting data/information relating to the study. Data are any form of information, observation, or facts that are collected or recorded (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000: 132). According to Baumgartner and Hansley (2006: 44), a data collection method is a procedure that specifies the techniques to be used, measuring instruments to be utilised, and activities to be conducted in implementing a research study. The main objective of data collection in this study was to obtain information, keep records, make an informed decision about important matters, and transmit information to others. For the purposes of this study, three research instruments were used to collect data:

- interviews;
- the questionnaire; and
- documents.

4.9.1 Interviews

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 121), an interview is a data collection format in which an interviewer asks respondents questions and records their responses. Answers could

be recorded by means of a tape-recorder, cellphone, Ipad, or any other device which can record; or, answers can be manually written down. This data collection technique is closely aligned to the questionnaire.

Primary data were obtained through interviewing people. The interviewer used open-ended questions which were read to the respondents who are traditional leaders, constituency administrators, business people, and political office bearers. They were chosen because they are directly involved in matters of public participation and service delivery. These stakeholders were interviewed because they would not have had time to go through the whole questionnaire, due to their busy schedules.

4.9.2 Questionnaire

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 94), a questionnaire is a set of written questions and or statements to which the identified stakeholders will respond in order to provide relevant information needed for the project. In this study, questionnaires were developed and distributed to all the identified samples. The questions were mostly arranged into open-end and closed-ended style (Du Plooy, 2009: 59). Two research assistants were appointed to help the researcher in administering some of the questionnaires.

4.9.3 Documents

The study also relied on available district documents which helped to corroborate the evidence for or against what the researcher sought to question (Turner 1975: 51). Thus, media reports on service delivery, press statements, policy documents, the Constitution of South Africa, pieces of legislation, journals, and other relevant government documents were scrutinised to gain an understanding of the participants' various viewpoints.

4.9.4 Piloting the Questionnaire

Before applying any research instrument, it is necessary to ensure that it is a valid and reliable tool. Hence, the researcher decided to have a preliminary field testing of the questionnaire. Bulmer & Warwick (1993: 89) captures the essence of the main objective of a pilot study thus: “The pilot study can be used to indicate questions that need revision because they are difficult to understand and it can also indicate questions that may be eliminated”. Similarly, Bakker (2011: 60) notes that “Questionnaires have to be composed and tried out, improved and then tried out again, often several times over, until researchers are certain that they can do the job for which they are needed”. These views were echoed by Bell *et al.*(1998: 80) who indicate that data-gathering instruments should be piloted in order to test how long it takes the recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear, and to enable the researcher to remove any items that do not produce usable data. In the light of the above, a pilot study refers to a small scale replica of the main study. It is the rehearsal of the main study. It covers the entire research process, from the preparation of a broad study plan, the construction of tools, the collection of data, the processing and analysis of data, and report writing. Thus, a pilot study provides some preliminary knowledge on the problem under study and its dimensions.

Hence, it can be deduced that however well-designed a questionnaire may seem, it should always be piloted to ensure relevance, objectivity, and effectiveness. In May 2016, during a field trip to the selected local municipalities in the Capricorn District, the questionnaires were tested through a purposive sample of about 50 respondents from five local municipalities. A total of 50 interviews were also completed successfully. An analysis of the pretest findings resulted in the elimination of certain questions and the refinement of others. Subsequently, the questionnaire was sent to the researcher’s promoter and his co-promoter for further

critique. Both recommended some more refinement of questionnaire. Consequently, some questions were redrafted to ensure that items that were irrelevant to the study were eliminated. New questions were added, and certain sentences were restricted, reordered, and regrouped. By June 2016, the reconstructed and revised questionnaire was ready for administration. On the 2nd of July 2016, the main field work was started by the researcher; this extended until August 2016. Each interview started with a brief introduction, followed by an explanation of the purpose of the research by the researcher and an assurance that the information provided will be confidential. The interviews with members of the public were held either in the morning or late in the evening, when the interviewees were free from their work. During the day, the researcher had discussions and interviews with senior officials and councillors from the Capricorn District municipality.

4.9.5 Administration of the questionnaire

The researcher decided to use face-to-face interviews to administer the questionnaire to all respondents. Face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to probe, explain, and follow up on important points that were raised by members of the public, senior officials, and councillors. Thus, face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to obtain detailed and rich information from the respondents. It must be noted that some members of the public had indicated their preference for talking face-to-face rather than filling in forms. This prevented the administration of the postal questionnaire. Other reasons also prompted the researcher to use face-to-face interviews. The latter ensured a high rate of responses to the questionnaire and therefore an equally high rate of questionnaire returning. Using interviews also ensured a clear understanding of the questions.

However, studies using postal questionnaires can cover a much larger number of respondents, but they caused the researcher to miss the nuances of local politics in the communities studied. Hence, one may learn much less from them. Moreover, political leaders, in particular, are reluctant to respond to postal questionnaires. On the contrary, they are relatively much happier to chat in interviews about their roles and activities. For all these reasons, this study also extended face-to-face interviews to the councillors.

The interviews with the respondents lasted between 25 to 40 minutes. All the interviewees were first contacted by telephone; letters were subsequently sent to the respondents to ask for permission to interview them. Once a person had agreed to a suitable interview time, the researcher sent a background letter. One essential function of the background letter was to confirm the agreed interview time and place, and to provide the participants with a record of the researcher's contact details. The formality of the background letter aimed to reassure the participants of the credibility of the research and that any information given would be handled in a professional manner. It also indicated that the participants would be treated in a professional way. The background letter also indicated that the participants could contact the researcher at any time, if they had questions, and emphasised their right to withdraw at any moment during the research process. The content of the background letter was a brief introduction to the research topic, to give the interviewee some indication of "what to expect" from the interview. This was done with the intention to encourage the participants to start thinking about what they will say in the interview. As a result – and as expected, all the interviews were enjoyable experiences. It must be noted that a consent form was used to gain written approval from the interviewees and to guarantee confidentiality.

The researcher began each interview with a brief introduction so as to make the participants feel free to discuss issues that they believed were important. Each of the research participants was allocated a pseudonym to protect their identity. The pseudonym provided a referencepoint in the research analysis and linked participants to the Capricorn District contexts more closely than a general term. During the actual interviewing, the researcher was concerned not only with what was said, but also how it was said. All this information was essential in understanding the prevailing state of things. Hence, the contexts of the interviews were considered essential and, to this end, the researcher kept a field work diary in which he noted the place and time of a given interview, the prevailing atmosphere, the interviewee's tone of voice and body language, and any other significant features. This information formed a background to the analysis of the findings. These in-depth interviews were a way to gain entry into the 'life worlds' of various members of the public and officials of the Capricorn District Municipality – with respect to the field encompassed by the research topic.

4.10 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Leedy and Ormord (2005: 136) define data analysis as the process of systematically searching and arranging the interviews and field notes that have been accumulated in order to increase the researcher's own understanding and enable him or her to add to what others have already researched. Data analysis is also defined as the process of placing observations in numerical form and manipulating them according to their thematic properties, to derive meaning from them (Turner, 1975: 84).

The first step in the analysis of data is a critical examination of the assembled data. Here, the researcher asks himself or herself questions. This stirs up his or her thinking process and induces a novel way of looking at the research problem. The analysis is made with a view to establishing some significance for a systematic theory and some basis for a broader

generalisation. Many studies using qualitative methods are not reflexive enough about the interpreting process. This is because common platitude proclaims that the data speak for themselves, and that the researcher is neutral, unbiased and invisible (Fontana, 2002:80).

However, according to Lampard (2002: 64) this is very hard to achieve as the researcher becomes buried under an increasing amount of field notes, transcripts, and audiotapes. In the present research study, a multi-method approach was used where data gathered from observations, interviews, and the literature review supplemented each other during the data analysis. Observation, in this study, involved the collection of data about the nature of the physical and social world as it unfolds before the researcher – directly via the senses rather than indirectly via the accounts of others.

Kerlinger (2002: 93) notes that, during data collection, procedural data analysis occurs because the researcher is continuously engaged with the data as they are collected. Therefore, for the purposes of preliminary data analysis on public participation, the researcher read through his notes and listened to the audio-tape of each interview several times, in order to get an adequate impression of the discussion climate and to make verbatim transcriptions in which psychological indicators like pauses, hesitations and enthusiasm were noted. In this way, an attempt was made to become familiar with the data. Moreover, data gathered from initial interviews provided direction for framing further questions on the basis of on-going interpretation and analysis. In this study, the researcher reviewed all the data first, in a general manner, to gain a sense of the data and emerging themes. A more detailed review followed with bracketing (placing preconceived ideas within brackets) and focusing on the participants' views on the conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District. This provided structure to the data gathered which were then evaluated holistically, in an attempt to identify the major categories represented. The major categories were reflected within the different dimensions of the participants' physical,

psychological and social environmental; the spiritual patterns of interaction between these dimensions were also derived. In this way, the data were analysed and the major emerging categories and sub-categories were identified.

In this study, two methods of data analysis were used, namely, quantitative data analysis for quantitative data, and qualitative data analysis for qualitative data. Data collected through questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The information was presented in the form of tabulations, frequencies, and percentages. Data collected through interview schedules were analysed using the thematic process. The data were presented in a narrative form.

This study used frequency tables to summarise the demographic profiles of the respondents. For the Likert-scale questions, clustered bar charts were used in order to compare the responses of municipal officials to those of the other stakeholders. Furthermore, a chi-squared goodness of fit test was used to establish if the Likert-scale responses differed according to whether or not one is a municipal official or member of the public. The final decision was made on the basis of the p-value for the chi-squared test. Small p-values lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis, while a large p-value leads to failure. The cut-off point is usually 0.05; if the p-value exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected; otherwise, it is rejected.

When the field work period was completed, the data collected from the sample of participants through interviews were eventually checked before coding and editing. The data were then classified according to the various local municipalities (Polokwane, Lepelle–Nkumpi, Blouberg, Molemolle). Data classification was also done according to the respondents (councillors and officials) per municipality. The classification was designed to determine the

extent of the difference of perception from one area/group to another. The acquired information was organised in tabular forms to make it more user-friendly. Tabulation, in this study, means recording classification in a compact form so as to facilitate comparisons and the identification of relations between data sets. It is an orderly arrangement of data in columns and rows. It is of great help in the analysis and interpretation of data. In short, tabulations mean that data are arranged in the forms of tables, to facilitate statistical and mathematical operations. Indeed, two statistical devices were used in the analysis of the data throughout major parts of the study, depending on the nature of the questions. For questions which were too short, the test of percentages was used to determine the percentage of respondents in one area/group giving the same answer. Therefore, the main statistical forms which were used in this study were frequency distribution and percentages.

4.11 RETHINKING SUBJECTIVITY – USING REFLEXIVITY

Researchers who use the interpretive mode have to pay special attention to issues of subjectivity. In fact, much of the criticism levelled against this approach consists in the fact that the researcher may underscore some aspects of his or her findings and under-emphasise others (De Vos, 2002: 67). Proponents of qualitative research argue that no research is biased or value-free, because it is always done from somebody's perspective. According to De Vos (2002: 83), a researcher creates a self in the field; the situation-created self is distinct from both the research-based self and the brought self. In this study, the researcher had a conversation with a critical colleague who attended some of the random test interviews which are not included in the current design. This was done to test the researcher's ability to be objective during the interviews. Indeed, it made it possible for the researcher to step out of himself and take a distance – with his own representation of himself in the research setting.

The critical colleague highlighted the contradictions that existed during the interactions with the test-interviewees. This helped the researcher in terms of the gathering and interpretation of data in the actual research phase.

4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations deal with how the respondents are protected in a study (Bulmer & Warwick, 1993: 315-318). The aim of ethical considerations is also to ensure that data are not collected at the expense of the respondents or participants. Ethics calls for a determination of what is proper or improper when conducting social research. According to Babbie (1998: 438), ethics is associated with morality, as the two deal with matters of right and wrong. Thus, something is considered ethical if it conforms to the code of conduct of a given profession or group. Ethics serves as an educative tool for researchers, it ensures that when a researcher goes to the research field, he or she is aware of what society considers as ethical and unethical. Indeed, all researchers are expected to uphold certain moral, social and ethical values, when conducting a research project.

In the light of the above, ethical considerations are a set of moral principles which offer rules and the most correct behaviour towards experimental subjects, respondents, employees, sponsors, other researchers, and students (De Vos, 2009: 57). Ethical issues mostly arise from the kind of challenges that social scientists investigate and from the methods used in an endeavour to obtain valid and reliable data. Ethical considerations are therefore a list of principles and guidelines (informed consent, confidentiality, safety of the participants, trust, and full disclosure) offered by professional organisations to guide research practices and to clarify behaviours that are ethical (Neuman, 2000: 89).

Bless (2006: 140) defines ethics as a way of preventing research abuse and assisting investigators in understanding their responsibilities as ethical scholars. Ethics in research deals with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad (Millan, 2001: 94). According to Gillespie (2002: 89), ethics emerged as a result of value-conflicts among people from a given profession. These conflicts are expressed in discussions and policy-decisions that relate to individuals' rights. For instance, when conducting a research study, the researcher attempts to minimise the risk to the participants' rights. However, there is conflict between a participant's right to privacy and the researcher's need to know.

Researchers must therefore attempt to minimise risks to the participants, while trying to maximise the quality of the information generated.

Qualitative researchers must thus be sensitive to ethics, because of the harmful potential of their research topic, face-to-face interactive data collection, an emergent design, and the researcher's reciprocity with the respondents (Schumacher, 1999: 63). Thus, the criteria for research design involve not only the selection of information, rich informants, and efficient research strategies, but also an adherence to research ethics (Britzman, 1998: 86). The two potential ethical issues in this research related to confidentiality and anonymity. Precaution was thus taken to maintain the confidentiality of the information given and to guarantee the privacy or anonymity of the participants. The latter were informed in advance of what was expected of them during the interviews. The respondents who participated on a voluntary basis in this research displayed enthusiasm during the interviews.

The findings of the research were recorded in such a way that the participants could be identified and appropriate codes and pseudonyms were subsequently used when individual statements were quoted. Moreover, the attribution of statements was carefully-monitored to ensure that the participants are not adversely affected by issues of power and status. This measure was taken so that the participants would not feel constrained to share information for fear of repercussions from within their institution, workplace, or home. Each participant was informed of their right to decline participation in this study – which will have to be respected at any time and for any reason. Also, the participants had to give permission to audiotape the interviews, because this was a means of obtaining accurate information. The participants were informed that they would be given a copy of their transcript to check for accuracy and modify it, if necessary. Therefore, in the true sense of a democratic survey research, the participants were empowered to express themselves freely during the interviews. Moreover, the methodology adopted in this research was reflective of an ethical stance which allowed open-ended dialogue between the participants and the researcher. Furthermore, the interviewees made a commitment to the researcher by donating their time and energy. Following each interview, the participants were sent a letter of thanks to recognise their contribution.

4.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Every survey is subject to some field problems which cannot always be anticipated. Thus, beside the financial constraints related to the fieldwork, the general problems encountered during the collection of data are the transport difficulties and hot weather conditions in the Capricorn District Municipality area. This led to some respondents to refusing to be interviewed. Moreover, all the interviews with members of the public had to be conducted late in the evenings, owing to the fact that none of them were available during the day.

Travelling at night not only made the researcher's task difficult, but a longer time than anticipated was also taken in some local municipalities. Furthermore, some of the respondents had a tendency to bypass direct answers. Thus, strenuous efforts and patience were required to complete the research survey. However, the respondents were willing to discuss, informally, some aspects of the conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality.

After the collection of data, it was found that the analysis was a much-more-troublesome task than initially anticipated. Technically, the difficulties emanated from the endeavour to aggregate and systematise the data collected from different sources and methods. In this case, the problem was also compounded by the existence of a large quantity of data. In this regard, Hoinville *et al.* (1979: 81) observe that a month of data collection should be matched by two months of data analysis. Hence, this survey was time-consuming. Nevertheless, the problems encountered during the survey research broadened the researcher's knowledge.

4.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research philosophy, design and methodology used in this study. The study included a combination of etic and emic data and provided a detailed explanation of the qualitative research approach to public participation. Qualitative paradigms were explained based on three aspects: the ontological question, the methodological question, and the epistemological question. Besides, the two opposing conceptions of reality that researchers espouse were explained. It was noted that the best way to explore "reality" is for the researcher to remain "outside" it. However, the interpretive stand – which includes the phenomenological approach – contends that people's activities build their reality by imposing meaning upon their experience and perceptions. This chapter also concentrated on the

research design. Design choices were explained by means of a dance choreography analogy. Construct validity was based on a careful analysis of a view of the construct of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District. It was highlighted that different strategies used to answer the various research questions showed varying degrees of reliability. The instrument used in this research was a survey questionnaire which was piloted and refined for eight months, before its administration in Jun/July 2016.

A major part of this chapter was devoted to the research methodology. It was indicated that a research survey was conducted independently by the researcher between May and August 2016 so as to collect baseline information on a conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. This chapter also focused on the development of the survey questionnaire and the cover letter informing the participants about the identity of the researcher and the objective of this study. Attention was paid to the detailing of the research process: the selection of the sample and research areas, the piloting of the questionnaire, and the administration of the questionnaire, data presentation, the rethinking of subjectivity using reflexivity, as well as ethical issues and problems encountered during this research. Chapter 4 has an essential place in this study as it forms the basis for the next chapter which deals with the research findings and their interpretation.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings emanating from the analysis of the data obtained from the administered questionnaire and the interviews conducted. The sub-themes developed in this chapter have been generated from the issues that were raised during the researcher's interaction with the respondents. It is important to reiterate that the study aims to establish the respondents' views and perceptions on the questions included in the questionnaire and to provide possible solutions to the research problem. The following section summarises the profile of the respondents.

5.2 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

5.2.1 Respondents' Positions

The following table indicates the respondents' positions.

Position	Frequency	Percent
Community development worker	41	25.5
Municipal councillor	19	11.8
Ward Committee member	50	31.1
Civic association representative	21	13.0
IDP manager	5	3.1
Public participation manager	5	3.1
Constituency administrator	5	3.1
Traditional leader	10	6.2
Business person	5	3.1
Total	161	100.0

Table 5.1: Respondents' positions .

Table 5.1 shows that the sample population was dominated by Ward Committee members (31%), community development workers (26%), civic association representatives (13%), and municipal councillors (12%). Section A of questionnaire was more concerned with the profile of the respondents. The data collected in this regard is reflected in the above table. The respondents were aware of the service-delivery-related activities undertaken in the Capricorn District; hence the purposive sampling. For clarity and uniformity, the percentages have been

rounded to the nearest whole number – whenever possible. The data analysis is based on the aggregation of the participants’ responses to statements that focus on specific constructs. The study population initially earmarked was 20 respondents more than the number in the frequency column. Each potential participant was given the opportunity to read through the questionnaire, before it was administered.

Among the questions raised as part of the concerns of the study was the extent to which the exponents of participatory methodologies genuinely commit themselves to the notion of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District. The analysis of the respondents’ profile was part of an attempt to establish who they are and what inspires them.

5.2.2 Respondents’ Age

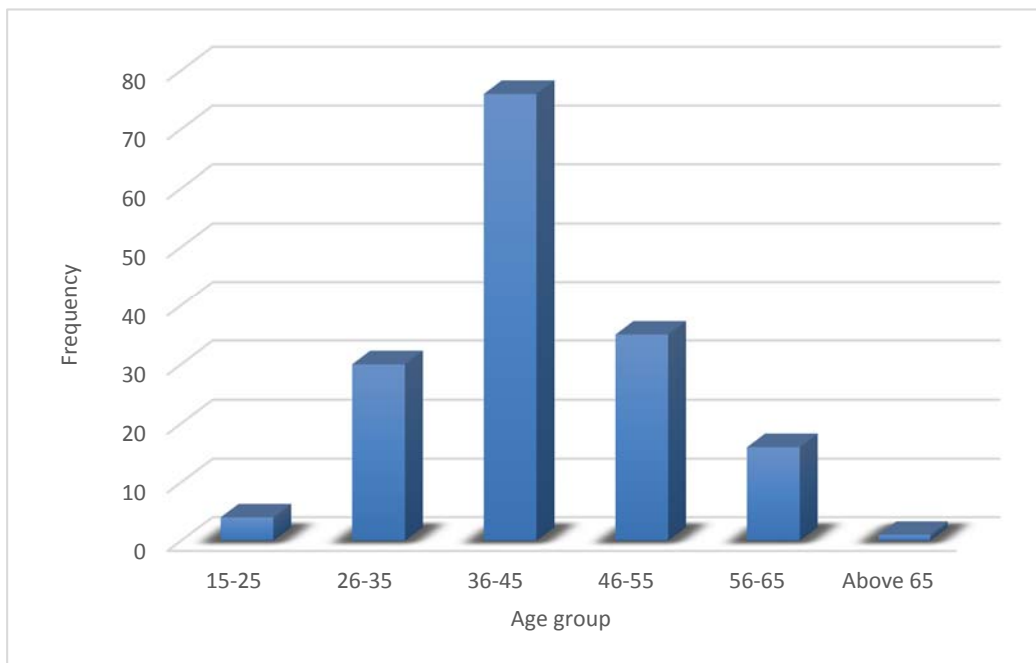


Figure 5.1: Respondents’ age

It can be seen from Figure 5.1 that the majority of the respondents are between 26 and 65 years of age. Section A further required the respondents to provide the researcher with their specific age groups. In this regard, the above graph reflects that the majority of the respondents are between 36 and 45 years of age. From these responses, it can be concluded that most of the respondents were not youth. The possible implication of this is that youth participation is minimal.

5.2.3 Respondents' Gender

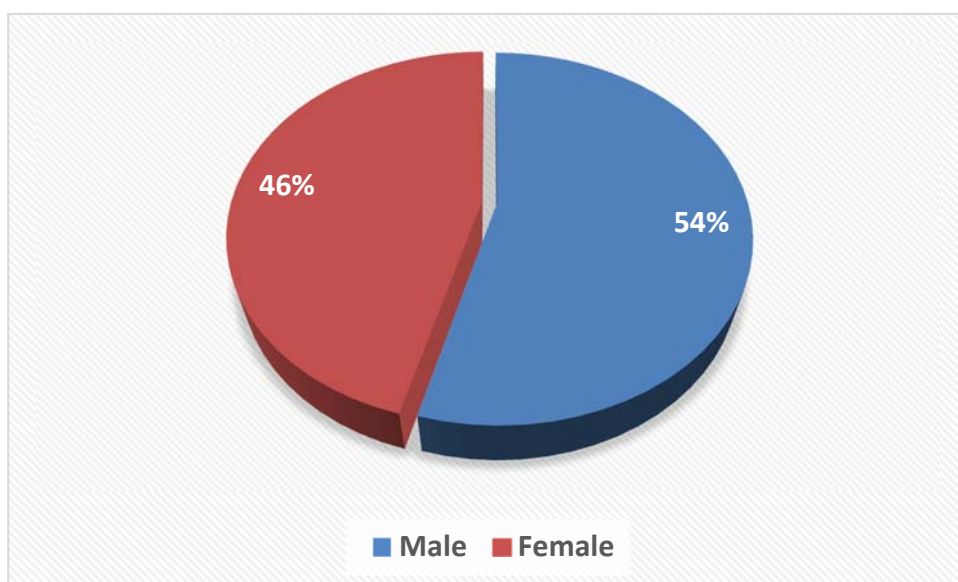


Figure 5.2: Respondents' gender

Part of Section A of the questionnaire endeavoured to determine the gender profile of the respondents. The respondents' gender distribution was almost even. Indeed, it is observed from the pie graph above that 54% of the respondents were males and 46% were females. Thus, it can be argued that the respondents' gender representation was fair. This suggests that the district had ensured adherence to gender mainstreaming in terms of public participation and service delivery. This ruled out the possibility of the gratuitous and superfluous influence

of the views of a dominant gender among the respondents. Hence, the level of participation of both male and female respondents was perceived to be good.

5.2.4 Respondents' Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Currently married	90	55.2
Staying together as married	32	19.6
Widowed	5	3.1
Divorced	2	1.2
Separated	2	1.2
never married	30	19.6
Total	161	100.0

Table 5.2: Respondents' marital status

This section was more interested in the marital status of the respondents. Table 5.2 reveals that close to three quarters of the respondents are either married or staying together as married. As a matter of fact, 55.2% of the respondents are married. It is believed that they are affected by issues of service delivery and that they can participate in the municipality's processes, if they are involved.

5.2.5 Respondents' Highest Educational Level

The bar graph below presents the respondents' highest educational level

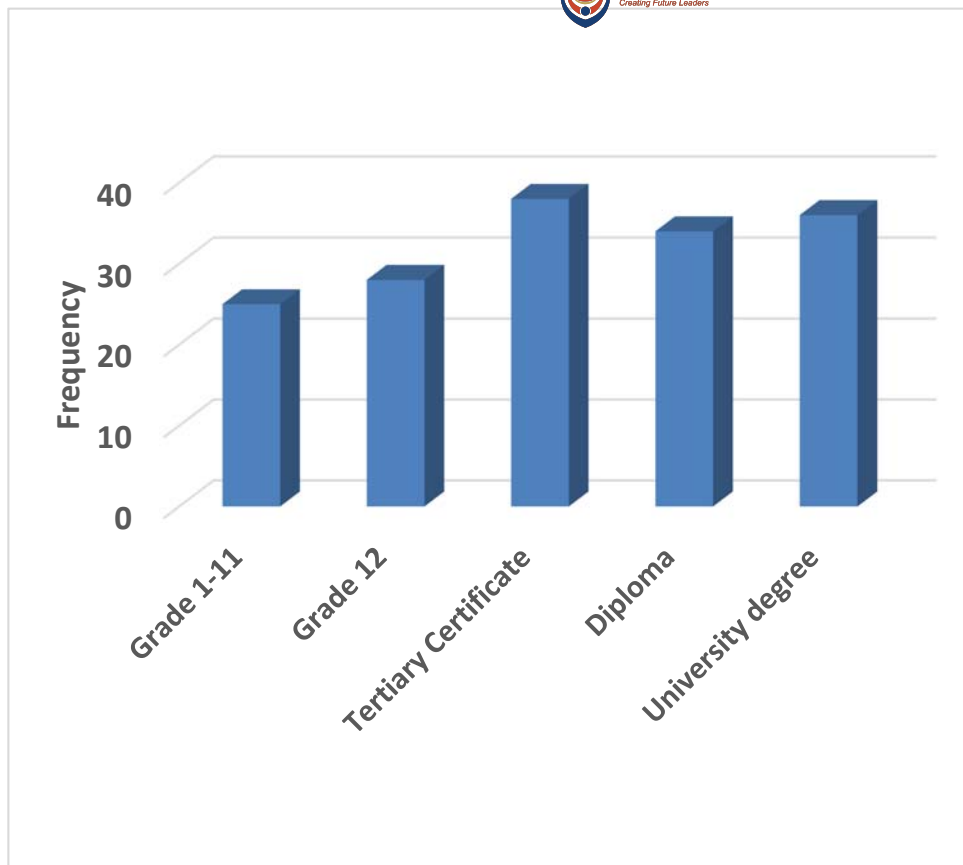


Figure 5.3: Respondents' highest educational level (source).

The above graph explored the respondents' level of education. The respondents with tertiary qualifications – be they certificates, diplomas or degrees – had the highest percentages. The majority of the respondents have attained an educational level equal to or higher than Grade 12

From the above represented respondents' responses, it can be deduced that all the respondents were literate. Indeed, the data on educational attainment show that all respondents were educated beyond the primary level. The above graph shows that a very high number of respondents went beyond Grade 12. The overriding impression is that the respondents' level of literacy may have an impact on their ability to participate meaningfully in ensuring that public participation becomes a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality.

5.2.6 Respondents' Length of Service in the Current Portfolio

The table below provides the respondents' years of service in their current portfolio.

	Frequency	Percent
Below 1 year	3	1.9
1-5 years	62	39.4
6-10 years	55	34.4
above 10 years	39	24.4
Total	161	100.0

Table 5.3: Respondents' length of service in the current portfolio.

As can be seen from Table 5.3, about 98% of the respondents had served in their current portfolios for at least one year. Thus, it can be argued that the respondents were quite aware of what was happening in the municipality; this increased the reliability of the data they provided.

The figure below summarises the purposes of service delivery.

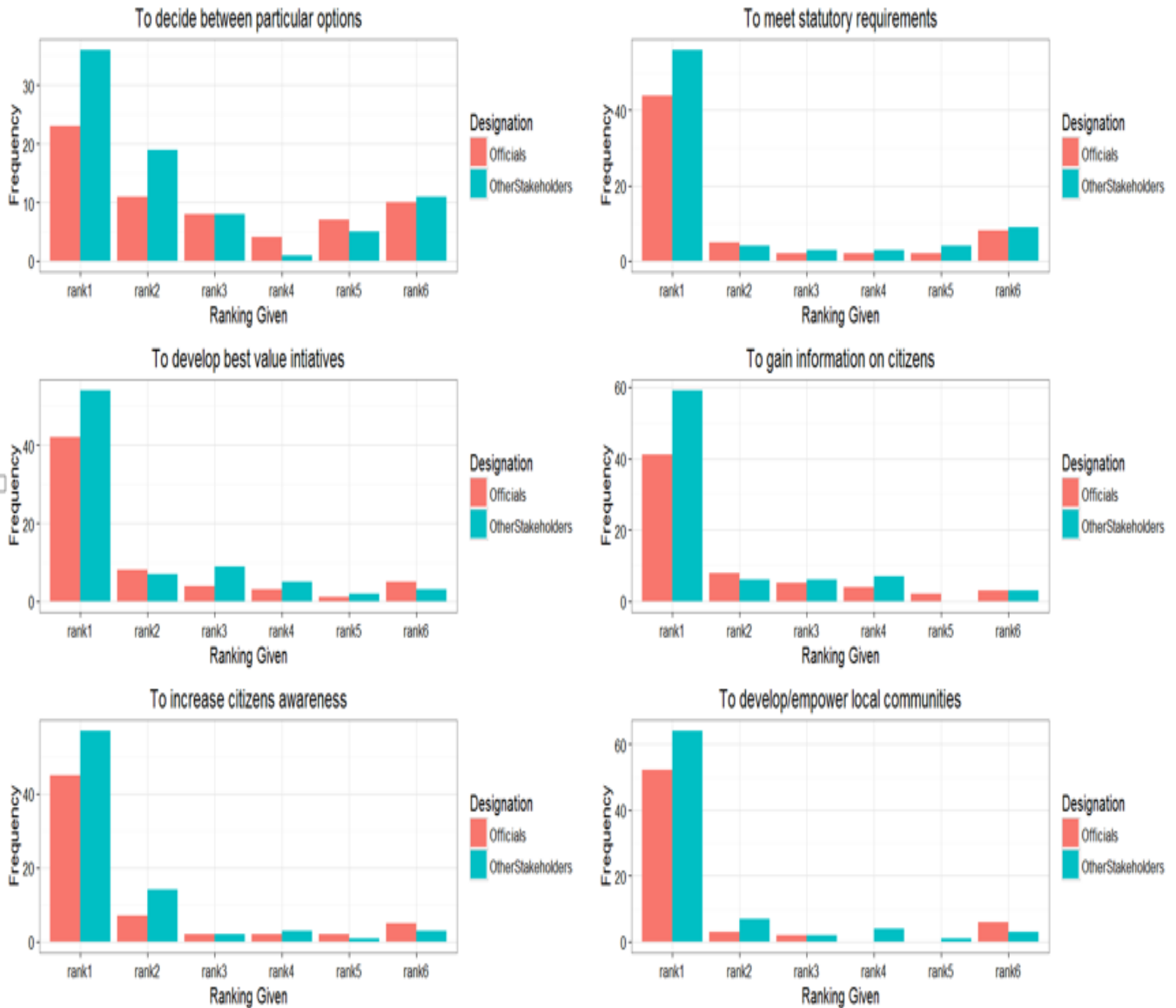


Figure 5.4: Purposes of public participation (source).

To test if all the respondents knew the purposes of public participation, each respondent was given a choice of six possible purposes of public participation and was asked to rank them by order of importance – with a rank of one being the most important and 6 being the least important. However, this question was not well understood by the respondents. Indeed, instead of ranking the items from the most important to the least important, most of them

gave an equal ranking (usually one) to all the items. As illustrated by the above graphs, meeting statutory requirements, developing best value initiatives, gaining information on citizens, increasing citizen awareness, and developing local communities are the main purposes of public participation. It can also be inferred, from the graphs, that “deciding between particular options” is viewed as the least important of the purposes of public participation, as a larger number of respondents gave it a ranking of two and higher. It must be stressed that the pattern of responses is similar for municipal officials and other stakeholders.

To further probe the manifestation of the concept of public participation, the respondents were asked if they were of the opinion that their district municipalities viewed public participation as an important mechanism, as illustrated by the graph below.

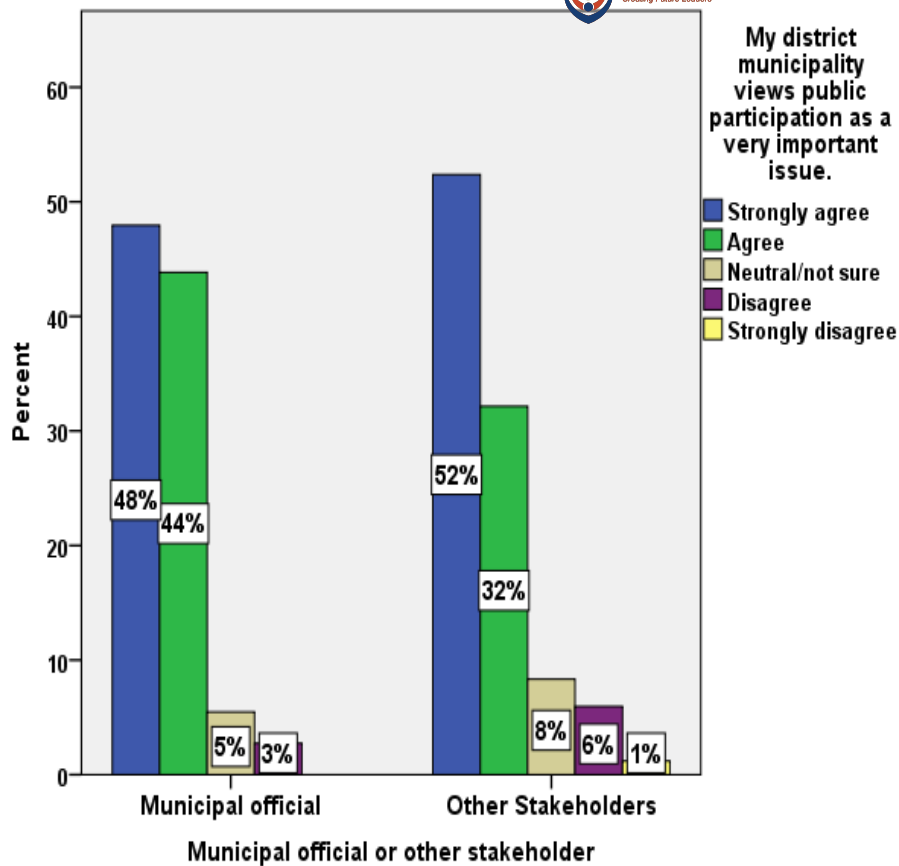


Figure 5.5: Opinion on whether municipalities view public participation as an important mechanism .

When cross classified, 92% and 84% of municipal officials and other stakeholders, respectively, agree that their district municipalities do view public participation as an important mechanism. The response to this question is independent of whether one is a municipal official or not (p-value = 0.434).

Based on the results in this section, it can be concluded that both municipal officials and other stakeholders are of the view that their municipalities view public participation as an important mechanism. Both sets of respondents believe that the purposes of public participation consist in meeting statutory requirements, developing best value initiatives, gaining information on citizens, increasing citizen awareness, and developing local

communities. Equal importance is attached to these five purposes which are deemed to be more important than “deciding between particular options”. Overall, a high percentage of interviewees expressed opinions that are similar to the above. The respondents regard public participation as a good tool for enhancing service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. Some respondents also indicated that public participation is very important for the prevalence of democratic values at grass-root level. Some respondents stressed the need for officials and councillors to be held answerable for the actions taken and services provided by the Capricorn District Municipality.

5.3 GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

The respondents were also asked to indicate if their district municipality had developed a policy document on public participation. The results are summarised in Figure 5.7 below:

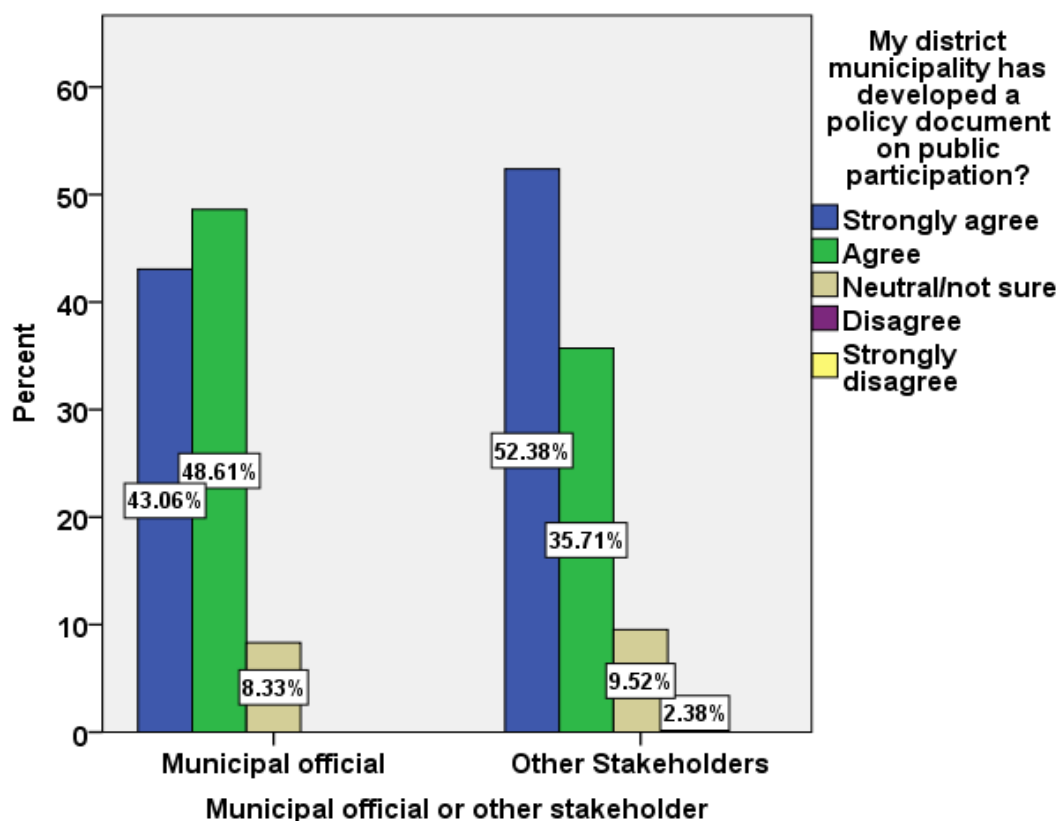


Figure 5.7: Whether the district municipality has a policy document on public participation.

The majority of the respondents (about 9 in 10 for both sets of respondents) indicated that their municipalities had policy documents on public participation. Only about 2% of the other stakeholders were in disagreement. Thus, it can be inferred that municipalities forming part of the Capricorn District do have policies on public participation and that these policies are accessible to both municipal officials and other stakeholders. From these findings, it can be deduced that the Capricorn District does communicate its policies to officials and members of public. Hence, some of them confirmed that they participated in the district's IDP activities. It can further be concluded that the district does have public participation education and outreach programmes.

5.4 METHODOLOGIES

The respondents were also questioned on the use of different modes of public participation to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. The question listed a number of forms and levels of public participation (elections, IDP, public hearings, protests, and survey questionnaires). Most of the respondents indicated that they participate mostly through elections and – sometimes – through IDP activities. To probe the methods used by the municipalities to promote public participation, each respondent was asked to indicate if s/he was of the opinion that his/her district municipality had a functional Ward Committee system. A summary of the findings is given in Figure 5.8 below.

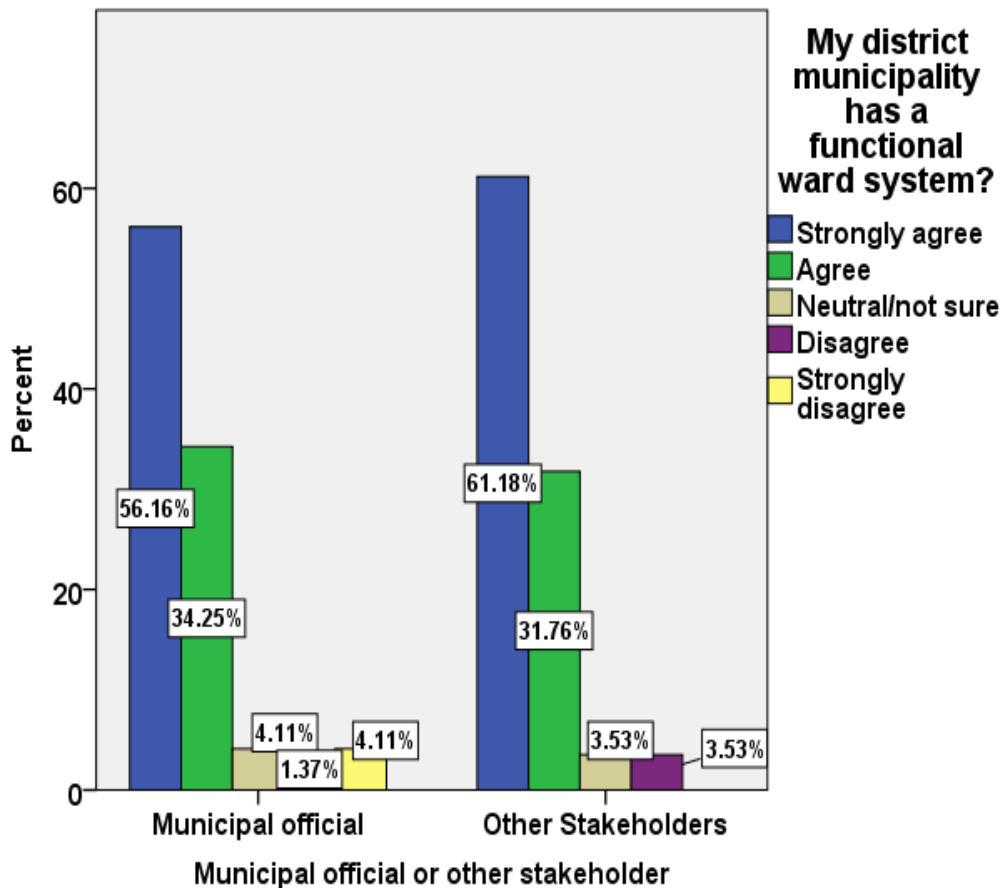


Figure 5.8: Whether the district municipality has a functional Ward Committee system

From the diagram, it can be seen that about 9 in 10 respondents (both officials and other stakeholders) do agree that the Ward Committees in their municipalities are functional. This opinion is independent of whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.343$).

The respondents were also probed on whether or not communities in their districts were educated regarding the role and operation of local government (see Figure 5.9 below).

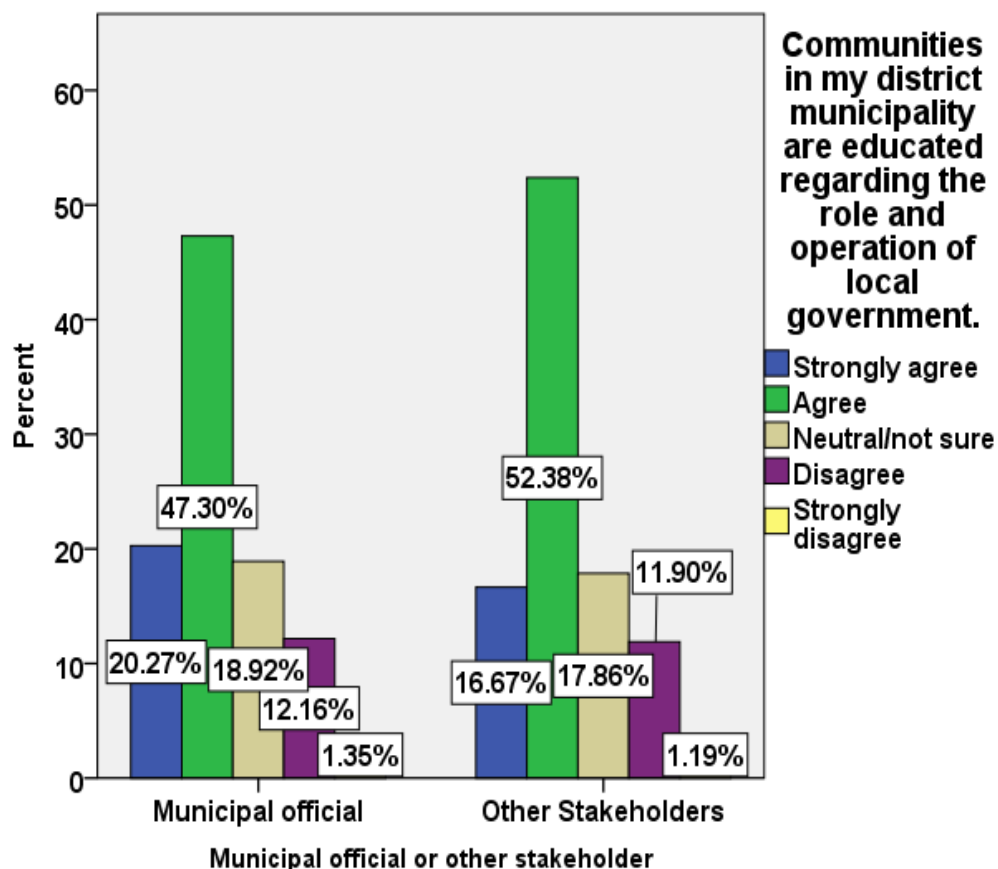


Figure 5.9: Whether communities are educated regarding the role and operation of local government . The results reveal that about 7 in 10 respondents do agree that local communities in their district municipalities are educated regarding the role and operation of local government. This opinion is independent of whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.972$). A little over 10% of the respondents disagree that local communities are educated on local government issues.

Based on Figure 5.10 below, some of the methods used to promote public participation include awareness campaigns, meetings/Imbizos, hearings, and IDPS/Budget fora.

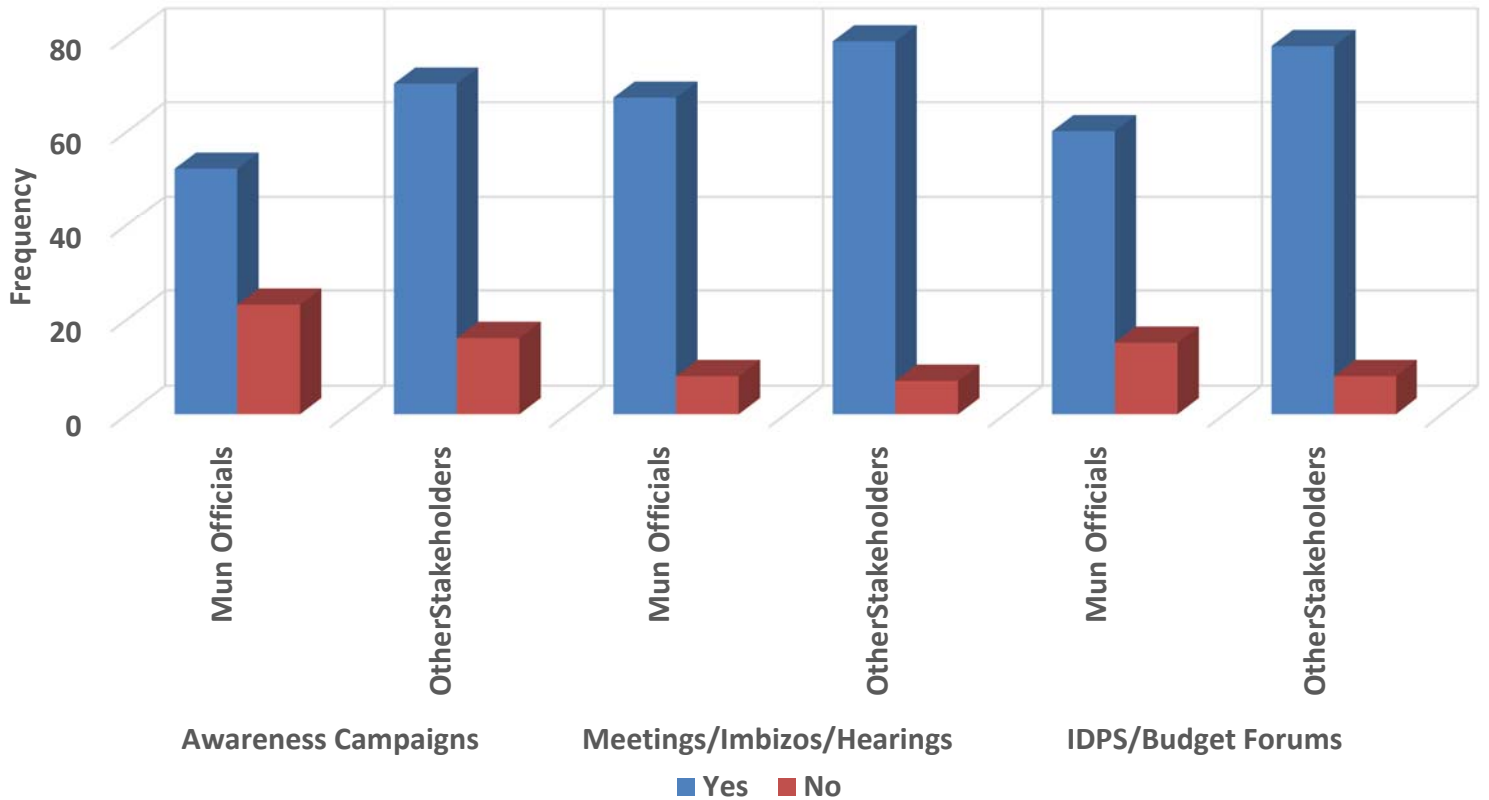


Figure 5.10: Methods used to promote public participation.

The respondents were probed on whether or not their municipalities' IDP and budget processes provide the public with sufficient opportunity to participate. Figure 5.11 below shows that about 75% of the respondents do believe that their municipalities' IDP and budget processes do provide the public with sufficient opportunity to partake in development implementation, as well as its monitoring and evaluation. This opinion is independent of whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.285$).

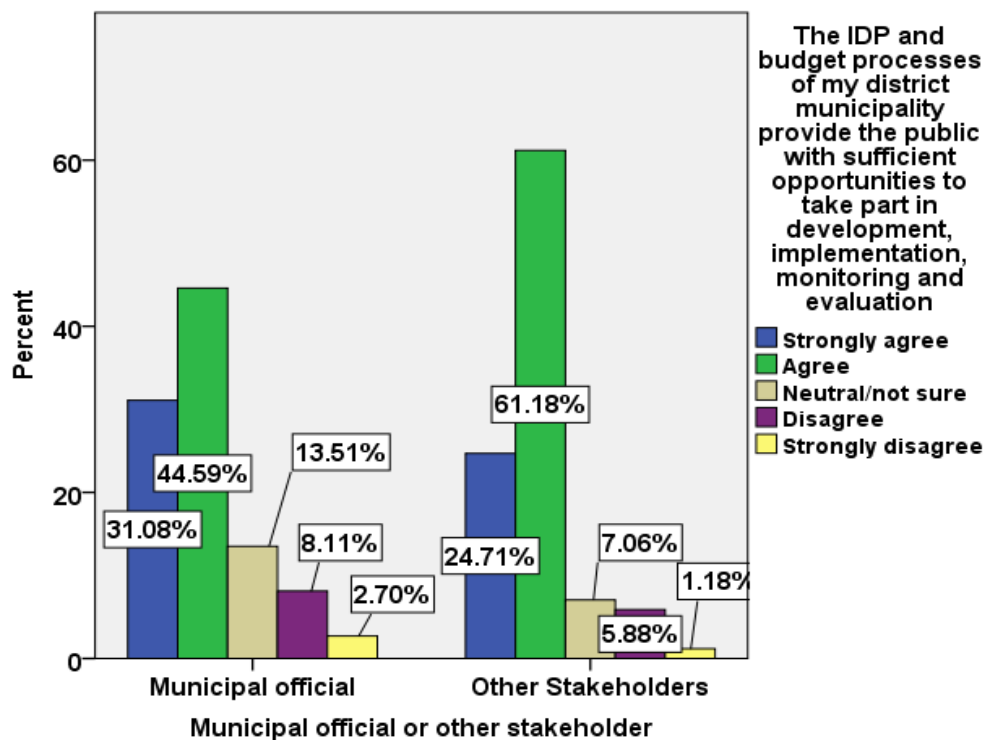


Figure 5.11: Whether or not IDP and budget processes provide the public with sufficient opportunity to partake in development implementation, as well as its monitoring and evaluation. It is clear from the foregoing that municipalities use Ward Committee systems and integrated planning fora to promote public participation. The respondents are of the view that these methods are effective.

5.5 RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

The respondents were questioned on their districts’ human and financial resources. The question sought to get information about their municipalities’ official capacity to promote public participation and services to members of the public. The respondents raised a number of challenges pertaining to their municipalities’ official capacity and budgetary constraints on issues of public participation. They underscored that some positions are occupied by

incompetent officials whose performance is not even monitored. Some respondents raised the issue of the little budget allocated to public participation. Clearly, there is a need to ensure that strong municipal administrative systems and processes are created. These findings show that the Capricorn District should implement human resources development programmes. It transpires that the district needs to be driven by appropriately-skilled and correctly-placed personnel. The respondents indicated that, in some municipalities within the district, there is a lack of sound financial management and accounting.

The respondents were also requested to indicate if their district municipalities have a budget allocation to public participation. The results are given in Figure 5.12 below.

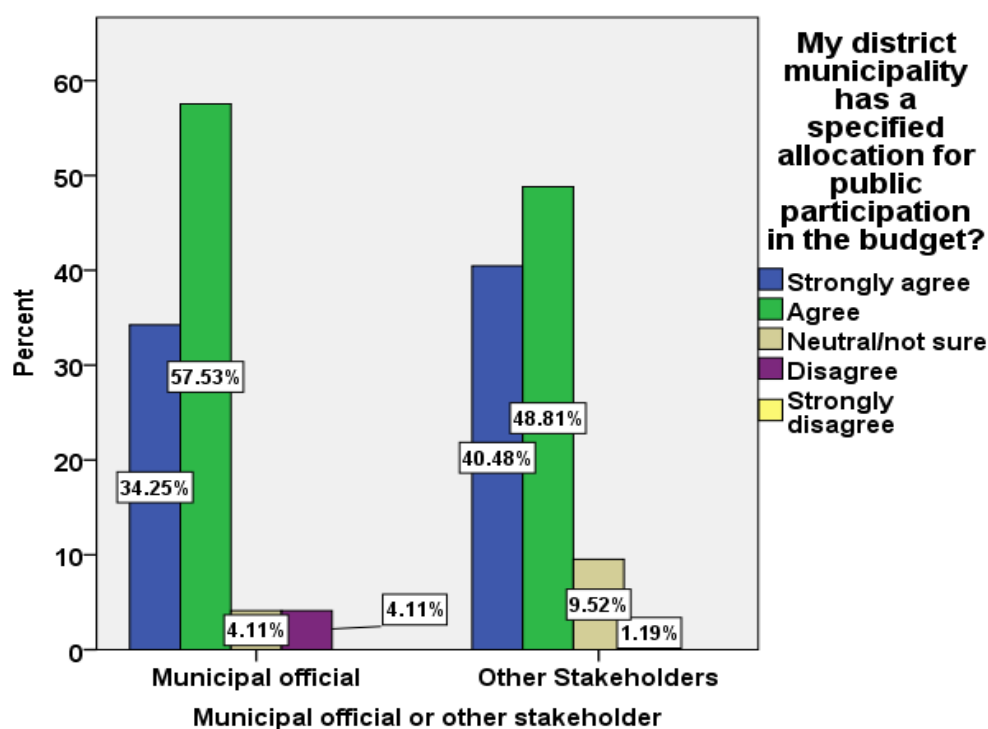


Figure 5.12: Whether municipalities allocate a budget to public participation..

The respondents' opinion is independent of whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.272$). About 9 in 10 – in both groups of respondents – do agree that their municipalities do make a budget provision for public participation. Although the respondents indicated that a budget is allocated to public participation, the question remains how much? Thus, they were

asked to indicate if the amount allocated is adequate. The results are summarized in Figure 5.13 below:

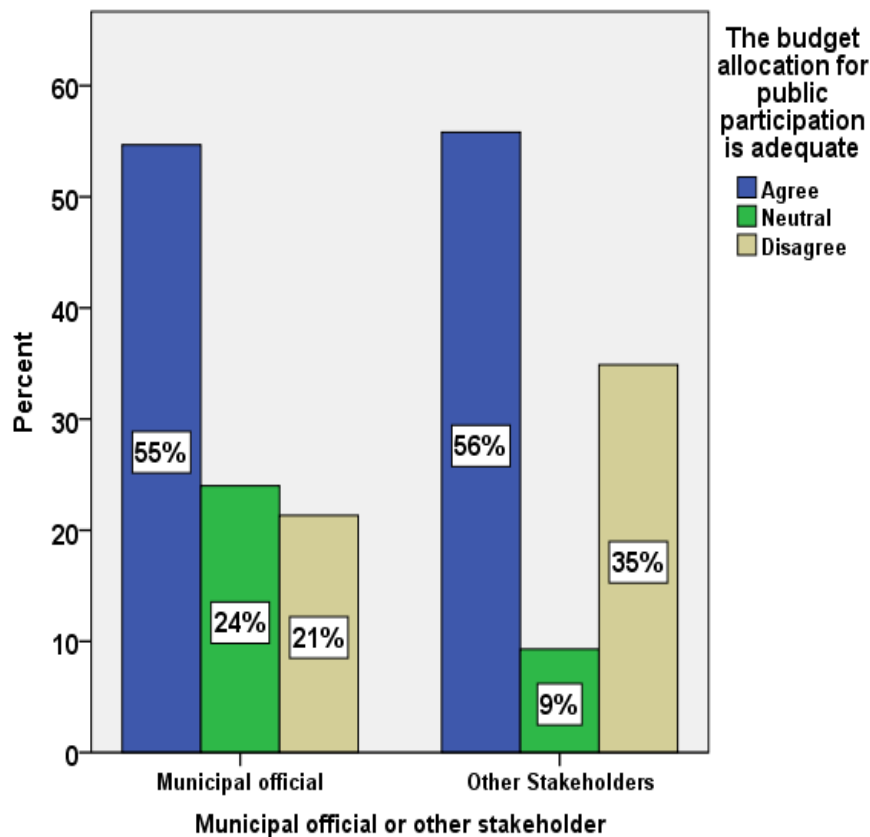


Figure 5.13: Whether the budget allocation for public participation is adequate (source?).

The opinion on the adequacy of the budget allocated to public participation depends on whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.019$). An interesting observation from the graph is that whereas only about 21% of the municipal officials are of the opinion that the budget allocation is inadequate, about 35% of the other stakeholders believe that the public participation budget allocations are inadequate. In other words, many of the other stakeholders think that the public participation budget allocation is inadequate.

According to Figure 5.14 below, over 90% of both groups of respondents indicated that their district municipalities have officers responsible for public participation. This response is independent of whether one is a municipal official or another stakeholder ($p = 0.242$).

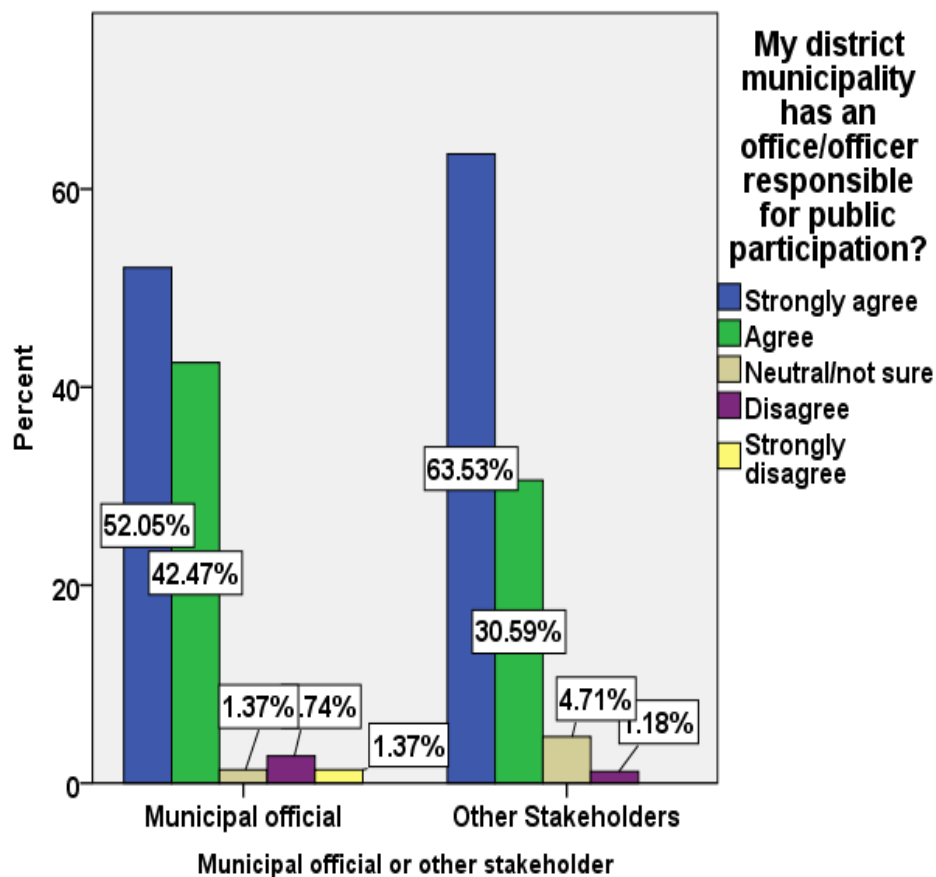


Figure 5.14: Whether or not the municipality has an office/officer responsible for public participation. The respondents were also requested to indicate if the officials responsible for public participation in their district municipalities are easily accessible at all times. The results are summarised in Figure 5.15 below. In this particular case, the opinion differed between municipal officials and other stakeholders ($p = 0.00$). While 81% of the municipal officials thought that officials responsible for public participation are easily-accessible at all times, only 68% of the other stakeholders had the same opinion. Another interesting finding is that even though the vast majority of the municipal officials claimed that officials

responsible for public participation are easily-accessible at all times, there is still about 11% of municipal officials whose view is contrary. The respondents further noted that some officials are not even aware of their roles, because they never received any training related to public participation and the provision of services to members of the public.

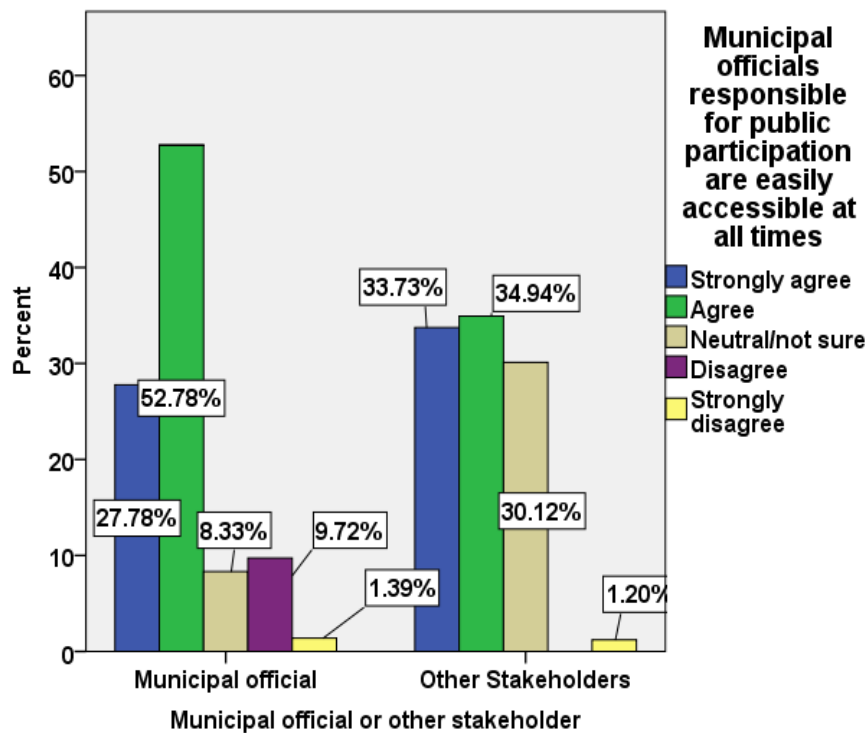


Figure 5.15: Whether officials responsible for public participation are easily-accessible at all times.

5.6 CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not their district municipalities were experiencing any challenges in terms of the promotion of public participation. The results are summarized in the graph below:

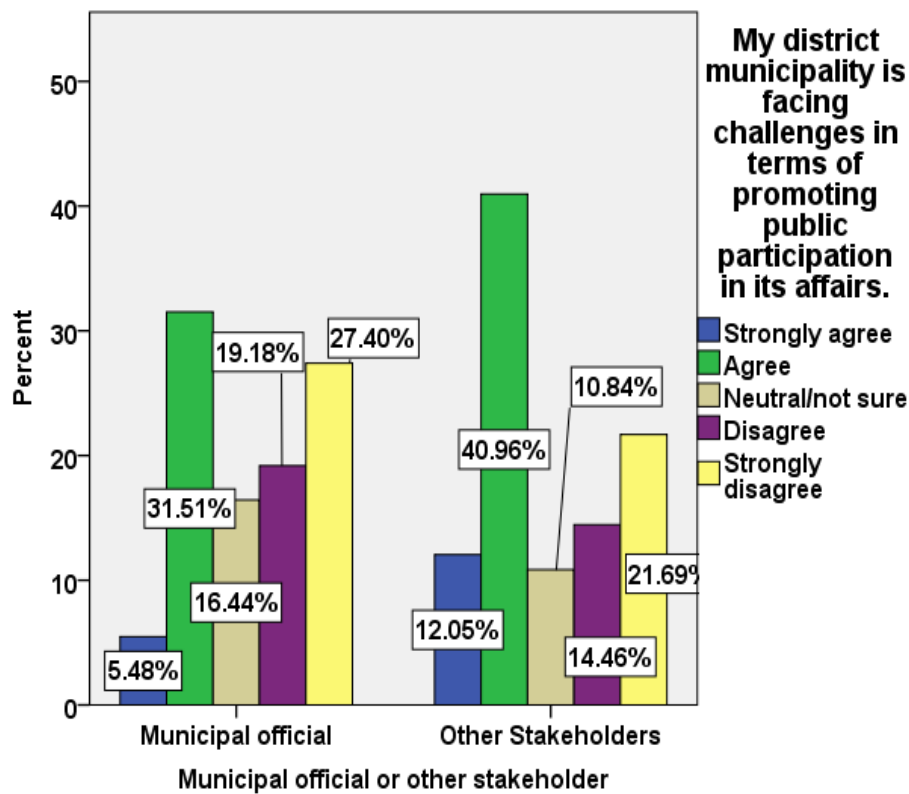
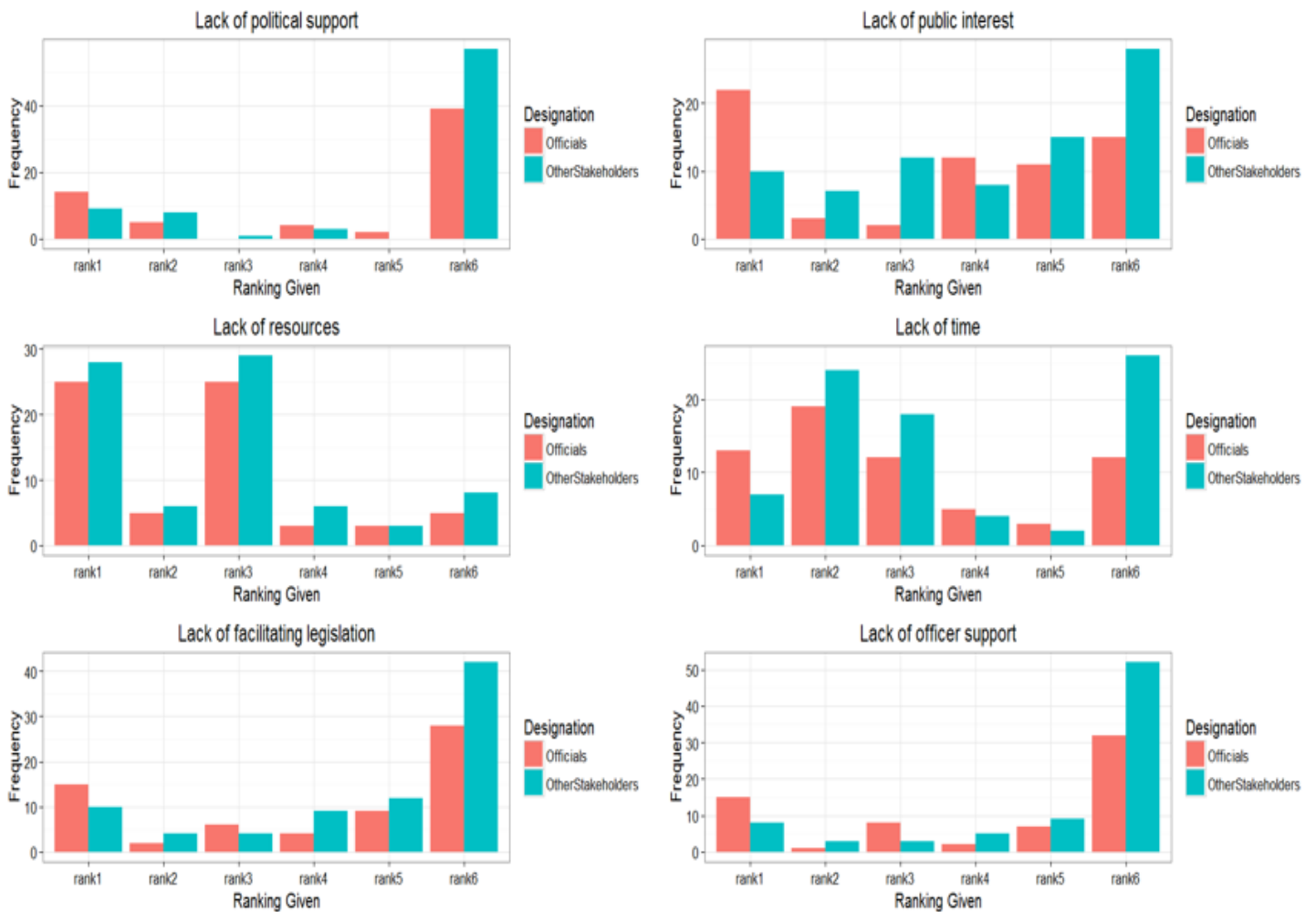


Figure 5.16: Whether or not district municipalities are facing challenges in terms of promoting public participation.

The respondents were also asked to indicate if they were of the opinion that their district municipalities are facing challenges in terms of promoting public participation. This opinion was independent of whether one was a municipal official or another stakeholder ($p = 0.313$).

It must be noted that about 37% of the municipal officials and about 53% of the other stakeholders were of the opinion that municipalities were indeed facing challenges with regard to the promotion of public participation. In an effort to understand the types of challenges faced by municipalities in the above regard, the respondents were given a list of 6 possible challenges and were asked to rank them from 1 (the most important) to 6 (the least important). The results are summarised in Figure 5.17 below.

Figure 5.17: Constraints and challenges to public participation.



From the above diagrams, it can be seen that the lack of resources and the lack of time are identified as the main challenges faced by municipalities in their endeavour to implement public participation. It would also appear that the public's lack of interest is thought to be the least important among the constraints to public participation.

5.7 EFFECTIVENESS

To measure the effectiveness of public participation as practiced in the Capricorn District municipalities, the respondents were requested to indicate the degree to which they agreed or

disagreed with the claim that municipal budgets and IDPs are not driven by the people, but rather by the municipalities themselves. The results are summarised in Figure 5.18 below.

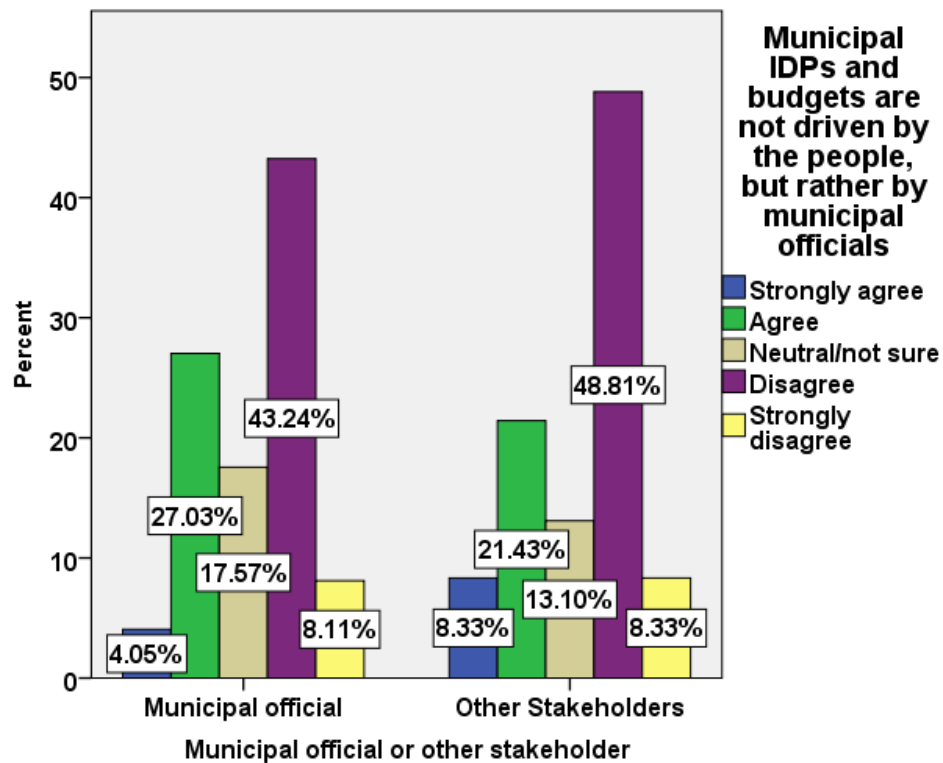


Figure 5.18: Municipal IDPs and budget processes are not driven by the people, but rather by the municipalities themselves.

Just slightly over half of both the municipal officials and the other stakeholders disagreed with the above statement. The pattern of responses is independent of whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.656$). One in three municipal officials or other stakeholders do believe that municipal IDPs and budgets are driven by the municipalities, instead of the people.

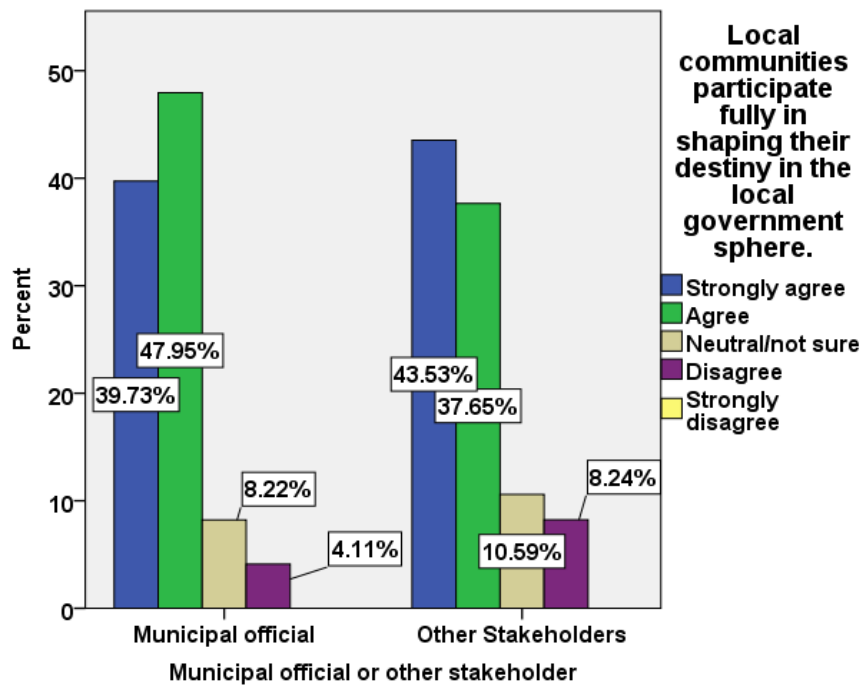


Figure 5.19: Whether or not local communities participate fully in shaping their destiny in local government spheres (source).

Figure 5.19 above shows that 8 in 10 respondents do agree that local communities participate fully in shaping their destiny in local government spheres. This opinion is independent of whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.492$).

The respondents were also requested to indicate whether or not Ward Committees in their district are structured in a manner that is representative of key community groups. The results are summarised in Figure 5.20 below.

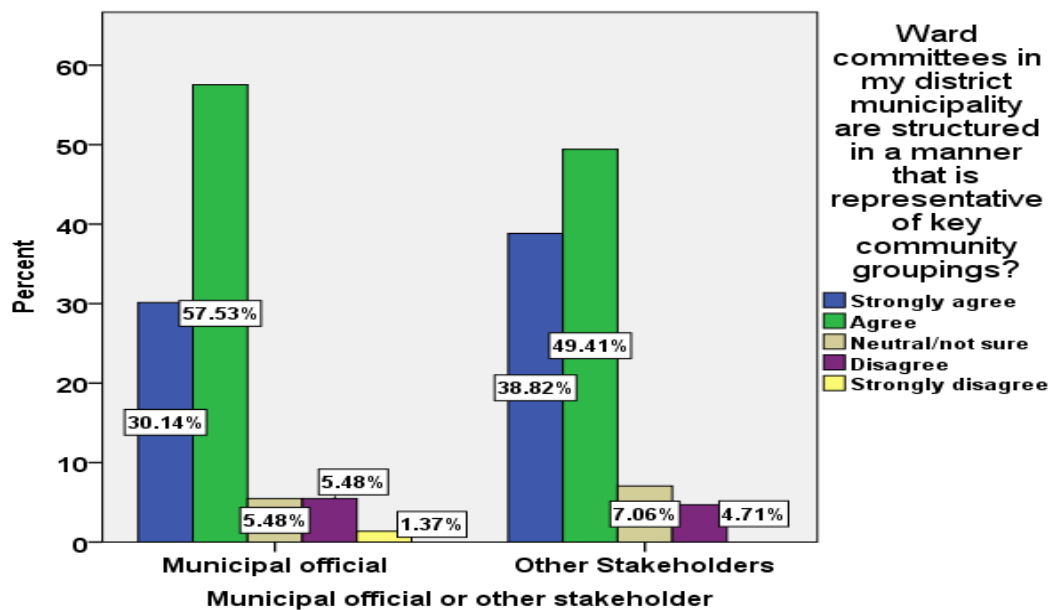


Figure 5.20: Whether or not Ward Committees in the respondents' district are structured in a manner that is representative of key community groups. About 90% of both groups of respondents indicated that Ward Committees in their district municipalities are structured in a manner that is representative of key community groups. This opinion is independent of whether one is a municipal official or another stakeholder ($p = 0.608$).

Figure 5.21 below shows that there are mixed feelings regarding whether or not rural and urban communities in the municipalities are given equal opportunities to contribute to municipal decision-making. 57% and 48% of the municipal officials and other stakeholders, respectively, do agree that the rural and urban communities are given equal opportunities. Conversely, about 30% and 45% of the two respective groups of respondents do not believe that rural and urban communities are given equal opportunities to contribute to municipal decision-making. This opinion is independent of whether or not one is a municipal official ($p = 0.289$).

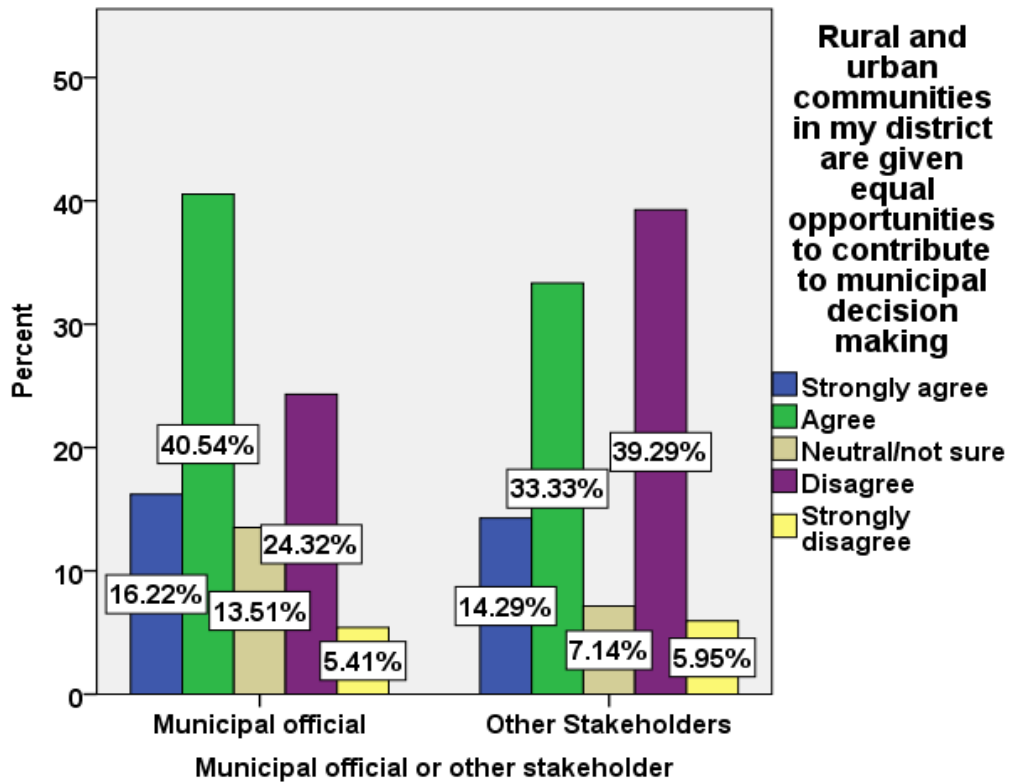


Figure 5.21: whether or not rural and urban communities are given equal opportunities to contribute to municipal decision-making. The respondents were also given the opportunity to indicate whether or not special interest groups were excluded from planning and decision-making. The results are summarised in Figure 5.22 below.

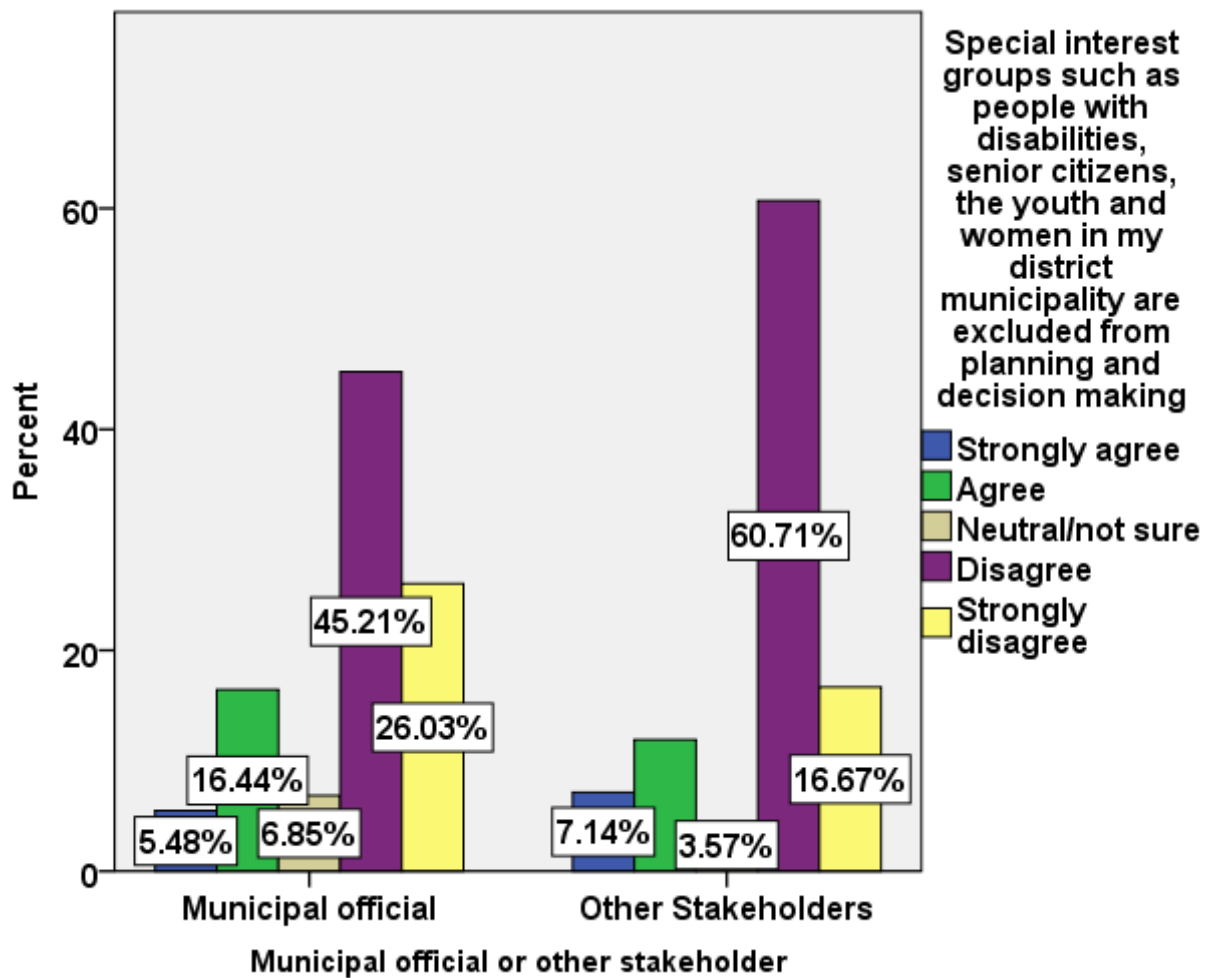


Figure 5.22: Whether or not special interest groups are excluded from planning and decisionmaking . The majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that special interest groups are excluded from municipal planning and decision-making. Nevertheless, about 22% of municipal officials and 11% of the other stakeholders believe that special interest groups are marginalised. The respondents were further asked to indicate whether service delivery protests occurred mainly because municipalities do not involve communities in their planning and budgeting processes. The results are summarised in Figure 5.23 below.

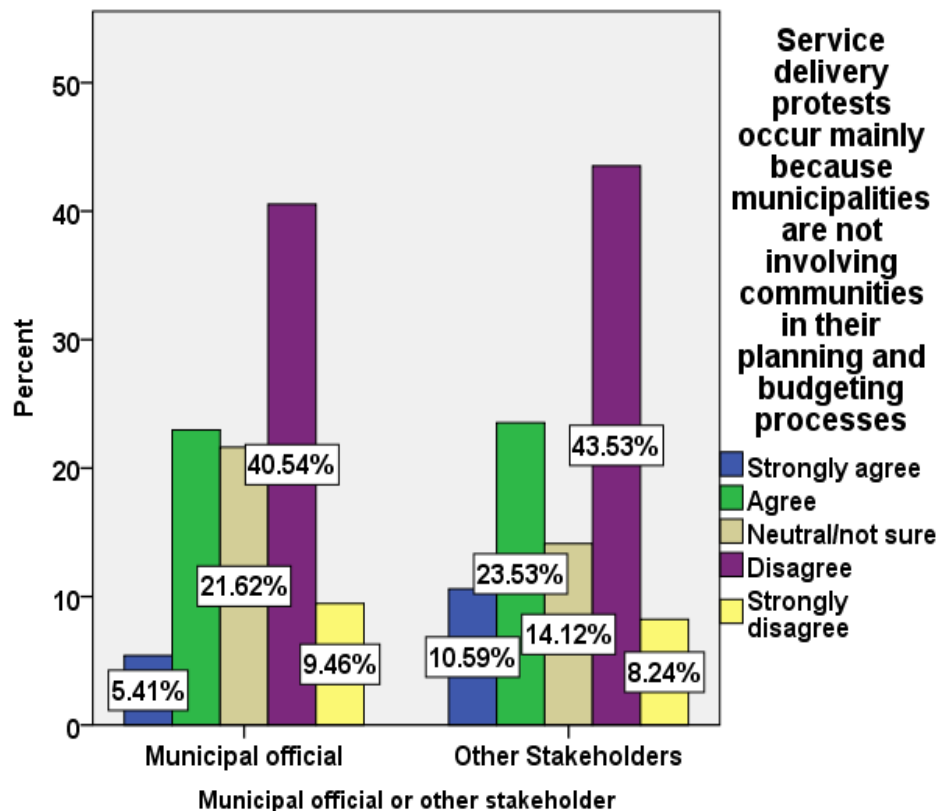


Figure 5.23: Whether or not service delivery protests mainly occur because municipalities do not involve communities in their planning and budgeting processes .

The results reveal that about 26% of the municipal officials and 34% of the other stakeholders establish a causal link between service delivery protests and the exclusion of local communities from municipal planning and budgeting processes. The respondents were then asked to assess the impact of public participation on service delivery in their municipalities. The results are summarised in Figure 5.24 below.

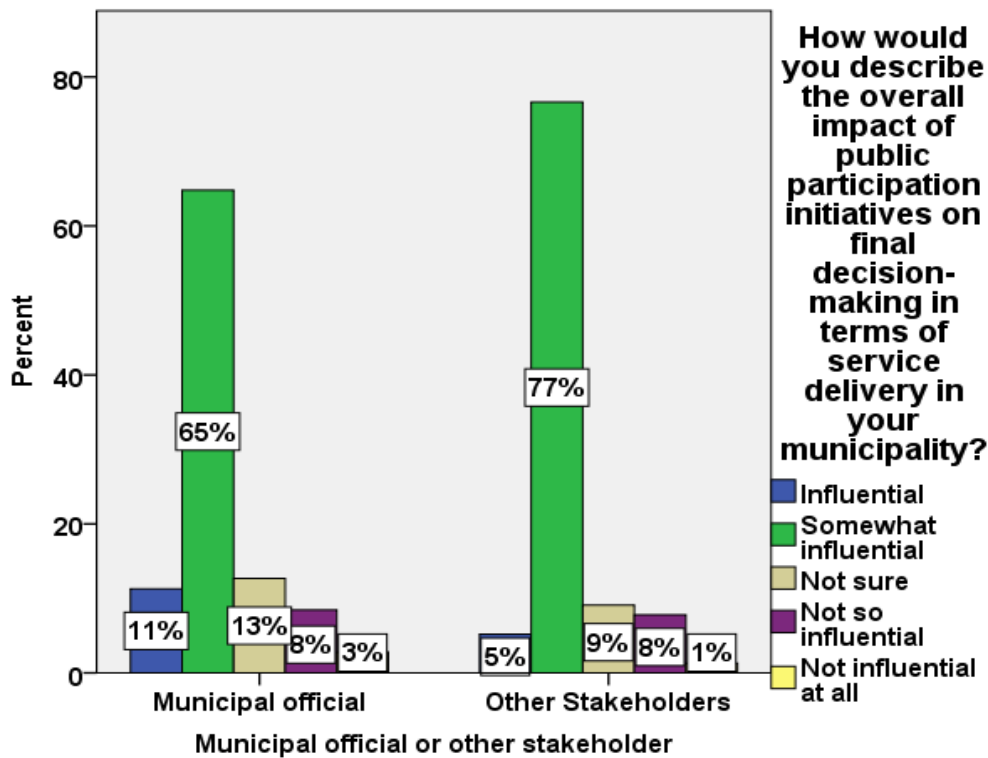


Figure 5.24: Impact of public participation .

Most of the respondents think that public participation has a minimal impact on service delivery in their municipalities. They agree that public participation may have benefits and can influence service delivery, but they are unsure if the way it is facilitated by the district is making any impact. The researcher also explored the extent to which the various stakeholders influenced municipal decision-making. The results of this exploration are presented in Figure 5.25 below.

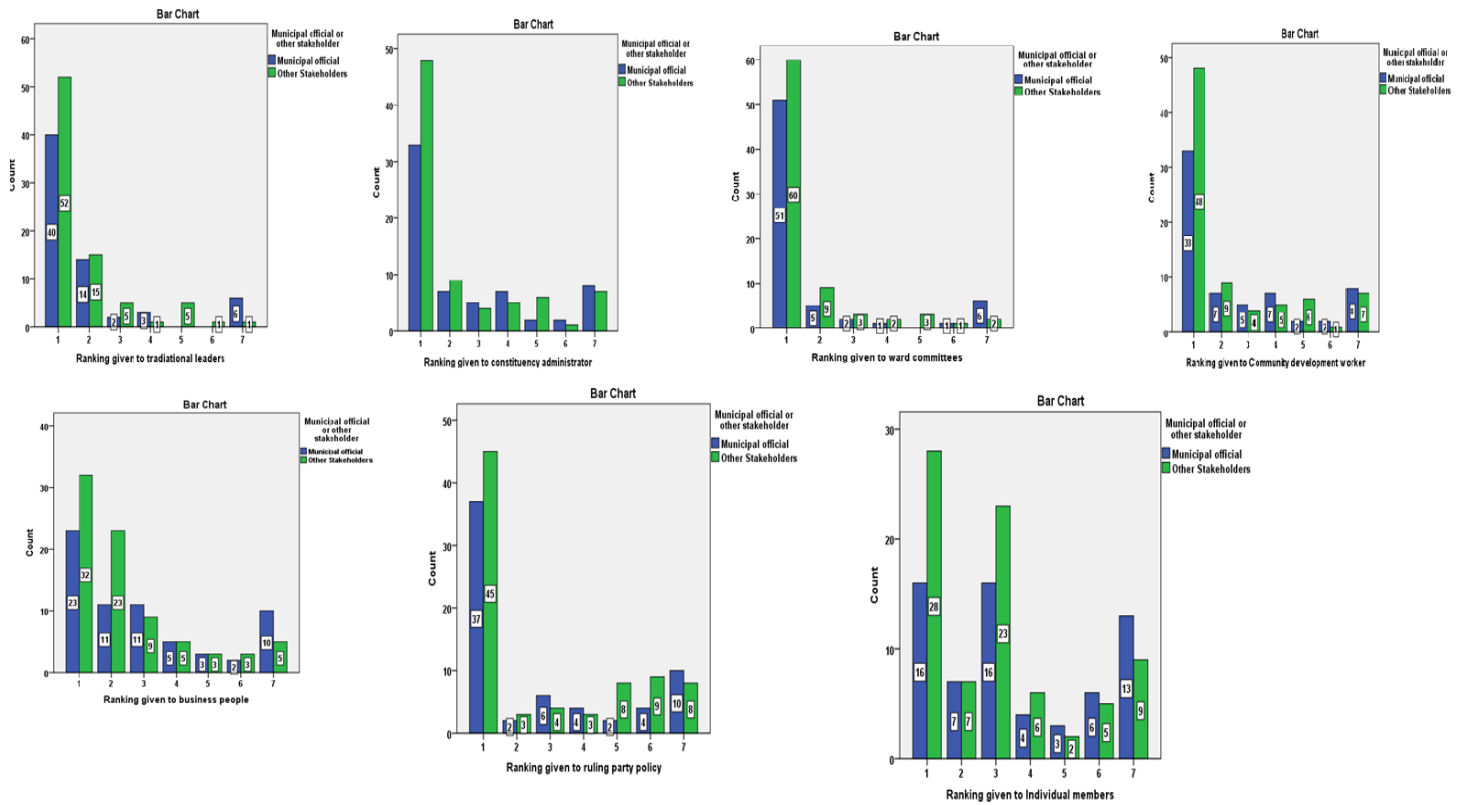


Figure 5.25: The extent to which different stakeholders influence municipal decision-making (source).

It can be seen from the figure above that individual members have ranked the list items by order of importance in terms of their influence in municipal decisions. All the respondents agreed that well-formulated and effectively-implemented guidelines and policies on public participation can enhance service delivery, if well monitored.

5.8. SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this chapter were to:

- Determine the manifestation of the concept of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery within the Capricorn District Municipality;
- Establish the capacity of public participation officials to discharge their public participation responsibilities;

- Describe and examine the current structures, mechanisms and legislative frameworks for the facilitation of public participation in the Capricorn District Municipality;
- Explore the allocation of resources (financial and human) to the public's involvement in municipalities within the Capricorn District;
- Determine mechanisms of and make recommendations to improve public participation in the Capricorn District Municipality; and
- Investigate the existence of a monitoring mechanism and evaluate its influence on officials' commitment and accountability with respect to public participation.

5.8.1 Manifestation of the Concept of Public Participation

It transpires that all Capricorn District municipalities have adopted public participation. Most of the respondents were of the opinion that their municipalities view public participation as an important mechanism and have developed policies and guidelines for public participation. For the respondents, public participation is meant for meeting statutory requirements, developing best value initiatives, gaining information on citizens, increasing citizen awareness, and developing local communities. The respondents viewed all these purposes as equally important – but, more important than deciding between particular options.

5.8.2 Mechanisms for Public Participation

The chief mechanism through which municipalities promote public participation is the Ward Committee system. Most respondents were of the view that their municipalities' Ward Committee system is fully functional and that Ward Committees are structured in a manner that is representative of key community groups. There is also consensus on the point that

municipalities are educating local communities about the role and operation of local government. However more than 10% of the municipal officials feel that local communities are not being educated about the operation of local government. Some of the methods used to promote public participation include awareness campaigns, meetings/Imbizos, hearings, and IDP/budget forum.

5.8.3 Resource and Capacity

Generally, the respondents agreed that their municipalities have a specific budgetary allocation for public participation. However, opinions on the adequacy of that allocation seem to differ from municipal officials to the other stakeholders. Equal proportions of the two groups believe that the budget allocation for public participation is adequate. However, there is a higher percentage of other stakeholders who opined that it is inadequate.

There is general consensus that municipalities have officers/offices responsible for public participation. However, opinions seem to vary on whether these officers are accessible at all times. Compared to municipal officials, the proportion of the other stakeholders who agreed that municipal officials are accessible at all times is relatively lower. Another cause for concern is the fact that there are about 11% of municipal officials who disagree that the municipal officials are available at all times. It would seem that there is room for improvement in terms of providing an adequate budget allocation and making offices responsible for public participation more readily-available at all times.

5.8.4 Constraints

The identified main constraints to public participation are lack of resources and lack of time. The following challenges were common to all municipalities under the Capricorn District Municipality:

- Poor planning;
- Translation of documents into languages spoken in the district;
- Political dynamics resulting in political parties always fighting for influence;
- Poor institutional arrangements such as weak Ward Committees;
- Inadequate human resources;
- Lack of feedback-report on issues raised by members of the public; and
- Budgetary constraints.

5.8.5 Effectiveness

The majority of the respondents indicated that public participation is “somewhat influential” in shaping the final municipal decisions. This seems in line with the finding that individual members are ranked the least in terms of their influence on municipal decisions. This means that municipalities should do more to place public participation in a position where it will be regarded as playing a more significant role in municipal decision-making.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an interpretation and analysis of the findings from the interviews and questionnaires that were administered to receive possible answers to the research questions posed by this study. The objective of this chapter was to explore the research findings and analyse the data obtained from the respondents from the Capricorn District

Municipality. The data obtained indicate that municipalities face a challenge with regard to public participation. Special attention was given to responses to the research questions. This chapter answered the set of research questions through its findings. This paves the way for the subsequent chapter which provides recommendations. The findings reveal that public participation is indeed taking place in the Capricorn District Municipality, even though it is not extensive, and that it is influenced by certain factors and elements. The findings from the interviews indicate that other challenges impede public participation and service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. Some of those challenges were mentioned in Section 5.7.4 of this chapter. The identified challenges seem to discourage members of the public from participating. Indeed, members of the public think that public participation is a time-waster, as certain municipalities within the Capricorn District impose their plans – against the will of members of the public. The findings reflect the need for political training and education for both the citizens and the councillors, as one of the challenges raised was the general lack of the capacity to foster public participation.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1. INTRODUCTION

This study examined the role of public participation in the enhancement of service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. Chapter One provided the framework and context of the study in order to ensure a deeper understanding of the topic. Chapter Two provided the South African local government's perspectives on the role and processes of public participation, including theoretical perspectives on the role of Ward Committees and municipalities' Integrated Development Plans. Chapter Three elaborated on the constitutional and policy landscape of public participation and service delivery. Chapter Four described the research methodologies employed in this research. Chapter Five presented an analysis and discussion of the results of the study. Chapter Six made recommendations in response to the challenges identified by the study in relation to the conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. This chapter also provided the conclusion to the whole study.

The new developmental mandate assigned to local government in terms of, *inter alia*, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the 1998 White Paper on Local Government appear to not have been fully grasped by the Capricorn District Municipality. In other words, certain role-players do not fully comprehend the implications of this new mandate. This assumption is based on the results of the quantitative and qualitative research.

This study has shed light on the role of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery, with specific reference to the Capricorn District Municipality. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to generate statistical findings. Some of the positive findings that emerged from the analysis of the data obtained from the respondents are as follows: 80% confirmed the importance of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery; the respondents knew that public participation and service delivery are constitutional mandates of all municipalities.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

The following were the limitations of the study:

- The study was based on a sample of respondents within each municipality in the Capricorn District Municipality; therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised or be regarded as reflective of the views of all population within the Capricorn District Municipality. However, these findings are useful indicators of the state of public participation in the Capricorn District Municipality.
- Some municipalities did not provide the researcher with all relevant documents, such as public participation guidelines and copies of public participation budgets. Therefore, such documents could not be analysed for the purposes of this study.
- The results of this study cannot be generalised to all municipalities in South Africa, as the Capricorn District Municipality served as a case study for the purpose of the research. Each local municipality has its own peculiar hardships and constraints.
- Service delivery protests in Blouberg and Polokwane municipalities affected the data collection as some relevant officials and councillors could not be accessed.

6.3 RECOMENDATIONS

Today's challenges cannot be solved with the same level of thinking that created them in the first place. The Capricorn District Municipality needs to do things differently, if it wants different results. This district needs to change its paradigm, to focus on serving the people and not elites alone. The Constitution and other legislations spell out the municipality's responsibilities and tasks in terms of public participation and service delivery. Some municipalities within the Capricorn District perform their tasks very well, but other do not comply. The following recommendations are based primarily on the findings of the empirical survey and the theoretical investigation on the status of public consultation and participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality.

6.3.1 A Differentiated Approach

The Capricorn District should develop a transformational agenda which recognises the existence of widely divergent levels of performance between different categories of municipalities in terms of service, public participation, good governance, and financial management. Thus, the district should set proper standards for municipal performance.

6.3.2 Managing Performance

The major problems faced by the Capricorn District result from the fact that it does not recognise and reward good performance adequately, and the lack of sufficient consequences for under-performance. Hence, the district should elaborate a set of indicators, as per its strategic objective.

6.3.3 Empowering Citizens to Hold the Municipality Accountable

The Capricorn District should endeavour to give all citizens a basic set of tools that will enable them to hold their municipalities to account and measure whether they are living up to their promises.

6.3.4 Good Governance

Good governance is at the heart of the effective functioning of municipalities. The Capricorn District should constantly monitor and evaluate its officials' ability to carry out their duties.

6.3.5 Resources Management

Sound financial management is integral to the success of a district municipality. Dedicated administrative support should be appointed, and such operating requirements as offices, stationery, telephones, and an operational budget should be provided. Committed funding provided annually as part of the operating budget of the Capricorn District Municipality's public participation plans should be forthcoming as a matter of priority. Provision should be made for realistic stipends or salaries to be paid to Ward Committee members, in an effort to motivate them to perform their functions with conviction and dedication. They are, after all, the "link" between local communities and the Capricorn District Municipality. The findings from the focus group interviews indicate that, currently, Ward Committee members receive an amount of R1000.00 when they attend relevant municipal meetings, which total only four per annum. Besides the recommendation of a realistic stipend or basic salary, it is further recommended that the CDM provide transport from designated areas, each week, to enable Ward Committee members to liaise more closely with the bureaucracy at the Capricorn District Municipality. A concerted effort should also be made to empower Ward Committee members with basic computer skills, so as to enhance their networking and communication skills.

6.3.6 Institutional Capacity

There is a need for the Capricorn District municipality to ensure that officials involved in public participation are adequately trained to engage with members of public within the district. The district need to ensure that officials acquire the necessary skills, especially in areas such as conflict management, negotiations and understanding community dynamics. Trained officials in public participation should ensure that public participation initiatives in the respective departments are not only done by councilors, but are also initiated and led by officials.

There has to be a focus on building strong municipal administrative systems and processes. This includes ensuring that administrative positions are filled with competent and committed people whose performance is closely monitored. Ward Committee members, officials, and councillors should be trained, and capacity building should be provided on issues of public participation and service delivery.

Regular capacity-building programmes should be offered to Ward Committee members, to assist them in carrying out their duties and roles more effectively. It is further recommended that Ward Committee members and ward councillors receive training simultaneously, because their functions are complementary and teamwork could thus be promoted. The Capricorn District Municipality should ideally engage with such structures as SALGA, PALAMA and universities, in order to facilitate such capacity-building initiatives. Certain “in-house” trainings could also be facilitated by the municipality – through staff with the applicable skills, knowledge and qualifications. Where possible, any training initiatives provided (whether by an external service provider or “in-house”) should bear formal

University credits, in an effort to encourage Ward Committee members and ward councillors to participate actively.

6.3.7 Creation of a Public Participation Unit

Due to the identified lack of public participation strategies in the Capricorn District Municipality, this research recommends the creation of a new normative model for enhanced public participation. This model advocates for the institutionalisation of public participation initiatives and strategies across the board in all the departments of the Capricorn District Municipality, with a Public Participation Unit based in the Speaker's Office assuming a coordinating role. The Capricorn District Municipality should also develop a Public Participation Strategy and Plan that will identify and communicate activities for each year in advance. A dedicated, adequate budget should be made available for this purpose, annually. Through this Unit, the municipality will amongst many functions ensure that the following activities related to public participation are well coordinated:

- Coordinating the work of Community development workers,
- Encouraging and facilitating the establishment of ward committees;
- Facilitating all IDP's, service delivery and budget gatherings and ,
- Mobilising departments and municipalities to engage in public participation programmes.

6.3.8 Roles and Responsibilities of all Structures Involved in Public Participation

It emerged, from the interviews and discussions, that there is a need for the activities of Ward Committee members to be more clearly articulated and better monitored. The equally important role of community development workers (CDWs) should also be redefined, as they, too, play a pivotal role in community consultation and participation initiatives. In this

regard, it is recommended that the roles and responsibilities of Ward Committee members, CDWs, and ward councillors be reviewed by the municipality, in an effort to identify the overlapping of functions – which clearly has a negative impact on the current public participation initiatives undertaken by the Capricorn District Municipality. Indeed, this research has revealed that, because the appointment of CDWs is facilitated by the provincial government, there appears to be a vacuum regarding the interaction that should take place between the councillors and the CDWs.

6.3.9 Coordination between Community Structures

The respondents expressed the need for the municipality to ensure that there was a working relationship between the different structures, so as to facilitate community members' participation in the activities of the municipality. A lack proper coordination between councillors, Ward Committee members, and CDWs is possibly the primary reason for the regular derailment of community programmes in the Capricorn District Municipality. Thus, it is recommended that the district establish a task-team, to identify the actual reasons for this lack of coordination and propose solutions to the current challenges.

6.3.10. Adhering to Constitutional directives

Current constitutional mandates with regard to the approach public administration should be implemented or done, tries to encourage that , it be exercised in a manner that shows Constitutional rights which include public participation are considered when servicing members of public.

The mandate calls for the public and municipal officials to be clearly and adequately informed of constitutional prescriptions and other piece of legislations relating to public administration which include public participation should be exercised, in order to apply such prescriptions correctly and thus render an effective and efficient public administration service.

This study recommends that Capricorn District municipality should implement constitutional principles related to public participation and service delivery in order to avoid these principles and mandates in effect stagnating. The success or failure of implementing constitutional mandates depends on the early education and training of municipal officials to understand the value and significance of these constitutional mandates. Municipal officials should be made aware of the fact that South African in this study Capricorn District citizens are entitled to effective and efficient compliance with constitutional principles, and may hold officials accountable to ensure such compliance (Van Heerden 2001: 159-160).

6.3.11. Guidelines/Policies on public participation

The study discovered that the district does not have well written guidelines and policies related to public participation. Hence the study encourage the district to develop guidelines and policies on public participation that talks to the local environment, situations and circumstances. The proposed guidelines should be planned with the aim of informing and managing critical engagement with members of public. The guidelines should clearly articulate the objectives of public participation and process to be followed when engaging with members of public within the district. During the development of such policies and guidelines, district should ensure that the views and inputs of affected stakeholders are solicited.

6.3.12. Institutionalisation of public participation

Capricorn District municipality is encouraged to ensure that public participation is institutionalised as a service delivery and good governance mechanisms. In order to do that the district should ensure that public participation units are established and have the necessary financial and human resources to support public participation activities.

6.3.13. New approaches and techniques to Public Participation

A common thread weaving through the current participation in the district need for new approaches that emphasize two –way interaction between decision makers and members of public as well as deliberation among participants.. Increasingly complex decision making processes, it is argued, require a more informed citizenry that has weighed the evidence on the issue, discussed and debated potential decision options and arrived at a mutually agreed upon decision or at least one by which parties can abide. The study recommends an active, engaged citizen (rather than the passive recipient of information) is the prescription of the day.

6.3.14. Meaningful Educational workshops and outreach

The challenge to involve members of society in policy processes and service delivery is an important matter in context of good governance, but public participation cannot be successful without knowledge and understanding governance about the work of state institutions, especially municipalities (Dudina & Sprindzuks, 2006). The study recommends that public participation in the service delivery is of cardinal importance if the district wants to deepen democracy in the district. Therefore, this calls for district's innovation son issues of public participation.

Empowerment of members of public through educational workshops, public hearings, exhibitions, sectoral councils etc, in the district should become one critical area of focus for the Public participation unit within the district of Capricorn. Outreach progammes should be

designed and developed and it might be appropriate in future to evaluate the impact of these educational workshops and outreach activities.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The focus of the study was to contextualize public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery as is applicable to the Capricorn District municipality. The literature survey, has indicated that public participation is a concept that may signify any process in a relationship between those that are governed and their governors. The study further investigated the role that is out to be played by the members of public in public participation and service delivery and the benefit, accompanying public participation towards the contribution to the development of local democracy in the Capricorn District municipality. In particular, the discussion was based on the notion of service delivery improvement.

Public Participation is no longer a new discipline in South Africa and has started to shape up as discipline since the 1980s. This essentially makes the work of the municipal councilors and officials very interesting and challenging. This is because in South Africa and many other developing countries, the work of public participation has not been fully developed into formidable theory or model. The challenging task for the district is to make the practical work much more formalized and canonized into more practical.

The purpose of this study was to undertake a survey on the conception of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. The study explored the theoretical and constitutional framework, as well as other legislations and policy documents related to public participation and service delivery. Environmental factors that can promote or impede public participation and service delivery in the Capricorn District

Municipality were considered. Subsequently, the study has offered various models, levels mechanisms, strategies and approaches that can promote service delivery through public participation.

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to collect the data that were analysed. The study made several recommendations that were informed by its findings.

International, regional, and South African perspectives on public participation were also analysed. The view of public participation as a tool to enhance service delivery in this study should be understood from the theoretical framework of substantive democracy which asserts that democracy should transcend political rights and address the socio-political challenges facing members of the public. Thus, the study encourages political leaders to endeavour to promote a culture of public participation as one of the components of democracy.

The study encourages and recommend that the district should employ new approaches and techniques to the current public participation model and further encouraged that members of public to be empowered to participate on issues affecting them through well-structured educational workshops.

The study demonstrated that public participation played a critical role in deepening democracy and promoting good governance. This is because citizens' involvement in governance processes ensures that their experimental and grounded perspectives inform the government on their needs and how these latter can best be addressed. Given South Africa's past, where prior to 1994 the practice of critical engagement between citizens and the government was frowned upon by an insular and self-perpetuating state, public participation should be regarded as a constitutional mandate. Indeed, the Constitution of South Africa clearly states that people's needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in all issues that affect them, especially those on services delivery.

This study's main objective was to investigate whether public participation is a tool that enhances service delivery in the Capricorn District Municipality. As such, it should be regarded as a continuation of research on the theme or topic of improved public participation strategies for local government institutions like the Capricorn District Municipality. The first lesson learnt during the study is that democracy can only be deepened when there is active citizen participation. The second is that although the Capricorn District Municipality has guidelines and policies related to public participation and service delivery, there are challenges in terms of implementation. The researcher would like to discuss this finding with the district – if granted the opportunity. This study can serve as a source document for further research on the explored topic.

Lastly, South Africa, this year, marks its 22nd year of the “experiment” of democracy. It has achieved much, however; much still has to be done and it is through study such as this where we can reflect on the achievements and identify ways in which we can improve this democratic process, which comparatively speaking, remains in its infancy. However, as South Africans we need to remain open to methods in which this democracy can be strengthened.

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