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Editorial

Christelle Auriacombe

University of Johannesburg

This first issue of the 2011 journal includes a diverse range of contributions, such as the results of research into higher education institutions, leadership, constitutional and conservational issues, as well as Local Government. In the first category, Gerda van Dijk and Chris Thornhill provide an undergraduate curriculum analysis of Public Administration in selected higher education institutions, while Hendri Kroukamp pays attention to new topic areas or skills that Departments of Public Administration and Management should introduce at universities. It is hoped that these skills will help improve citizens' quality of life and add value to tertiary education. Thus helping future role-players to fulfil their rightful role in delivering efficient and responsive public services.

In terms of the second category, Betty Mubangizi and Francois Theron reflect on Public Administration curricula in order to inculcate public leadership for citizen value. In turn, Thokozani Ian Nzimakwe deals with public leadership in a transforming society to ensure effective service delivery.

In the third category, Albert Venter provides a constitutional engineering perspective on the South African presidential election, while Annie Fourie and Kobus Müller propose governance-based innovations for biodiversity conservation, by focusing on the case of the Conservation Stewardship Programme in the Western Cape.

The last group of contributions covers Local Government. Lyndon Mark du Plessis and Liezel Lues provide a conceptual framework for preparing effective municipal councillors, in terms of ensuring the future of Local Government through skills identification. Mogie Subban, PS Reddy and Pregala Pillay focus on Integrated Development Planning and the primacy of community participation, with specific focus on a case study of eThekweni Municipality's Integrated Development Plan. Kishore Raga, John Derek Taylor and William Albrecht address the challenges of developmental Local Government and public participation in contemporary South Africa. Furthermore, Sam Ngwenya and Tasneem Majam assess the financial viability of metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng. The last article by Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu and Nirmala Dorasamy focus on Local Government's level of preparedness for disasters, in terms of a case study of Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements in the eThekweni Municipality.



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Although these scholarly contributions deal with a wide range of issues, they focus on the implications of current leadership and public service delivery problems and how to address them – through redesigned higher education curricula and policy content. It is clear there are major challenges that have to be addressed; particularly in relation to translating policy into practice and more importantly ensuring efficient and effective implementation of policies and programmes. This is what public administration, management and governance research and practice is all about. It is imperative that all these policy and legislative developments and strategies introduced should have a qualitative impact on public governance. More importantly, it should enhance service delivery and poverty alleviation on a local, provincial and national level. The issue of service delivery is currently high on the Government’s agenda, given the increasingly large number of public protests experienced within the public sector during the last two years. A strong political will and proactive and dynamic leadership in all three spheres are necessary to address some of the challenges highlighted above and also to promote good governance. Ultimately, this will ensure a more responsive Government.

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An undergraduate curriculum analysis of Public Administration in selected higher education institutions

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ABSTRACT

Public Administration Education has been a contentious issue as the discipline developed and struggled to find its own identity and theoretical framework. The article argues that Public Administration Education has been shaped by its historical influences and that the interdisciplinary nature of Public Administration poses specific challenges to its teaching. Public Administration, as a social science, finds its application in various political, social, economic and physical environments. The reality is that some common characteristics in the practice of public administration can be discerned, but this is not sufficient to create a theory. The implication of the above is that institutions of higher education, although led by South African Qualifications Authority registered qualification outcome, interprets the discipline based on their own peculiarities – leading to fragmentation and non-consensus as to what constitutes the discipline of Public Administration.

In this article, the authors argue that teaching Public Administration does not reflect any true discipline related inquiry. Rather, institutions of higher education react to the practice of public administration in teaching the theory of Public Administration. The authors argue for a balance between theory and practice to be evident in Public Administration Education. This article will explore, using inductive reasoning, the content



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and context of teaching Public Administration in undergraduate degree programmes. Selected institutions of higher education will be used. The article concludes with a framework which could inform future curriculum selection for the teaching of Public Administration.

“a fateful question seems posed: does Public Administration, by becoming everything in general, thereby become nothing in particular?” (Dwight Waldo)

INTRODUCTION

The argument can be made that Public Administration emerged out of the concern that politics corrupts and that administration inherently strives to serve. Citizens require effective and efficient service delivery and practitioners require scholars to provide answers to administrative challenges. What makes the teaching of Public Administration unique is the notion of *public*. However, the domain of what constitutes public is no longer a given. Administration is also a concept not easily defined and leading to different conceptual understandings. For some administration means getting things done and for others administration refers to the taking charge in order to get things done. Whichever conceptual understanding will have a definitive impact of what constitutes Public Administration Education.

In this article the history of teaching Public Administration will be highlighted in an effort to ensure a common understanding of the development of the discipline. However, the article’s main thrust is to make the case of Public Administration Education creating the balance between theory and practice. With a lack of a conceptual theory to guide the development of the discipline, this becomes an increasingly difficult task. The reality is that Public Administration Education is meant to have a positive impact of the daily lives of citizens, but due to the complex nature of the discipline, the positive impact is not felt and therefore, the importance and relevancy of Public Administration Education is undermined and schools and departments teaching Public Administration continue to fight for their right of existence.

The article will argue Public Administration Education within the context of the bachelors of administration undergraduate degree offered by selected departments and schools of Public Administration/Management. The following will be investigated:



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- UNISA: Department of Public Administration and Management BAdmin degree offered in the College of Economic and Management Sciences with a mixture of Public Administration, Accounting, Auditing, Business Management, Economics, Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Statistics and Law (Commercial and Labour).
- University of KwaZulu Natal: School of Public Administration and Governance BAdmin degree offered at the Westville Campus only and comprising subjects such as Public Administration, Public Management, Economics, Human Resource Management, Management, Marketing and Supply Chain Management
- University of Pretoria: School of Public Management and Administration BAdmin degree with specialisation in Public Management or Public Administration. The Public Management specialisation offers faculty wide subjects including Economics, Business Management, Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Politics and International Relations. The Public Administration specialisation is a pure Public Administration degree with a focus on the generic administrative functions.
- University of the Free State: Department of Public Management BAdmin degree with compulsory courses in Public Management, Municipal Management, Business Management, Economic Systems and Industrial Psychology.

From the above the argument is made that the BAdmin degrees offered at various South African higher education institutions have a strong management focus. The developmental nature of the South Africa government necessitates a strong emphasis on management competency and the following discussion will illustrate that the management focus of Public Administration Education has been evident ever since the discipline was conceptualised as a specific area of study.

A further deduction is that public administration and public management is evident in both the content (as will be proven later in the article) as well as the name of the selected academic units. For the purpose of this article, the authors propose that the difference between administration and management be acknowledged as it also relates to the central argument put forth in the article, namely that Public Administration includes a cognitive ability to theorise and Public Management is focused on ensuring that a particular skills set is taught. By including one of both as academic identity a specific preference or direction is implied.

HISTORY OF TEACHING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Before endeavouring to describe how Public Administration Education developed, the question should be asked 'what is education?' Aristotle stated



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that “nobody knows whether the young should be trained at such studies as are merely useful as means of livelihood or in such as tend to the promotion of virtue or in the higher studies” (SAQA 2000:3). In answering the question, one could also argue as to what the role and place of theory in education should be. If the result of education is the attainment of a particular set of skills, then the theory which led to the development of that skill set becomes less important. However, should the result of education be the attainment of cognitive abilities to enhance a particular skill set, then the theoretical underpinnings of that discipline becomes integral in the teaching thereof. Is education reproduction or is it the development of the mind and intelligence to understand and theorise?

In South Africa, public administrators are educated to become professional experts devoted to public service delivery. Bowman and Plant (1982) maintain that education should make provision for the balance to be created between *doing* public administration (the administration thereof) and *being* public administrators (leading the administration). Inherently, this reinforces the earlier submission, that education should balance skills and intellect (cognitive ability), that education should balance theory and practice. Ventriss (1991:4) highlights that the content of Public Administration Education should be approached by taking the following into consideration:

- relationship between scholars and practitioners;
- the need for common intellectual culture among public administration scholars; and
- the lack of an integrated approach for the analytic, managerial and policy-knowledge perspectives central to the public administration curriculum.

The reality is that practitioners look towards scholars to provide answers to administrative challenges. However, a lack of understanding and communication between scholars and practitioners leads to situations where these two parties become competitors and critics negating the original intent of education in a developmental state, which is creating the balance between theory and practice. Greene (2005:50) maintains that Public Administration Education has developed through the following paradigms which gave rise to specific schools of thought:

- the classical school in which the principles of administration were taught (1900-1940);
- the behaviourists which comprised an empirical period where behaviour was studied (1940-1970);
- the administration-as-politics school (1950-1970) which placed Public Administration back in the folds of Political Science, but as a second rate citizen;



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- the administration-as-management school (1956-1970) which focused on using economic principles to predict human behaviour with the subsequent emerging of the subfields of comparative and developmental administration;
- New Public Administration (1986-1990s) which stressed organisational humanism, policy advocacy, participatory bureaucracy and client-focused service delivery;
- Public Administration as Public Administration (1970-current) with the establishment of professional associations such as the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) with a renewed focus on professionalism and creating accrediting standards for Public Administration Education; and
- the refounding movement (1980-current) which has emerged as result of Gaebler and Osborne's *Reinventing Government*, privatisation and public choice theory with an emphasis on public accountability and equity.

The basic curricular structures and emphases for Public Administration Education emerged during the first paradigm and are evident even today (Rabin, Hildreth and Miller 2007:724). The argument that a public administration student becomes a public servant who is expected to be knowledgeable about the administrative function, systems, policies and processes is still held today, even though this argument was presented in 1887 when Woodrow Wilson called for the scientific and systematic study of administration. The first Public Administration curriculum in the United States of America was taught at the Johns Hopkins University between 1884 and 1896 and comprised foundation courses in politics, economics, history and law. The curriculum was however not emulated elsewhere and was soon replaced by a more practical, applied and efficiency-minded administrative management framework. The creation of the Society for the Promotion of Training for Public Service in 1914, as forerunner to the American Society for Public Administration called for professionalism and an enhanced knowledge base which led to the increase in public administration programmes offered by higher education institutions (Rabin *et al.* 2007:725-726).

Ellwood (1985:6) maintains that the curriculum developed during this period and based on the POSDCORB (planning, organising, staffing, direction, coordination, reporting and budgeting) formula would become the fundamental definition for public administration curriculum development and placed an emphasis on teaching management as a series of skills. During the 1920s and 1930s two specific universities had a formative influence on the development of the curriculum, namely the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University and the School of Citizenship and Public Administration at the University of Southern California. The Maxwell School absorbed the activities conducted by the Training School of the National Institute for Public

Administration who was headed by Luther Gulick and thus bringing practical application as the foundation for Public Administration Education. The founders of the Maxwell School, George Davenport, Luther Gulick and William Mosher, all believed and promoted an educational philosophy that built on administrative professionalism to combat political corruption and administrative inefficiency. The School of Citizenship and Public Administration at the University of Southern California developed both an undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum focusing on the prevailing norms of efficiency and effectiveness by introducing business techniques as part of Public Administration Education.

From the above can be argued that the close relationship between practice and theory is what makes Public Administration Education unique and also what hampers its recognition as an independent scientific discipline. Hanekom (1983:41) concurs that the although Public Administration might have been evident in what Socrates, Plato and Aristotle taught, and even though the Kameralists in Germany argued for the recognition of Public Administration, the discipline originated in the United States of America with Woodrow Wilson's *Study of Administration*. Thornhill (2006:794) states that Lorenz von Stein is considered to be the founder of Public Administration in Europe although Public Administration was deemed to be a form of administrative law. He acknowledges that the study of Public Administration in Europe gradually faded in favour of the study of Administrative Law.

The practice of public administration is, however, as old as human beings themselves and is guided by the political, social, economic, scientific and technological factors evident in a society. Hanekom (1983:42) argues that the vulnerability of the discipline to external factors leads to a blurred understanding of the domain of public administration. The study of Public Administration (and thus the teaching thereof) is considered to be for the purpose of ensuring that the administrative requirements to the delivery of services are understood and applied, which implies that the study is influenced by the practice – an undeniable fact and challenge for Public Administration Education.

THE LOCATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION

Thornhill and Van Dijk (2010) concur with Cloete (1967:4) that Public Administration is inter-disciplinary and as such finds its location as part of social and management sciences. This perhaps has the greatest impact on the development of a possible curriculum for the teaching of Public Administration. Since the discipline does not have measurable boundaries, the content becomes flexible and is influenced by the practice of public administration. Within the developmental state context, the teaching of Public Administration is not only



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concerned with ensuring the transfer of discipline-specific knowledge, but also with the minimum skills and competencies required for a public administrator to function effectively and efficiently. This is not peculiar to the teaching of only Public Administration, since the same is expected for any student graduating in any social or management science degree e.g. as accountant or as social worker. The difference lies in the fact that in most social and management-related fields, the existence of professional bodies and their impact on curriculum development contributes to delineating the field of study. In Public Administration, this is not the case.

Since Public Administration is not seen as a professional qualification (which implies a qualification accredited by an accepted professional association), every person active in the practice of public administration (whatever his or her academic background) will have an opinion about what should be taught in the discipline. Consequently, the diverse public sector becomes the source for trying to determine a homogenous teaching curriculum for Public Administration. Public Administration does not have an exclusive subject specific language, its concepts are defined in terms of the practice thereof and as such deductive reasoning becomes the order of the day. Cloete (1967:6) maintains that the lack of subject specific language means that no underlying theory exists to inform the teaching of Public Administration. In addition to the above, those who study Public Administration are not concerned with enhancing the theory thereof, but is more concerned with understanding the practice thereof. Unfortunately, without the discipline specific theory, the curriculum can become a product of individual whim or practitioner focus.

The reality is that the acceptance of Public Administration as a professional degree requires a body of knowledge enhanced through scientific investigation based in the understanding of a particular theoretical framework. Mosher (1975) contends that "Public Administration has cross-interests with virtually all other social sciences. In fact, it would appear that any definition of this field would be either so encompassing as to call forth the wrath or ridicule of others or so limiting as to stultify its own discipline." Authors such as Stone and Stone (1975) and Bowman and Plant (1982) agree that the interdisciplinary nature of Public Administration Education is disappointing, because as the role of government becomes more complex, so does the teaching of the discipline. This pedagogical diffusion leads to Public Administration becoming a safe haven for scholars from all differing disciplines and academic programmes becoming a "disoriented educational octopus, with appendages moving in all directions, lacking a sense of normative coherency" (Ventriss 1991:8). The argument is that interdisciplinary study is good, but a fragmented study is not. Fragmentation leads to the discipline losing substantive worth and scholars exhibiting only a limited understanding of the link between administration and the public. Greene (2005:50) argues



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that the tension created by the interdisciplinary nature of Public Administration Education has been evident since Public Administration developed its own reputation, created its own professional associations and journals and pursued its own interests. However, the existence of an own reputation by no means guarantees that there is consensus as to what the reputation should be. Ventriess (1991:10) maintains that the conceptual understanding of the importance of the public to the teaching of Public Administration is what makes the discipline so vulnerable to any field finding itself a home within the academic departments and schools of Public Administration.

The above becomes evident when looking at the four selected universities and the location of their departments of Public Administration (and/or Public Management) as well as the qualification of their academics (doctoral, masters, honours and bachelors degrees).

Table 1: Location/qualifications pertaining to departments and schools of Public Administration/Management

Institution	Faculty/ College	Department/ School	Doctoral degree	Masters degree	Hons/ B degree
UNISA	College of Economic and Management Sciences	Department of Public Administration and Management	DAdmin DLitt et Phil DPhil PhD (Public Affairs) DCom PhD (Economics)	MAdmin MPA MA M Tech	BAdmin + Hons BA + Hons BTech BSoc Sci
University of KwaZulu Natal	Faculty of Management Studies	School of Public Administration	DAdmin	MAdmin MM (P&DM) MPA	BAdmin +Hons BSoc Sci BA + Hons
University of Pretoria	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	School of Public Management and Administration	DAdmin DPhil	MAdmin MA MPA	BAdmin +Hons BA + Hons
University of the Free State	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	Department of Public Management	DAdmin DTech (Public Management) PhD (Public Management)	MAdmin MA (African Studies) MPub	BAdmin + Hons BA +Hons BPub + Hons

From the above the following arguments are made:



- B Admin degrees have a strong management focus and all departments or schools are located in the faculties or colleges of economic and management sciences or management studies.
- All departments or schools seem to have a strong focus on management as evident from the names of the academic units. Thus, the focus on management specific subjects is expected.
- Faculty members come from a variety of different backgrounds although the degrees are either situated in social sciences or management sciences. Without a clear theoretical framework for the discipline it is to be expected that the focus of Public Administration Education becomes the product of the individual academic backgrounds of faculty members and the teaching of their respective courses will be aligned to their academic orientation e.g. scholars from social sciences may focus on a more philosophical or abstract understanding while management scholars focus on the skills that are required in performing the public administrative function.

The following section will highlight the specific content of Public Administration Education. The teaching of Public Administration as Public Management will also be described although the argument that practice has led education should be evident from the above discussions.

TEACHING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The argument proposed and supported in this article is that teaching Public Administration should strive to create the balance between theory and practice. The lack of a conceptual theory makes this endeavour a difficult and challenging exercise. Hodgkinson (1978:4-5) conceptualised administration by arguing that administration and management should be seen as two ends of a continuum. Administration presents the higher levels on the continuum (the more philosophical, abstract and theoretical), while management relates to the lower levels, which includes the universal functions pervasive in all public organisations. The continuum is presented in Figure 1.

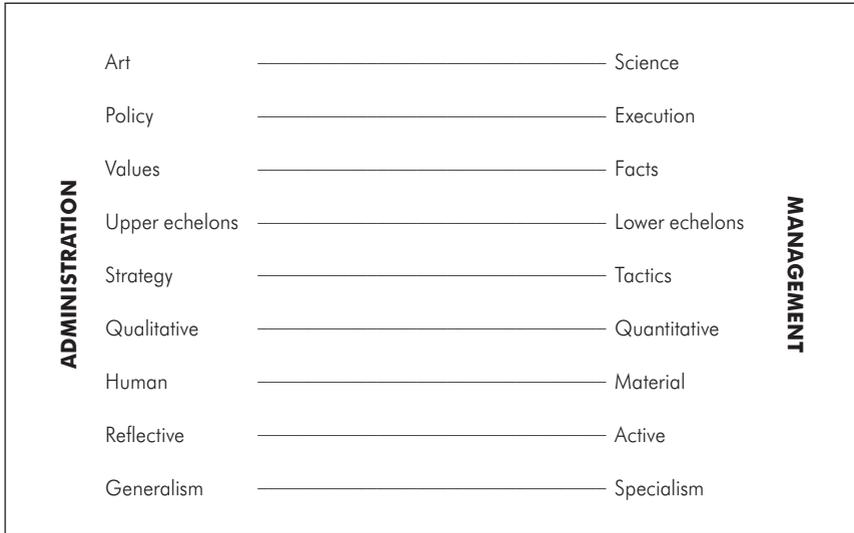
From the figure it becomes apparent that administration related to the aspects dealing with the formulation of purpose, the value-laden issues and the human component of the organisation, while management relates to activities which are routine, definitive, programmatic and susceptible to quantitative measuring. While the above might be contentious, the value for the teaching of Public Administration lies in the identification of what might be required from a curriculum in terms of developing both cognitive and practical skills. The reality is that Public Administration Education needs to address requirements



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Figure 1: Conceptual continua for the definition of Administration



Source: Hodgkinson, C. 1978. *Towards a Philosophy of Administration*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. p.4.

for both scholars and practitioners. Woodrow Wilson (1887) states that “the object of administrative study to discover, first, what government can properly and successfully do, and secondly, how it can do these proper things with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost either of money or of energy” (Greene 2005:48).

The selected higher education institutions focus on both Public Administration and Public Management in the name of their academic units as well as the content of their degrees, with the exception of the University of KwaZulu Natal. The following section describes the content of their Public Administration and/or Public Management modules with the aim of inducing a possible theoretical framework for Public Administration Education.

From the above table the following arguments are proposed:

- There is consensus between departments and schools of public administration and/or management as to what should be inherent in the teaching of a B Admin degree, namely a focus on the public management functions. As to what constitutes the public management functions the generic functions proposed by Cloete seems to still act as guideline for curriculum development.
- The curriculum of Public Administration includes a focus on public management and specifically on ensuring that a particular skills set is taught e.g. public financial management, public policy, public human

Table 2: Compulsory modules in selected B Admin degrees

Institution and degree	Module descriptions
<p>UNISA B Admin</p>	<p>First year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature, content and scope of public administration • The structuring and functioning of public services <p>Second year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations of public administration • 1 elective chosen from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Protection services ◦ Creation of wealth ◦ Welfare and social services ◦ Culture and education ◦ Environmental affairs <p>Third year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 electives chosen from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Public management skills ◦ Public human resource management ◦ Public policy ◦ Organisational studies in the public sector ◦ Public financial administration and management ◦ Reflective Public Administration ◦ Ethics in public administration and administrative justice
<p>University of KwaZulu Natal B Admin</p>	<p>First year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary Public Administration and Politics • Introduction to Public Management <p>Second year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Local Government • Introduction to Public Sector Financial Management • Introduction to Public Policy Management • Introduction to Public Sector HR Management <p>Third year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Sector Performance Management • Development Policy and Project Management • Public Service Delivery: Principles, Approaches and Processes • Organisational Change and Leadership
<p>University of Pretoria B Admin (Public Management)</p>	<p>First year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Public Administration Theory • Constitutional framework for public Administration <p>Second year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Management Functions • Public Administration Research Methodology <p>Third year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics in public administration • Comparative public administration <p>Created with</p>

Institution and degree	Module descriptions
University of Pretoria B Admin (Public Administration)	First year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Public Administration Theory • Constitutional framework for public Administration • Public Resource Management (Decision making and public policy) • Public Organisation Studies • Public People Management Second year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Management Functions • Public Administration Research Methodology • Public Resource Management (Financial Management) • Public Organisation Studies • Public People Management Third year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics in public administration • Comparative public administration • Public Resource Management (Project Management) • Public Practices (WIL module)
University of the Free State	First year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Public Management Second year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Financial Resource Management • Public Policy Management • Introduction to the study of Municipal Governance • Municipal Management Third year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macro and Micro Organisational Analysis • Human Resource Management • Current issues in Local Government • Municipal Financing

resource management and project management. The politics/administration dichotomy does not seem to feature in the development of the Public Administration curriculum. In all cases the study of Politics is encouraged, but synergy between the curriculum of both disciplines is not evident.

- The curriculum of Public Administration is not theory led and students are not introduced at the undergraduate level to the developments in the study of Public Administration. Students are thus not taught to deliberate on the domain of their study and modules do not reflect an inclination towards the development of abstract, theoretical, cognitive/thinking skills. A possible exception here is the module *Reflective Public Administration*.



offered by UNISA although only as an elective. It is clear that although Public Administration is considered to be a social science, the basis of social scientific thinking, namely the study of Philosophy, is not emphasised as an integral part of Public Administration Education.

The reality of teaching undergraduate students a particular skills set and not focusing on why the skills are important or where it originated from leads to students being able to do the job, but not be the job. The argument made at the beginning of the article that a balance should be created between *doing* public administration and *being* public administrators is hereby enforced.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

"...public administration as orientation and literature, as research, activities, concepts, and techniques, has grown so large and heterogeneous that to think of accommodating it as a sub discipline of *anything* is *prima facie* absurd" (Waldo 1968:7-8). The article argues that the circumstances which characterised the Public Administration Education conversation in the 1960s are still evident today. Public Administration is a discipline but without a universally accepted theoretical understanding. The boundaries of what constitutes the public are fading and as such the content of what is taught is ill-defined. Public Administration and Political Science share a history and cannot be taught in isolation, but this does not mean that the one is subordinate to the other or should be absorbed by the other. It simply implies that both disciplines have the right of existence since both are indispensable to the effective and efficient functioning of the state. The bureaucratic nature of the function of public administration is no longer seen in a negative light, but rather places the emphasis on the administrative reality of the public administration function and as such on the necessity of contributing to a professional public administration capable of addressing the complex challenges of the day.

Ventriss (1991:5) maintains that specific factors which impact on Public Administration Education have not been addressed, and include:

- the lack of appropriate communication between scholars and practitioners;
- the pedagogical ambivalence of the impact of practice on theory;
- the tension created through the interdisciplinary nature of Public Administration which could lead to fragmentation of the discipline; and
- the lack of an integrated conceptual framework for the content of Public Administration (an ill defined discipline which leads to an ill defined curriculum).



The South African developmental state attempts to address the above through the promulgation of the *Public Administration Management Bill, 2008*, clause 16(a) which calls for senior management members to teach at institutions of higher education. The proposal seeks to develop a closer working and communication relationship between practitioners and scholars. However, by involving practitioners in the teaching of Public Administration the emphasis once again falls on development of a skills set without understanding the necessity, development or theoretical context thereof.

The involvement of practitioners during the development of curriculum is an accepted academic practice. The rationale for the inclusion is to ensure alignment between practice and theory. However, with an emphasis on practice the balance between theory and practice is not promoted. The argument that public administrators are not recognised as a profession means that their input focuses on government agendas and not on the promotion of the public administration function.

The Wikipedia Online Dictionary (2010) describes a profession as a vocation founded upon specialised education. Furthermore, specific requirements are set for the establishment of a profession, namely:

- full-time occupation;
- national and/or international association regulating and overseeing the members as well as accrediting the education and/or training; and
- members submit themselves to codes of professional ethics, which means that not everybody can or may belong to a profession.

Should Public Administration be able to establish itself as a profession a single qualification will have to be introduced, promoted and protected. Although national and international professional associations exist (such as ASSADPAM, NASPAA and IASIA), these associations do not function as accrediting bodies to institutions of higher education, they do not enforce minimum educational standards for undergraduate degrees and they also do not promote professionalism through a comprehensive and compulsory code of ethics. With the absence of a profession, the creation of a uniform undergraduate curriculum becomes impossible and institutions of higher education have discretion in the conceptualisation of an undergraduate curriculum.

Mention should be made of the decisions ratified during the 2010 Annual Conference and General Meeting of the International Association of the Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA) accepting standards of excellence for postgraduate academic programmes. These Standards of Excellence for Public Administration Education and Training identify institutional; programme development and review; programme content; and programme management and administration criteria upon which schools and



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departments of public administration/management may obtain accreditation for their postgraduate qualifications. The participation of academics from the University of Pretoria, University of KwaZulu Natal and University of the Free State ensures that undergraduate programmes will also benefit from the manner in which professionalism is strived for in, at this stage, postgraduate academic offerings.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The article argued that curriculum development in Public Administration should strive for reflecting a balance between theory and practice. It seems as though the emphasis of practice in current B Admin degree curriculum leads to students who are able to, for instance, compile a public budget, but not necessarily interpret or understand the relevance of public budgeting in public administration. A closer relationship between practitioners and academics are necessary, but academics should agree on what the theoretical necessities of their discipline are to ensure that the discipline is protected and recognised for its scientific contribution. Should practitioners look to scholars for answers to their challenges, scholars should accept their responsibility for ensuring that cognitive skills are integral in Public Administration Education.

Specific challenging areas for the discipline include its interdisciplinary nature and its lack of professional recognition. For the South African developmental state the promotion of Public Administration as a specific area of study is undeniable and a future area for research should focus on the multitude of undergraduate degrees all professing an emphasis on Public Administration. The impact of this fragmented academic offering on the theoretical underpinnings of the discipline should be thoroughly investigated in order to contribute to the professional recognition of the discipline.

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Efficient and responsive public services

Are departments of Public Administration and Management at universities playing their rightful role?

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ABSTRACT

Much of the reform processes that have been implemented in the public sector have not been based on evidence that change would benefit those using the services, those working in them and the community as a whole. To date much attention was given to the extent of reform efforts, but little inter alia on how the education of future public servants should be altered or updated to reflect these reforms. Attention will therefore be focused on what new topic areas or skills should be introduced by Departments of Public Administration and Management at universities in light of the reform to be able to improve the quality of life of citizens and for universities therefore to play their rightful role in the delivery of efficient and responsive public services.

INTRODUCTION

An efficient public service is vital to a well-functioning country that maximises its developmental potential and the welfare of its citizens. The public service should play a particularly important role in developing countries, striving to extend services and reduce inequalities, and demonstrating to citizens that their society is capable of organising itself in an efficient way. In South Africa the public service is unfortunately rapidly gaining a reputation of inefficiency, corruption and incompetence as governmental institutions routinely receive qualified audits,



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thereby undermining, rather than maximising, the developmental potential of the country.

A fundamental challenge to rectify the above-mentioned situation is to provide top, scarce skills and leading technology in preparing individuals for the public service, as the situation cannot be solely blamed on the public service *per se*. In this regard universities, as custodians of new knowledge provision, have a responsibility to align their priorities with those of their country, the continent and the global world in order to produce talent and innovation to support both social and economic development.

However, the role of education and training (for purposes of this article education and training are seen as two equally weighted components of a holistic capacity building process) in building these capacities, has unfortunately not been taken seriously. Those involved in training the future generation of public servants should therefore critically assess the nature of their activities in order to ensure efficient and responsive public services. Regarding the research method, a literature study of appropriate sources containing authoritative publications, books, journals, the internet and official documents such as departmental policies was conducted to gather information, while the field operations included the use of focus groups. These groups consisted of 56 public servants in managerial positions – level 12 and upwards – who are currently enrolled at the University of the Free State in post-graduate Public Administration and Management studies. Attention will subsequently be focused on factors influencing efficient and responsive service delivery.

FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

The public service plays a key role in creating an environment in which citizens can flourish and benefit. The essential services for which the state is responsible are prerequisites for the economic growth which can bring improved prosperity and enable future improvements in public services. However, although some success stories can be identified in specific areas, there are disturbing signs that poor service delivery is well-established in many parts of the state. Examples are, firstly, the increasing community dissatisfaction about poor municipal service delivery, resulting in protests and civil disobedience causing millions of damages to state and private property (State of Local Government Report 2009:2); and, secondly, the overwhelming number of municipalities (279 out of 283) receiving poor qualified audit opinions, either disclaimers or qualified opinions, from the Auditor General during the 2007/2008 audit cycle due to a lack of controls, mismanagement and lack of governance principles. At national and provincial



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level, 20% departments received adverse or qualified audits (Auditor General 2009:4). Further examples are the size and variety of employment in the public service to the challenges of organisational and human resource management confronting the government. Public sector employment is highly unionised – 36% being affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) – and are industrial relations a contentious and highly politicised issue within the African National Congress (ANC) Alliance, as has been demonstrated by the three week public sector strike in August 2010 (Zulu 2010:2). The above-mentioned shows that basic failures of administration and governance, as well as improper and wasteful expenditure, infect much of the public service.

According to the respondents of the focus groups, Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) (2010:24), Fourie (2010:3) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) (2010:14) the following reasons can be seen as contributing factors towards inefficient and non-responsive service delivery in the public service:

- the appointment of incompetent people to various positions;
- low capacity where government suffers from weak personnel and system capacities due to insufficient skills bases, low compensation and poor human resource and operational policies;
- lack of co-ordination and integration of governmental activities;
- poor management systems coupled with organisational centralisation and top-down governance. Developing country governments are seen as very strong hierarchical, centralised and top-down. Such structures emphasise control in the governance powers and require role-players to adhere to the processes as alluded above. It is further argued that government departments are organised according to the classical bureaucratic model which is based on process and position, non-innovation, unproductive and unresponsive production processes and limited potential for change;
- the state is overambitious in the sense that its objectives exceed its capacities;
- service monopolies where public entities in the developing world are seen as uncompetitive and use inefficient processes leaving no incentives to operate otherwise;
- a vulnerable political context is not conducive to an efficient system;
- social insulation, low transparency and poor participation. The social explosion is based on the process and normal professionalism which is internally biased with non-responsive incentive structures;
- poor organisational evaluation and accountability mechanisms. Weak internal evaluation mechanisms and the lack of evaluation entities in civil society (external social evaluation) to comment unbiasedly on government performance is another reform challenge; and
- a lack of communication with citizens.

Against this background, the importance of improving public service delivery is clear. A key question that should be posed is how citizens rate government responsiveness. The Public Service Commission (2010:42) conducted a study with a sample of citizens to establish what they regard as important drivers of their satisfaction with government services. The study found the important drivers to be **accessibility** to public services, being treated with **courtesy**, **timeliness** in the provision of services, the availability of **information** on public services, the **knowledge and competency** of officials, the condition of **facilities**, where services are provided, **fairness and equity** in service delivery, **value for money**, **redress** where a promised standard has not been met, and the **outcome** of the contact with a service delivery unit (actually obtaining the service or product). Respondents in the focus groups indicated that the most important of these drivers are timeliness, followed by information, outcome, knowledge and competence of staff and redress. Improving services should furthermore *inter alia* go hand-in-hand with the provision of information about attempts to improve public services and available communication channels about poor services and corruption; sound political leadership, seen against the background of major historical inequalities, single-party dominance and a racialised public discourse which impedes understanding and action; good management practices and openness to effective partnerships with private enterprise (Centre for Development and Enterprise 2010:26). To solve problems in service delivery will, however, be nullified if public servants are not dedicated, committed and supportive to government, as progress in service delivery lies in the hands of public servants regardless of the system in place or actions undertaken to rectify the situation (Sexwale 2009:4).

The undertaking of the South African government to deliver quality services to the public manifested itself in numerous policy documents that have been designed for one common goal – the improvement of life for all. An emphasis was placed on meeting the basic needs of all the citizens by a reduction in unnecessary government consumption and the release of resources for productive investment and the redirection to areas where the greatest need exists. This meant that government institutions had to be re-orientated to optimise access to their services by all citizens, within the context of fiscal constraints and the fulfilment of competing needs (Wiseman 2006:96). It meant that the government had to revamp its expenditure management system where new initiatives had to be funded by the reallocation of existing resources, a stable fiscal environment had to be provided for longer-term departmental strategic planning, business planning had to be introduced to assist the Department of Finance in developing an overview of strategic planning across government institutions, and emphasis had to be placed on the continuous modernisation of programmes and by delivery of services with the available funds. The



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implications were that firm and binding financial targets had to be established and programmes and activities that were delivered, had to be subjected to tough scrutiny (Arnaboldi & Lapsley 2003:349). As can be expected, responses to these endeavours varied from highly emotional – sometimes politically driven – and negative comments, to critical but rational analysis of the outcomes.

Caution has been expressed that reforms in South Africa should not only focus on social upliftment objectives, since these efforts can only be achieved if the South African economy can be placed firmly on the path of sustainable economic growth and development. The present state of growth and development in South Africa seems to demonstrate an apparent lack of progress in terms of delivery of *inter alia* infrastructural, housing, health and educational services (Molele *et al.* 2010:4 & Public Service Commission 2010:59). To sustain its programmes, the government must develop a culture that supports continual change and improvement. The public service of South Africa must remain a structure of which South Africans can be proud. Service delivery, therefore, should be continually modernised, improved and directed towards the best interests of the citizens. A tool through which this can be achieved is training.

TRAINING OF FUTURE PUBLIC SERVANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Transformation and change, coupled with technological innovation, has shifted economies from industrial production to knowledge based production of goods and services. Knowledge is widely understood as a necessary and sustainable source of effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness. In an era characterised by rapid change and uncertainty, successful institutions are those that consistently create new knowledge, disseminate it through the institution and embody it in technologies, products, and services. As an academic field, Public Administration and Management is obliged to advance theoretical and pragmatic understanding of governmental institutions and processes with a symbiotic relationship that exists between knowledge and action, theory and practice (Evans 2007:128). Such an understanding, however, cannot be advanced solely by the explication of current knowledge through education and service, but it also requires the generation of new knowledge through *inter alia* research, innovation, technology, skills development and managing this knowledge (Nongxa 2009:6). This process requires increasingly sophisticated skills and knowledge levels of human resources. While institutions are applying varied strategies to stay ahead of global competition, the value of human capital would be put in jeopardy without continuously investing in the skills and knowledge capital of the workforce through *inter alia* training.



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Although it can be accepted that training is not a miracle cure by which all management and administrative problems can be solved, it is one of the human resource development practices which, in an integrated manner, can be used to obtain meaningful change and renewal (Erasmus *et al.* 2008:45). Training, described as learning that is provided in order to improve performance (Vukovic *et al.* 2008:655) will assist the government to develop the professional capacities of public servants and promote institutional change, thereby contributing towards equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to carry out their jobs effectively. A survey by the Public Service Commission (2010:59) indicated that state departments generally have skills development plans in place, but only 48% of those sampled by the PSC were based on a thorough skills needs analysis, and in only 12% of the cases was the service delivery impact of the skills development activities assessed. For departments to improve the relevance of their skills development plans, it is critically important to strengthen, through a coordinated approach with all role-players, the manner in which skills assessments and provision are done.

The numerous training programmes in the field of public administration and management, be it the formal curricula, work integrated learning to improve the challenges regarding bridging the gap between theory and practice, or Memoranda of Understanding between different role-players to transfer skills for improved service delivery, should therefore address very basic issues dealing with the design and development of programmes and curricula which adequately reflect the needs of ongoing national reforms and the administrative reforms. These two realities generate far more intense demands upon the contemporary public servant for innovative professionalism than has ever before been the case, an aspect highlighted by all the respondents in the focus groups (*cf.* Wessels 2006:1505). Innovation is increasingly regarded as the key to economic, social and environment progress: "It is the main source of economic growth, it helps improve productivity, it is the foundation of competitiveness, and it improves welfare. Economic growth and well-being are now widely recognised as being founded on a well-functioning knowledge and innovation system in which all actors, both the typical knowledge-creation actors (such as universities and public research organisations) and private firms, perform well" (Soete 2006:30).

According to the World Bank (2009:2) governmental innovation policies should address at least four dimensions:

- technical, financial and other support for innovators – this is partly being done in South Africa, through the National Research Foundation and other grants;
- reducing obstacles to innovation in competition and in regulatory and legal frameworks;



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- promoting the educational system to secure adequate human resources; and
- responding to the needs and demands of surrounding communities where local communities and governments are been mobilised.

This in turn creates a need for those involved in the training of public administrators and managers to respond in new, more creative and more imaginative ways to ensure that efficient and responsive public services are delivered.

ROLE OF DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT AT UNIVERSITIES TO ENSURE THE DELIVERY OF EFFICIENT AND RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES

The crucial question for public administration professionals is whether the conventional pattern of adult training provides a practical, contextualised form of rationality to meet the above-mentioned objectives and which makes learning of the necessary skills possible as a response to reform efforts. In South Africa, for example, the answer to this question is unfortunately negative. The reason been that the systems and practices of training with reference to the government do not appropriately address the increasing demand for high-level, up-to-date knowledge and skills, due to its mission and purpose, the criteria for success and its learning structures (Wessels 2006:1507 & Nzimande 2010:67). This is supported by the Public Service Commission (2010:8) which states that the functioning of the machinery of government needs to be strengthened through the development of appropriate skills to ensure that institutional capacity is built and services can be delivered optimally.

In the field of public administration and management the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) is currently charged with building the capacity of public servants in the work sphere. The goal of PALAMA is to foster and co-ordinate the delivery of training in practical management skills and in the common ethos and values required for a professional public service. As such, two major objectives will be strived towards, i.e. executive-level management development for the Senior Management Service (SMS) and the expansion of training initiatives for middle and junior management (PALAMA 2009:11). However, the training assistance of universities and provincial academies are necessary to equip potential public servants with relevant skills before they get to the work sphere.

A factor which should be considered when dealing with the transfer of the skills and the impact of training in the public sector is the quality of



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the work of the service provider. Quality of work relates *inter alia* to the qualifications, skills and experience of teaching staff and the relevance of the information being shared (*cf.* Smith 2003:41). In South Africa a host of legislation and policy initiatives were promulgated to implement reform in the areas of planning, finances and quality assurance. The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) has been working on implementing a national system of quality assurance based on both (i) an understanding of quality as higher education institutions' main responsibility, and (ii) of the influence that the different historical trajectories, missions and aspirations of each institution have had on the current state of the higher education system and its future possibilities (Higher Education Quality Committee 2004:3 & Higher Education Qualifications Framework 2007:5).

Simultaneously, the approach of the HEQC to quality assurance is premised on the view that facilitating the achievement of improved quality in higher education is a powerful way of giving effect to the reform objectives of equitable access with success and enhanced social responsiveness by universities. Taking this into account the HEQC has designed a system of quality assurance in which programme accreditation, institutional audits and quality promotion and development, support and interaction with each other as parts of an integrated system (HEQC 2004:5 & HEQF 2007:8). The implementation of a quality management system is seen from a process perspective that takes into account the relationship between inputs, processes, outcomes and outputs in a developmental trajectory that has improvement goals (HEQC 2004:6, HEQF 2007:10; CHE 2010:1 & Worrall *et al.* 2010:121). In the field of public administration and management, quality assurance should be linked to the following issues associated with the curriculum in order to prepare future public servants to deliver efficient and responsive public services:

- a reorientation of the curriculum, especially for senior administrators and political executives, to emphasise the regional and international context of public administration and management;
- more emphasis in the curriculum (for public servants at all levels) on the issues of economy, productivity and efficiency, concerns for a social safety net, effectiveness of stated policy objectives and responsiveness to clientele groups; and
- public servants should not only be trained in “how to do more with less”, but also be familiarised with the new socio-economic development strategies, including new areas such as the environment and foreign trade, and investigate their administrative implications (Llorens *et al.* 2010:123).

Respondents of the focus groups and the National Association for Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) (2009:16) – an accreditation body



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for public administration/affairs programmes in the United States of America (USA), propose that public servants should have the required skills and the ability to manage in public organisations, to participate and contribute to the policy process, and to analyse, synthesise, think critically, solve problems and make decisions, and communicate and interact in diverse groups and in diverse settings. In contrast to this relatively broad, skills-based approach to the subject matter and expertise required by public affairs programmes, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) identified subject matter areas that it deemed critical to quality education as follows:

‘organizational concepts and institutions, policy evaluation, budgeting and finance, public administration, ethics, and politics and legal institutions . . . public human resources management, information resources and management, and intergovernmental/ intersectoral relations’ (Henry *et al.* 2008:21).

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (UNDESA/IASIA) Standards of Excellence for Public Administration Education and Training (2010:10) suggests that the programme content of training programmes of universities should reflect:

- international state-of-the-art concepts and insights, theories and methods;
- ‘evidence-based’ taught methods, procedures and policies;
- a multi-disciplinary basis;
- consultation iro the needs of the organisations for which the individual is being prepared; and
- specific components to enhance the student’s competencies, values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically, equitably, effectively and with efficiency.

These components should include:

- the **management of public service organisations**, that is human resource management; budgeting and financial processes; administrative and constitutional law; effective communication skills; information management and new technology applications. Van Jaarsveld (2010:4) classified the information technology skills into three areas, namely:
 - information and communication technology skills needed for modern life outside the workplace, known as digital literacy or e-literacy;
 - information and communication skills in the workplace necessary for responding to changes in business and industry; and



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- information and communication technology skills for specialists in the information technology industry.
- **improvement of public sector processes** focusing on the development of high performing organisations; management of networks and partnerships; the delivery of public goods and services; management of projects and contracts; supporting workforce diversity; motivation and design of public sector organisations;
- **leadership in the public sector** through *inter alia* creative and innovative problem solving; leading institutional and organisational transformation; conflict prevention and resolution strategies; promoting equity in service delivery; developing approaches to poverty alleviation; promoting democratic institutional development; public sector ethics;
- **the application of quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis** focusing on institutional and developmental economics; policy and programme formulation, analysis, implementation and evaluation; decision-making and problem-solving; and strategic planning;
- **understanding public policy and the organisational environment**, that is political and legal institutions and processes; economic and social institutions and processes; historical and cultural context; the management of economic development; and acknowledging and reconciling cultural diversity; and
- **public sector ethos** including being knowledgeable about and understanding democratic values; respect for individual and basic human rights; social equity and the equitable distribution of goods and services; social and cultural diversity; transparency and accountability; sustainable development; organisational justice and fairness; recognition of global interdependence; and civic engagement.

It can therefore be deduced that training programmes should capacitate future public servants to think analytically and critically; deal with complexities, uncertainty and ambiguity; be flexible; involve other groups and institutions in society to realise policy goals; and apply life experiences to academic and training activities. In this endeavour, cognisance must be taken of the above-mentioned components and should Departments of Public Administration and Management at universities adapt their programmes to reflect the new demands and realities facing those who are and will be guiding the public sector in the future to ensure that these institutions play their rightful role in ensuring efficient and responsive public services. This exercise must, however, according to Green *et al.* (2009:18) not be equated to curriculum maps, which show areas of skills development within existing curricula, as such curriculum mapping has the potential to foster superficial and ineffective approaches to the development of the required skills.



CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it can be deduced that although public service reforms took place in South Africa and fundamental changes have been achieved, the constant questioning and striving to find better ways of delivering improved services must continue. This is necessary against the background of dissatisfaction with current services been brought about by *inter alia* a lack of coordination, poor communication and participation and low capacity. To prepare public servants to adapt to changing circumstances it is clear that training is one mechanism which, if properly utilised, could bring about a visible change in the performance of the public service. The support of Departments of Public Administration and Management at universities in this regard is crucial, and should these departments critically assess the nature of their activities to assist in developing innovative professionals and to determine whether they play their rightful role in ensuring efficient and responsive public services. To address this situation, specific components which would enhance the student's values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically, equitably, effectively and with efficiency were proposed. These included *inter alia* the management of public service organisations, improvement of public sector processes, leadership in the public sector and the application of quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis. Personal capacities to thus be analytical, flexible, applying life experiences to academic and training activities and dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty would therefore be transferred through these endeavours.

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Inculcating public leadership for citizen value

Reflecting on Public Administration curricula

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ABSTRACT

Although broadly advocated and entrenched in South African law, the practice of public administration often tends to pay lip service to the principles of public participation and citizen empowerment. It would seem that public managers, who plan and implement service delivery processes do not fully comprehend the local social and meaning-giving contexts in which the public exists. A matter that could be attributed to the training they receive.

The recent Winelands (2010) Conference on *Public Leadership for Added Citizen Value* introduced the principles of *citizen value* and *public leadership* into the discourse of public administration theory and practice in South Africa. This article examines the suitability of existing curricula at selected South African universities to inculcate a people, citizen centred approach in Public Administration teaching. It does so by exploring the curricula of the Bachelor of Administration of selected universities and by drawing on discussions held with selected academics. In addition, the authors draw on their experience in teaching Public Administration as well as research supervision in the discipline.

The article concludes that while academic conferences are vibrant in their discussion of values and notions of public leadership, public governance, public value and public participation, this does not sufficiently reflect in the curriculum of Public Administration – at least not at the undergraduate level.



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INTRODUCTION

Academic conferences are invaluable in shaping both the theory and practice of academic disciplines. Not only do conferences provide space for academics and practitioners to present their research, but valuable academic networks are established and contacts built. Conferences have the added potential to fundamentally impact on both the curriculum and the practice of an academic discipline.

So it was with Public Administration and the Minnowbrook I-III Conferences in America as well as the Mt Grace Conferences I-II in South Africa (Theron & Schwella 2000). Cameron and Milne (2009:380-395) argue that while there were important differences, both the Minnowbrook and Mount Grace Conferences have been influential on Public Administration with regard to scholarship, professional education and training in the discipline of Public Administration? They have, for this reason, been referred to as “the watershed conferences which tried to shape Public Administration in times of turbulence” (Cameron & Milne 2009:380). The recent Winelands Conference (2010) added yet another dimension of reflecting about Public Administration when it not only introduced the principle of public leadership and citizen value, but linked the two principles.

In this article the authors reflect on the continuously developing discourse of conceptualising Public Administration theory and practice by examining Public Administration curricula from selected tertiary institutions in South Africa. Examining the curricula allows one to establish the extent, if at all, to which various academic teaching programmes incorporate conference discourse generally, and specifically, the principle of citizen value. The authors advocate that public value needs to be located within the level and space of “publicness” that is; the combination of ideas, issues, people, relationships, practices and sites that are in the public domain. “Publicness” also refers to the space allowed for the public to participate in the design, delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and governance of institutions and services (Newman & Clarke 2009:2-7; Cornwall & Coelho 2007 and Mhone & Edigheji 2003).

Some may rightly ask “*why do the authors continuously debate Public Administration theory and practice?*” This recurring question is asked by academics as they are forced by practical realities and challenges to refocus and adapt to stay “relevant”. The authors interrogate what difference Public Administration make (or can make) through teaching and research to better prepare students that will contribute significantly to policy implementation within South Africa’s current socio-political reality.

With globalisation, public administration is no doubt experiencing “challenging times” the world over. The challenge is particularly significant for



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the South African public where, due to fundamental socio-political changes, discourse tends to be preoccupied with narratives of decline in public policy implementation. Newman and Clarke (2009:1) warn of a “new debate” developing in the public sphere. This debate, Newman and Clarke (2009) contend, is concerned with *inter alia* an unsustainable environment, security concerns, food insecurity, global warming, poverty, social exclusion and a lack of authentic public participation. This growing debate calls for public action and clear guidance from both academics and practitioners. In particular, academic leadership, innovation and direction are required if Public Administration hopes to remain relevant as an academic discipline and respected by government, and the public alike. Newman & Clarke (2009) enlighten academics about the “chain of connectivity” between *publicness; the public sphere; public value; the politics of the public* and *public action*. In South Africa, if one assesses the quality of public services, it is not always clear if and how the above connectivity functions – is it connected or dismantled? One thing is clear though and that is, that academics in the discipline are researching, they are debating and they are sharing their thoughts through publications and conferences as the following discussion will reveal.

FROM MINNOWBROOK TO WINELANDS – A BIG LEAP OR A SMALL STEP FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION?

The young and eager academics brought together by Waldo for the first Minnowbrook Conference (1968) focussed on the need for a Public Administration that addresses public interest. Minnowbrook I marked the birth of the “New Public Administration” which was normative in approach and characterised by a move towards normative theory and social concern. It was also characterised by an attempt to break away from the technical precepts of the POSDCORB (planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting) model developed by classical Schools exponents, namely Gulick and Urwick (Hughes 2003:24-31).

Subsequent conferences in the Minnowbrook series were particularly concerned with the importance of productivity and performance management in the public sector (Cameron & Milne 2009:5; Bailey 1989; Guy 1989 and Frederickson 1989) and on how Public Administration, Public Management and Public Service could better respond to current times effectively (Cameron & Milne 2009:380 – 395).

In 1991, following the political changes in South Africa, the New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI) was launched in South Africa (De Beer 2003:478) as an attempt to reenergise, unify and transform Public Administration



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and Management into a relevant discipline. Based on this initiative, the Mt Grace Conferences (I&II) were initiated to map out a framework under which Public Administration and Development Management as a discipline and practice could be transformed.

A clear message from the Mt Grace Conferences I & II was that “the theory, teaching and practice of Public Administration was in crisis in that it was too descriptive, reductionist, fragmentary and ignored other dimensions and approaches to public administration” (Cameron & Milne 2009: 386). One of the conference resolutions called for, among others, an explicit establishment of a *developmental focus* as opposed to a control, regulatory and managerialist framework in Public Administration teaching and practice.

Changes in Public Administration and Development Management since Mt Grace I, though seen as superficial by some (see Gasper 2000:22), included the adoption of a development and management oriented curricular as well as the abolition of the divisions between white-oriented and black-oriented Public Administration. Fundamentally the curricula did not change and as Cloete (2000:14) noted, the Public Administration teaching content remained too descriptive and lacking in analytical and explanatory techniques. For this reason, a call was made to change the focus and depth of research in the discipline. The Mt Grace Conference II resolved that research should be relevant, empirically rigorous and critical and that it should be geared towards generating new knowledge rather than rehashing existing knowledge.

Since 1997 the School of Public Management and Planning (currently the School of Public Leadership) at the University of Stellenbosch has presented the Winelands Conferences. These bi-annual conferences increasingly attract national and international participants. In the past, the themes have ranged from networking for sustainable delivery; good governance; outcomes-based governance; ethics, to mention a few conference themes (see Meyer, Theron & Van Rooyen 1995; Burger, Theron & Van Rooyen 1996; Theron, Van Rooyen & Uys 1998; Theron, Van Rooyen & Van Baalen 2000 and Van der Molen, Van Rooyen & Van Wyk 2002 for published conference proceedings).

The 12th Winelands Conference, in the view of the authors, took on a *paradigmatic shift* with and advanced the concepts of public leadership and citizen value as conference themes. Papers were focused on these concepts and subsequent discussions called on the public service to take a leading role as informed by that which the citizen's value. Muller's entitled *Creating public value through collaborative environmental governance* example, showed the benefits that accrue when government finds alternative ways of contributing to public value and adopts new roles to cope with what he calls “the limits of governance”. In his paper, which examined the benefits of collaborative arrangements for resource management, Muller affirms that such arrangements



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require processes and consensus-building between stakeholders and knowledge sharing to enable the development of sustainable solutions to new challenges. Muller concludes that such collaborations require a “shift of emphasis from management skills to enablement skills that engage the public and that bring multiple stakeholders together for a common end” (Muller 2010:13).

Nabatchi and Goerdel, in their paper entitled *Reconciling managerialism and Public-centred administration: the role of Lead Administrators in creating public value* offered theory-driven strategies for reconciling managerialism and public-centred administration to better create overall public value through service delivery. While pointing out the importance of efficiency in public administration, they warn that a focus on this alone crowds out important values that are critical to the functioning of government, including a reduction in public participation and an erosion of democratic principles in service delivery processes.

Mubangizi and Theron in their paper entitled *Public leadership in local government for public value – what role for South Africa’s community development workers?*, located the notion of public leadership within the service delivery debate at the local government sphere, and proposed locally based solutions in the pursuance of service excellence for public value. In particular, they point out the role of the newly established Community Development Workers (CDWs) Programme suggesting how these CDWs can promote public value through processes of engagement with the community and by acting as a link between public managers and the communities they serve.

Probably the most poignant paper relating to public leadership and citizen value was the Kafka Brigade Research Programme whose paper, *Public management Theory in Practice*, presented a process approach to tackling bureaucratic dysfunctions through an understanding of public value, public sector organisations and public leadership. The process approach suggested in the paper highlights (among other things) the importance of putting the public at the centre while involving all stakeholders; reflection on all projects undertaken so as to understand cause and effect while maximising learning; and creating a safe environment for public servants to innovate, share new ideas and challenge long held assumptions. In short, the Kafka Brigade Research Programme calls for a greater understanding by public servants of the public and the environment in which the public exists.

What emerges from most of the 12th Winelands Conference papers is the shift away from an inward-looking bureaucracy seeking to manage internal processes efficiently and effectively, to one that is outward-looking, seeking to not only create linkages with the public but to create dialogue and seek to understand what the public, in fact, values. To do this requires public leadership—a notion that flows from a relationship between key concepts that have dominated the realm of both theory and practice in the public sector organisations. Notably,

these are Public administration; Public management; Public governance as discussed below:

THE CONTINUUM OF PRINCIPLES – IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT CURRICULA

A detailed discussion of the concepts of public administration, public management, public governance and public leadership is beyond the confines of this article. It is suffice to argue that these key concepts reveal a progressive shift towards greater participation of the public in public services and an increasingly flexible bureaucracy in the pursuit of public value. There is no doubt that the nature and quality of the public service by and large depends on the nature and quality of the system of education and specifically the Public Administration curriculum in South African institutions of higher learning. It is in these institutions that the above mentioned key concepts will become real in influencing public action. It is also through these institutions that the discourse in conferences will translate into practical application

Connaughton and Randma (2003) argue that the education system ought to respond to the demands of public administration while at the same time shaping the nature of that administration. A curriculum therefore, should respond to and inform public administration practice both through the content taught and the knowledge generated by research. The concerns of both the Mt Grace Conferences about content of research and teaching of Public Administration in South Africa were thus significant and timely. During that period South Africa was going through fundamental changes to democratise the State by shifting it to one that would not only be socially conscious but also be internationally connected. At the same time, both the discipline of Public Administration, and the practice globally, had undergone changes in response to the New Public Management (NPM) debates. As Newman and Clarke (2009:5) state, “While the dominant managerial logistics associated with the high point of the NPM were based on economics, public services now require therapeutic or psychological skills in order to deliver developmental and behaviour-changing strategies”.

Thus South Africa’s public service required a move to a skill-based or technocratic approach of *doing things right* (efficiency). At the same time, South Africa’s public service requires a move towards a compelling moral requirement for public managers and the public service to *do the right thing* (effectiveness). The time for mere administration and maintenance of the status quo while being oblivious to the public being served and the resource implications for sustaining such a process had come and gone.



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Doing the *right thing* in the public service requires that public institutions make a concerted effort to move in a democratic and socially relevant direction and function in a manner that promotes social justice and deliberately removes social inequity. Following public sector reforms of the 70's and beyond, public management came to be viewed as a panacea for achieving efficient, effective and politically popular governments (Lynn 2006:104). These reforms, whose principles were embedded in the New Public Management Paradigm, called for market driven changes to make the bureaucracy entrepreneurial, competitive, customer oriented and result-driven. This, in essence, meant the introduction of private sector ideals in the public sector domain. At the heart of these reforms was a theoretical mix of public choice theory and agency theory (Hughes 2003).

In South Africa, these principles are embedded in The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997 – referred to as the *Batho Pele Principles*. Fundamental to this White Paper is the notion of *value for money* and *efficiency*. It is no surprise therefore, that curricula to train public servants in South Africa (generally the Bachelor of Public Administration), has been too focused on ensuring that public servants *do things right*. Such a curricula trains students on how to manage resources, keep records and religiously follow the prescripts of POSDCORB. There seems to be less focus on understanding *what the right thing* is, i.e. who it is the public institution is serving? What are the power relations between and within communities being serviced? Or what the real needs of the public are?

Implicit in the *Batho Pele* Principles and in the constitutional principles of Public Administration in South Africa is the zeal to make government programmes more responsive to the public's needs. This can only happen if programmes are designed, not from the point of view of government officials, but from the point of view of the public as recipients of services. The benefit of public participation in the creation of public value is well documented in South Africa's public service delivery systems. Many public structures like parliamentary committees, citizens' forums and street committees as well as IDPs and *izimbizo* (Mubangizi 2010) have been established to facilitate discourse between the public and the government.

Barnes, Newman and Sullivan (2007:2) have shown that the public is becoming increasingly keen on public policy systems by demanding more transparency. They have also shown that, as a result, public service workers are being exposed to new experiences and encounters. This is the case, for example, when public servants have to deal with public service delivery protests and an irate public. In this regard, Barnes *et al.* (2007:3) advise that public servants develop the capacity to change their orientation to what they do and how they do it.



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Public managers need to understand the socio-economic context in which they function and the implication of their actions on the needs of the public. While public participation offers transformatory potential, it is critical to realise that institutional practices can constrain the participation processes (and related benefits) by producing a loss in trust by the public (Barnes *et al.* 2007:6). Thus the role that public managers' play as "facilitators" or "enablers" of service delivery at all spheres of government is critical. To this effect, a curriculum of Public Administration should train and develop public managers who are creative, able to ask different questions and able to discover alternative knowledge without getting stuck with organisational maintenance. It should prepare public administrators for the ambiguous, unpredictable consequences of POSDCORB. Such a curriculum would have to be democratic rather than technocratic as differentiated in the discussion below.

Morgan (1984:263) defines a *technocratic* curriculum as one which focuses on precise knowledge of processes, procedures as well as expert decision-making and efficiency. The technocratic view, Morgan adds, assumes that the world represented in the curriculum is rational and standardised and is as such predictable and capable of manipulation to attain goals. Trained under this curriculum, a good public manager shows systematic organisation of tasks, projects and programmes for the successful implementation of public policy.

Conversely, Morgan (1984:263) defines a *democratic* curriculum as that which emphasises localism, public control and accountability. A democratic view in a given curriculum emphasise participation and collective decision-making. It assumes that in the real world public administration is practical, subjective and contingent upon a range of factors. Trained under this curriculum, public managers admit that, rather than systematic organisation of tasks, projects and programmes, there is a diversity of approaches to achieving desired public policy outcomes.

In the training and development of public managers, a *technocratic* curriculum would be one which emphasises public administration processes, project, finance or human resources management. A *democratic* curriculum on the other hand, would place emphasis on development theory, social policy, gender relations, rural development and the like (cf. Henderson, 2001).

From Minnowbrook to the 12th Winelands Conference, a call has repeatedly been made to change the focus of the teaching and practice of Public Administration. What has transpired in South Africa in this regard? What curricula changes have occurred since the Mt Grace deliberations? To what extent are our curricula in South African institutions mindful of the inherent conflict between developing public servants that *do things right* i.e. are *technocratically* efficient and developing public servants that *do the right thing* and are effective, i.e. public servants that are democratic and socially alive to the public they serve?



The authors consider the above questions by examining curricula from selected tertiary institutions and hypothesise that while academic discourse has followed a continuum from public administration to public leadership, fundamentally our curricula remains biased to the technocratic(s) of public administration with little input from the democratic aspect of a curricula.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this article was to examine curricula of the Bachelor of Administration in selected institutions to obtain an overview of the extent to which concerns of the public are incorporated into the curricula and in this way establish the “*democratic*” content of the curricula. A study of curricula in selected universities was undertaken. A purposive sampling technique was used to select Universities that offer the degree and whose curricula appear on their websites. This was followed by a one-on-one discussion with an academic teaching on the Programme. While the authors appreciate that detail in curricula focus cannot be clearly assessed by interpreting course framework contents alone, it was possible to draw conclusions with regards to the curricula’s focus. In the discussion of findings, the names of the universities are omitted in keeping with ethical considerations.

FINDINGS

University 1

Based in the Faculty of Management and Commerce, the Bachelor of Administration aims to produce a cadre for the developmental State and thus enable students to fulfil the role required of an official in the public service, non-governmental organisations and civil society in general.

The 1st year modules are predominantly in line with the technocratic approach. In addition to Public Administration as a core module, the modules offered at 1st year are; Business Management, Financial Accounting and Statistics. There is a slight focus of the human sciences at this level in that Economics is offered as a mandatory module as is Political Science. The 2nd level is much the same but in addition, students are offered a wider exposure to fields which include Development Economics and Administrative Law. At the 3rd year level, a good balance of subjects is offered with Public Administration modules equally interspersed with Political Science, Administrative Law and Development Economics is maintained. While there is a bulk of technocratic modules in the

1st and 2nd year, there is a gradually shift to modules in the developmental and legal domain by the final year of study.

University 2

The Bachelor of Administration, offered in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, aims to build the capacity of students to participate and contribute to managerial issues of policy making, human resource management, organisational restructuring and ensuring accountability in public institutions.

In the 1st year the programme provides students with a variety of modules outside mainstream Public Administration which, at this level, comprises a mere 20%. In addition to Public Administration, students have compulsory modules in Communication, Academic Literacy, Computer and Information Technology, English and Politics. In subsequent years (2nd and 3rd) the programme grounds students in Public Administration modules but allows electives from a vast number of fields from (largely) the management sciences. In addition, electives from the field of Law are available in addition to Political Science, International Relations and Organisational Psychology. There is no exposure of students to the study of Development Studies or any module in the social sciences. The curriculum is thus more technocratic than democratic.

University 3

At the 1st and 2nd level, the Bachelor of Administration Programme offers students a good balance of courses from the fields of Public Administration, Management, Economics and Development Studies. In the 3rd year, although more Public Administration modules are offered, students still have an option to select elective modules from other faculties and in this way, are able to gain exposure to such fields as Law, Anthropology and Development Studies. While the introduction of modules from Law, Anthropology and Development Studies is noted, there is, by and large a clear leaning towards the technocratic and the managerial aspect of the curriculum than to a democratic one.

University 4

The Bachelors of Administration degree aims to build the capacity of students in management and governance aspects of the public sector. The 1st year allows a mix of modules in Public Administration and South African Politics. In the 2nd year a variety of management modules are offered including Human Resource Management, Financial Management and Organisational Theories. Also on offer



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is a module in Urban and Rural Management – a module that is not offered in any of the Universities in the entire study. The 2nd year modules are steeped in developing managerial skills. The picture remains similar at the 3rd year level. An important aspect to note is that students are introduced to knowledge generation through a module on Research Methods in Public Administration, the only of the selected institution that offers a research module.

University 5

In this University the Bachelor of Public Administration can be taken with inter alia Economics, Business Management, Financial Accounting, Industrial Psychology, Political Science, Sociology and Philosophy at 1st year level. At 2nd year level the above combinations are continued. In 3rd year, students specialise in either Economics, Business Management, Financial Accounting, Industrial Psychology, Political Science, Sociology and Philosophy. The introductory 1st year module Orientation to Development, Society and State; the 2nd year module in Development Theory and Paradigms and the 3rd year module Micro-Development Strategies are more Development Studies oriented than Public Administration/Development Management, while Integrated Development, Policy, Management (Theory and practice capstone) is specifically practical and outcomes based. The modules with a development focus have clearer people-centred practical outcomes than the Public Administration modules, which are Public Management and Policy; Government; Development Policy Frameworks; The Public Policy Process and Public Management Strategies. The development oriented modules have a clearer focus on public value issues, and the rest are somewhat technical and “managerialist” in orientation. A focus on social research through the modules is unfortunately absent. A strong binding element through all modules is theory, management, strategy and policy implications.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The current state of the Bachelor of Public Administration discussed above shows that while some universities focus on the technical, other universities focus strongly on the democratic curricula. The two do not have to be mutually exclusive. Indeed, in this article the authors do not suggest that the teaching of public administration should be exclusively democratic curricula steeped in the humanities or social sciences. However, what emerges from the discussion above is a tendency for the curricula to emphasise the *technical* aspect of public policy implementation wherein students are drilled into the knowledge of the process of carrying out government functions and doing so efficiently



and economically. With few exceptions, the curricula shows less focus on the general developmental context, be it social, cultural, political or economic, in which government activities are typically carried out (see Davids 2009:25-26). If curricula more or less emphasises the broader process, it is likely that future public managers will know how well to budget, manage resources, interpret policy but *will not* necessarily have a holistic understanding (see Kotze & Kotze 2003:76-99) of what it is that the public actually value and how best to assist.

With exceptions here and there, none of the curricula of the selected universities incorporate a specific and clear practical component. A practical component of the curricula could take the form of student placements or understudy where students are exposed to the public service work environment under the guidance of the university and as part and parcel of the academic programme. As it is, most students of the Bachelor of Public Administration in the universities studied are not given an opportunity to test the practical aspects of the discipline whilst still in the universities. The disadvantage here is that such students will not be able to functionally relate the theory to practice and will take a long time to relate to their work environment in the public sector.

With the exception of University 4, none of the curricula offer a specific or specialised module which expose students to Public Administration research methods. Students are not explicitly exposed to the basics of knowledge generation or creation. This would also mean that they are given limited exposure to computations of basic statistics or the interpretations of graphs and tables.

Based on an overview of the curricula of the Bachelor of Administration from the selected universities, it can be concluded that, by and large, the curricula leans towards a technical focus, emphasising POSDCORB principles. It assumes that once public managers have the right plans and execute them to the letter, the results will be precise and this will have successful outcomes for government. While the knowledge of these technical aspects is necessary, it is not sufficient in making good government and good governance. For the latter to be achieved, an understanding of the policy context, a perception of democratic and developmental values as well as the effectiveness of elected officials and the public's ideals are fundamentals that will make government work, and work better.

The findings are reminiscent with McLennan (2007) who noted that South Africa's curricula in Public Administration tended to be descriptive and historical in nature, focusing on existing State structures, rather than context, comparative structures and processes of change. McLennan (2007) further noted that there was no clear relation between theory and practice since the curricula, with the exception of technicians (now Universities of Technology),



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was devoid of relevant practical components. The observations in this study are also reminiscent of Meserumule and Mashigo (2009) who regret the absence of economic principles in the study of Public Administration and who suggested that it be included as an 'anchor subject' in the instructional offerings of the degree programme.

DO WE OR DON'T WE NEED TO CHANGE AND RE-FOCUS THE CURRICULA ?

Knowledge today is highly situated, rapidly changing and more diverse than ever before (Kalantzis *et al.* 2003:16). The notion of situated knowledge discards the claim that knowledge is authoritarian, universal and impartial (Harraway 1991). Instead, the notion of situated knowledge acknowledges that knowledge is, in fact, partial and linked to the context in which it is created. To this end, Lave and Wenger, 1992 (in Ben-Ari 2005) have advised that gaining situated knowledge occurs when a learner is mindful of activities as they actually take place within a community (Ben Ari 2005:367-368). From this perspective, it would, according to Lo Bianco (2000), be limiting if a curriculum were to be focused around (authoritarian) empirically right and wrong answers or any assessment techniques that measure knowledge within such a narrow context.

Because knowledge is rapidly changing, any facts or truths learnt in schools, no matter how immediately relevant they may be, are likely to be redundant or contested tomorrow. With this in mind, learners will have to possess particular attributes. Apart from being autonomous and self-directed learners, Kalantzis *et al.* (2003:17) suggest that good learners in the new economy will have to be broadly knowledgeable, and able to engage with the different interpretive frameworks and contexts of specific information (Kalantzis *et al.* 2003:17). So it should be in the training of Public Administration students to take on the roles of public servants and managers. The Public Administration curricula should ensure that lecture room information is applicable to the circumstances within which a learner is expected to function once they have left the university. They should be able to think broadly and comprehend the interrelatedness of the managerial and the social, the technical and democratic. Only then will public managers be able to withstand the onslaught of criticism they are faced with. For as Newman and Clarke (2009:7) remind us, "The state of public services and their proposed futures appear at the centre of current public and political debates. This proliferation of projects, innovations and contestations around publics and public services makes us wary of announcements of the death or decline of the public services. Publicness remains a site of significance: the focus of material and symbolic investments". In the light of the above it becomes



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clear that the global challenges referred to by Newman and Clarke (2009:1) in the first section of this article and the national implications thereof, require a much more socially focussed, ethically conscious public service, some of these national and global challenges are highlighted below:

- South Africa has become more conscious of the international image relations and obligations. This is evident through the numerous peace keeping missions in conflict areas on the continent as well as the international relations that are created and nurtured in the high commissions and embassies in far flung parts of the globe.
- A socially conscious and questioning public (due to public participation rhetoric and disillusionment and social exclusion) makes demands (sometimes violently) on the public service through demonstrations and protests as is currently the case in South Africa.
- The growing poverty levels and unsustainable livelihoods sometimes linked to poor environmental management whose cause and effect, may impact even beyond the national borders of the country.
- The ever looming threat of terrorism and cross border crime to which all countries are vulnerable but which are of particular significance for South Africa—a regional economic giant and numerous entry points.

RECOMMENDATIONS FLOWING FROM THE STUDY

The authors acknowledge that it is impossible to have one common curricula of Public Administration for the country and variations will no doubt abide. However, it is possible that, even in the diverse curricula presented above, certain principles, as recommended below, do indeed prevail;

- Greater input from the humanities in Public Administration teaching programmes calling for an inter-disciplinary approach which enables inputs that inculcate ‘people skills’ which are currently lacking in the curricula.
- Internship programmes for students with government, semi-state agencies and NGO’s as well as the introduction of a practical and community based course content in the Bachelor of Administration Programme.
- Incorporation of social research methodology into the curriculum, ideally presented by experts from Sociology. It would be useful to have service modules in Humanities being on offer to Public Administration students.
- Much more formal co-ordination with provincial and national government with regards to needs and requirements of future university trained employees, mutual research programmes, funding and bursary needs.
- Greater input from public administration practitioners in Public Administration curricula at conferences and workshops.



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- Greater input from Public Administration academics with regard to government research, panel discussions, committees and public hearings.

CONCLUSION

Against the backdrop of pivotal conferences on Public Administration and noting the evolution of key concepts in the practice and discipline, this article discussed the never-ending search in Public Administration for efficiency, effectiveness and relevance. In particular, it has, through a scan of Public Administration curricula of selected universities, attempted to examine how sufficiently prepared public managers are in responding to (unpredictable) situations in public administration practice. The discussion concludes that while academic conferences are vibrant in their discussion of innovative processes in Public Administration, and while discourse at such conferences is mindful of, and values notions of public leadership, public governance, public value and public participation, this does not sufficiently reflect in the curriculum of Public Administration – at least not at the undergraduate level. The article outlines the relevance of a democratic curriculum citing compelling national and global challenges. The discussion wraps up with suggestions on how this can be done. Among other things, the article suggests a multi-disciplinary approach to the teaching of Public Administration and the incorporation of a social research and a practical component into the curriculum.

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Public leadership in a transforming society for effective service delivery

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ABSTRACT

This article explores public leadership as a new way of leadership in the public domain. The leadership capacity of public service managers and officials is crucial in getting public policy adopted and in implementing government programmes. This requires public service leaders who can be classified as public leaders. Services are provided to communities to enhance and accelerate service delivery and public service leaders have to take the initiative in this. Effective public leaders have distinguishing features and the important one is their attitude toward community change. Leadership is also seen as key to improving the outcomes of public policies. This article argues that this has placed a strong emphasis on public leadership to help to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, advance the economy, improve the environment, and contribute to the attainment of wider national policy goals. More inclusive views of leadership need to be developed in the public services and there are indications that this is happening in practice. Societal development has also brought about changes in the function, power and ability of leadership in the public arena.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership has become the catch-phrase and tune for public service managers who must continue to provide ever-improving high-quality and reliable services. As leaders, public managers perform a variety of services. They mobilise resources, motivate people, make choices and explain decisions. Recent studies



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have looked at the role of leadership in the modernisation of public services. They begin by outlining the importance of leadership in current thinking about the improvement of public services. An especially important theme in the development of the new public service through the whole world has been the changing nature of leadership in public organisations (Denhardt 2008:180).

The aim of this article is to explore public leadership as a new way of leadership in the public field. A strong political emphasis on good leadership lies at the heart of the governance agenda. Leadership is not the property of only one person. Leadership may be found at all levels of the organisation, as well as outside the organisation in the community. It is often a function carried out by teams and committees. The article focuses on public leadership from a public administration, public management and responsive governance approach or point of view (United Nations World Public Sector Report 2005).

The research problem is about how public leadership is seen as an important underpinning of and challenge for public service modernisation. The article is based on the author's analysis and observations, a detailed review of literature, and on a number of efforts aimed at reforming public services. It argues that public leaders must share a common commitment to improve public services, and through their actions they must strive to make public services better.

THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership has been explained by various authors as a process of influencing and directing the behaviour of individuals and groups in such a way that they work willingly to pursue the objectives and goals of the organisation (Callahan, Fleenor and Knudson 1986; Koontz and Wehrich 1990; Smith and Cronje 1999 and Cole 2004). Leadership is the capacity of an individual to carry out or lead or influence others or organisations with the aim of achieving certain goals (Whitemore 2007; Nkomo and Cook in Luiz 2006; Van Dyk, Van der Westhuizen and Jooste in Jooste 2003). Jarbandhan (2009:52) defines leadership in terms of the ability to change others' behaviour, or to move them towards taking action in line with a goal or objective.

According to Broussine (in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:175-176) there is no one view about what leadership is, and there are several ways of looking at it. A number of studies came up with different conclusions: 'Your view of leadership depends on where you are coming from and who you are', 'There is no single correct definition, it is better to see leadership as a complex multifaceted phenomenon', 'It may be difficult to define, but you recognise it when you see it, or are in it' (Broussine in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:176). Leadership is a concept that is often hidden in myth, such that it becomes hard

to comprehend in the context of everyday events. Van der Waldt (in Du Toit, Knipe, van Niekerk, van der Waldt and Doyle 2002:183-184) points out that this mystique clouds the conception of leadership by looking at leaders as unique individuals, instead of understanding leadership as a way of advancing the common goals of an institution. Once we understand leadership as influence we recognise ourselves as leaders, irrespective of the formal positions we hold (Van Rensburg 2007:3).

Broussine (in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:176) maintains that the study of leadership is complicated by three factors. The *first* is that leadership does not reside only with the women and men at the top of organisations, but is exercised throughout, by team leaders, senior practitioners, and by teams of managers and professionals. A *second* issue is that the language of organisation is shifting away from management towards leadership, yet both these functions are necessary for the functioning of any organisation. *Thirdly*, the omnipotence that we project on to our leaders has taken several knocks, i.e. our leaders are human, make mistakes, take risks, and do not know what is happening all the time. Many leaders of public organisations admit in their candid moments to feeling powerful and in control sometimes, but powerless and out of control at other times.

The feature of leadership, particularly public leadership, is to get people to work together effectively, to inspire their loyalty towards the community, and to make a significant contribution to achieve the objectives of government in improving the welfare of the public. The challenges of public leadership have been compounded by forces of change at the global, international and national levels within state and society (Tripathi 2009:79). This is discussed in the next section.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

The current article is underpinned by a democratic theory of public leadership. Brookes (2008b) has considered public leadership to be a form of collective leadership in which public bodies and agencies collaborate in achieving a shared vision based on shared aims and values and distribute this through each organisation in a collegiate way which seeks to promote, influence and deliver improved public value as evidenced through sustained social, environmental and economic well-being within a complex and changing context. How effectively government institutions align the behavior of staff with the public interest is determined primarily by the capacity, motivation and integrity of human resources and the quality of leadership (United Nations World Public Sector Report 2005:ix).



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Public leadership should reflect a collective leadership style in which the responsibility is vested throughout the organisation. It is likely to work best where the purpose of leadership is clearly linked to the need for improved delivery of public services 'on the ground'. Public leaders need to tackle uncertainty. There is a tendency for leaders to focus on 'known' problems and 'known' solutions and develop expertise in relation to critical incidents and thus crisis management. The reality of public service is that problems are often more complex and intractable and thus require a leadership approach that is both creative and adaptive (Heifetz 1997 quoted by Brookes 2008b) to the circumstances and which deals comprehensively with the intractable nature of these types of problems. The development of public leadership standards has the potential to outline how a collective style of public leadership can help in building both the capability and capacity of public organisations to engage in the longer term aims and in achieving alignment between strategic aspiration and actual delivery (Brookes 2008a; Brookes 2008b). This article suggests that the time is ripe to move beyond new public management and more towards new public leadership and whilst aspects of management will remain, the real challenge for the public service is to advance a stronger theory of public leadership that emphasises the collective nature of public leadership (Brookes 2008b and Tripathi 2009).

UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

Understanding public leadership begins with accepting one's self within a framework to direct the choice of style and strategies in getting things done (Leatherman and Howell 2000:1). Public leadership is often concerned with promoting collective adaptation to social transformations and is one of the abilities that successful public figures in managerial positions might want to possess. Public leadership tends to reflect the distinct nature of the context of public service, especially the 'context of political interventions and administrative constraints' (Pittinsky and Zhu 2005:923).

According to Broussine (in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:183) public leadership is as much about relationships with external stakeholders and communities as it is about mobilisation of internal organisational capacities. Public leaders, at whatever level in the organisation, need to be able to operate at the boundaries between an organisation and its environment. In the public services this is not easy, because the environment is complex and consists of a range of stakeholders such as citizens, service users, customers, and community groups, whose needs and wants cannot be presented in the same way.



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Public leadership is the study of leadership from a public service perspective, and a great majority of what is called public leadership is focused on what might be better termed as political leadership; that of presidents, governors, and other high-level government executives such as those who are elected or who are political appointees (Morse and Buss in Morse, Buss and Kinghorn 2007:3). These authors argue that public leadership is, more than anything, the domain of those in the public service, in other words, public administration.

Pittinsky and Zhu (2005:922-923) further explain the evolving definition of public leadership: the term refers broadly to 'people who accept responsibility for defining and pursuing the public good'. One may therefore see public leadership as working at boundaries, developing effective relationships between professions, between agencies and organisations, and between all these and the communities they serve. Broussine (in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:183) maintains that public leadership cannot only be seen as the relationship between leaders and followers. It needs to be seen also as resulting possibly in new and unexpected forms of leadership. Public leadership, therefore, is a relationship between leaders and followers who develop mutual understanding and trust by repeated experiences of deep listening, and people who participate in this relationship are the stakeholders in governance (Kramer 2003:10).

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

Effective public leaders demonstrate a number of distinctive characteristics. One of the most important features is their attitude toward community change. They view change as an opening to move forward rather than a challenge to be feared. Effective public leaders are particularly not satisfied with the status quo. As such their willingness to take risks to initiate improvements is their way of life.

Research conducted in relation to businesses and organisations revealed that effective public leaders show five qualities. According to Leatherman and Howell (2000:2) public leaders:

- inspire a shared vision of common goals and promote a shared sense of possibility;
- lead by example;
- enable others to act, understanding different individuals' capabilities;
- challenge the *status quo* by taking risks; and
- understand something about human nature, responding to emotional needs of individuals as well as a task-orientation.



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The **personal strengths** of an effective public leader include: keenness for the task at hand; a strong sense of mission; the ability to conceptualise an issue within the overall framework of the mission or mandate; and communication skills, including the capacity to listen, to reframe an issue, and to be firm (Leatherman and Howell 2000:2). Public leaders do, of course, make highly significant decisions during a crisis (Boin, Hart, Stern and Sundelius 2005:43).

The **skills** of an effective public leader include: recognising an opportunity and knowing how to make the most of it; optimising group effectiveness; understanding the basics of planning; the ability of networking effectively; readiness to delegate; knowing when and how to challenge others; understanding the benefits of change and not hesitating to implement it when needed; and willingness to take risks (Leatherman and Howell 2000; Du Randt in Jooste 2003; Fox 2006 and Rees and Porter 2008).

What capacities do today's public service leaders need to learn in practice?

They need the capacities to:

- tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty;
- maintain personal perspective and self-knowledge;
- critically reflect, to ask oneself continuously whether current ways of leading need changing according to changed circumstances;
- develop leaders and leadership throughout the organisation, and in the community in which their organisation is embedded;
- watch out for 'dependency cultures'; and
- recognise that leadership and learning go together (Broussine in Bovaird and Loffler 2004; Kreitner and Kinicki 1998; Charlton 1992).

Actions such as creating better channels of communication and inspiring greater citizen engagement call for more than just public administrators. This call for public leadership which embodies both political leadership and organisational leadership (Kramer 2003:10; Tripathi 2009:86).

MODELS OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

Many models of leadership have been identified over the last few decades. Models indicate the interaction among variables that are conceived to be involved in leadership. The challenge, however, is to use a combination of relevant leadership approaches to develop the leadership cadre in the public service (Edwards 2009:50).

To understand public leadership, it makes sense to commence by analysing the two models of democratic leadership (Leatherman and Howell 2000:2):



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The *traditional model* of democratic leadership implies that a leader is chosen by peers or elected to serve as the ruling figure with authority within a group. The leader is authorised to direct the group toward the completion of goals or tasks. In this model, the spotlight is on the task. Group members may provide advises and information, but the leader is tasked with making final decisions (Leatherman and Howell 2000; Williams 2005; Jones and George 2008).

The more *contemporary model* of leadership is group-centred leadership, where the dynamics of the group functioning area are often as significant as the task. In this model the leader is in charge, and encourages others on the board, and in the community, to action. It is not only *what* gets accomplished, but *how* it is completed (Leatherman and Howell 2000; Wallace in Wallace, Fertig and Schneller 2007).

Matshabaphala (2008b:1) argues that it is mainly strong leadership that will allow South Africans to deliver reformed public services through a fitting leadership vision. That vision has to build on traditional strengths like integrity, dedication and responsiveness to events. Added to this argument is that the new leadership vision must generate inspirational, visible leaders, who take personal responsibility for delivering effective and swift results. The new public leaders deal with contemporary issues like oversight, regulation and performance management.

Leadership within the new paradigm differs from what was traditionally viewed as leadership or management. Leadership in the new organisation is formed by mutual consent, and traditional leadership functions are replaced by co-ordinators. New leaders in the public service face stronger expectations and often higher standards of fairness, honesty, transparency and democratic accountability from the public. The co-ordinator's role is broader than the traditional leadership role. Verwey and Verwey (in Verwey and du Plooy-Cilliers 2003:87) maintain that this is because it is based on the premise that an organisation/institution is there to serve employees, not vice versa.

The power of public leadership

Public leadership is one of the most dynamic and visible forms of social influence in attempting to modify the attitudes and behaviours of followers. Public leaders are found at all levels. When public leaders take the initiative, they encourage higher-level leaders to do the same. In a public setting, a leader must address messages to what groups of individuals have in common, as for example in healthcare issues, and political beliefs (Jooste in Jooste 2003:204). Public leadership is the result of effective public communication. Luke (1998) quoted by Denhardt (2008:180) examines the type of leadership required to



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raise and resolve important public problems, such as improving schools, protecting natural resources, or reducing poverty.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC LEADERS

In today's interconnected and interdependent world, public leadership has to be more than just leading public service organisations. Public service organisations are often accused of being slow to address new problems, are hampered by all kinds of constraints, and have short time frames, usually from election to election. 'Wicked' problems which cross organisational boundaries can be attended to fruitfully by networks of public, private and non-profit organisations, community groups and citizens and other inter-organisational arrangements (Broussine in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:175).

This means that the engagement of citizens in public issues becomes a key attribute of public leadership. As a means of solving complex challenges, public leaders must be able to commence resolute action within their own institutions and among a set of stakeholders with diverse and challenging interests. Broussine (in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:175) says this means that traditional models of organisational leadership have their restrictions, since they may facilitate in making public sector organisations more performance- and customer-oriented, but they are not adequate when addressing boundary-spanning public problems in the context of fragmented authority.

A leader in the public service has three broad responsibilities, namely: making sure the organisation is running smoothly, developing its capacity to operate effectively and efficiently in the future, and defining its culture and maintaining its standing and principles (Turnbull 2005:4; Starling 2005:393). The leadership capacity of public service managers and officials is crucial in getting public policy adopted and in dealing with implementing government programmes. Hanekom and Thornhill (1990:25) assert that in practice, top officials are responsible for leadership and have to see to it that work programmes for policy implementation are compiled. The top official as a public leader is concerned with the practical steps (the administrative policy) necessary to give effect to legal instructions.

Forms and determinants of public leadership

Organisations have become increasingly dynamic and turbulent in recent years against a background of constant and rapid change. Public service organisations are no different and new approaches to leadership are equally required in the public service. It is in this respect that the public leadership challenge has real potential in helping public services to react to these changes in a positive way.



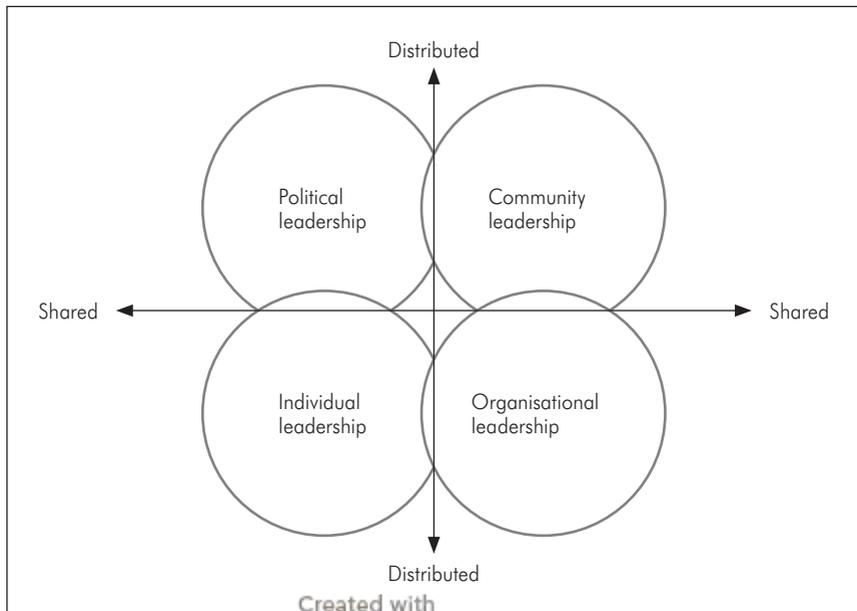
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and in a way that will secure continuous improvement (The Public Leadership Challenge 2008).

The introduction of a public leadership style has the potential to draw together the key elements of public service delivery. Based on this, four forms of public leadership can be identified, and these are depicted in Figure 1. They consist of *political leadership* with an emphasis on developing political awareness of leaders, *community leadership* which can involve developing a vision for the locality working in partnership to deliver that vision and guaranteeing quality services for all, *organisational leadership* and *individual leadership* which are both shared across agencies and distributed within each. There is limited review on leadership, which is both horizontal (shared between organisations) and vertical (distributed throughout each organisation) although both these dimensions are recognised within the public policy process more generally and in relation to accountability. These existing theories are starting points and have investigated the concept of public leadership and the notion of *horizontal* (shared) and *vertical* (distributed) leadership (Brookes 2008b). The realistic evaluation approach aligned to the theoretical framework suggests that the style of leadership representing vertical, horizontal or combination (outcome) will depend in part on the type of problem being addressed (context)

Figure 1: Four forms of public leadership



Source: Public Leadership Challenge 2008



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and whether there is a single or plural engagement by agencies with related lines of accountability (mechanism).

In addition to the forms of public leadership, there are key determinants of public leadership and they are seen as follows:

- The *purpose* of public leadership is to set out clearly what it is that public leaders get to accomplish and the reasons;
- The *process* of public leadership represents a series of actions required to convert the purpose into practice and how this is harmonised;
- The *public value* of public leadership requires an alignment between social goals, trust and legitimacy and organisational capability in matching purpose to practice through the process of public leadership; and
- The *praxis* of public leadership represents the actual practice of public leadership at all levels in the attainment of the purpose in a way that it is acknowledged as regular practice through shared learning (The Public Leadership Challenge 2008; Brookes 2008b).

PUBLIC LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE DELIVERY CULTURE

The way public leadership is exercised is likely to create a good culture for service delivery. According to Matshabaphala (2008a:10) individuals and teams, through their behaviour can transform their work places into institutions of integrity. He further maintains that there has to be a continual sensitivity and understanding of the needs of the members of the public, as this can assist in the improvement of the organisational culture and service delivery. The concept of public leadership further entails a concern with how well things are going in the public and the integrity and standing of the public officials in the eyes of the public (Matshabaphala 2008a:10).

In highlighting the point about public leadership and service delivery Behn (in Kobrak 2002:50) states that:

“Leadership [from public administrators] is necessary because without leadership public organisations will never mobilise themselves to accomplish their mandated purposes, let alone figure out how best to do that. Leadership [from public administrators] is necessary because the elected chief executive can provide that leadership for only a few of the many agencies and programmes for which he/she is responsible. Leadership [from public administrators] is necessary because the legislative branch of government gives public agencies missions that are vague and conflicting and often fails to provide enough resources to pursue seriously all of these missions. Leadership [from public administrators] is necessary because a

narrow interest can easily capture a public agency and redirect government programmes for its own gain. Leadership [from public administrators] is necessary because the citizenry often lacks the knowledge and information (or will) necessary to perform its responsibilities”.

There has to be a respect for the values and way of life of members of the public. Public officials have to be, at all times, the face and the guardians of the public institution. Members of the public must feel that they are treated with respect by public servants. To this effect, some essential principles to transform public service delivery have been enacted in the *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery* of 1997. These principles include consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money (RSA 1997; Mafunisa in Kuye *et al.* 2002:207). This means that there has to be a gathering of intelligence on the organisation’s culture of work so that interventions can be implemented at the right time to the right people (Matshabaphala 2008a:10). Again this will entrench a culture of service delivery.

Goldman and Nieuwenhuizen, quoted by Matshabaphala (2008a:10), argue that the concept of public leadership further entails a concern with how well things are going in the public and clientele domain and it also entails the integrity and standing of public officials in the eyes of the public (See also Thomas in Wallace *et al.* 2007:117).

The Importance of public leadership styles

Leadership style lies at the centre and is the key success factor in drawing together the different elements of what is considered an excellent leadership style.

Excellent public leadership is defined through a series of the following standards, measures and dimensions:

(www.publicleadership.co.uk/public_leadership_standards.htm):

Firstly, excellent leaders demonstrate community leadership in all aspects of the role through dynamic engagement with key stakeholders and, in particular, reflect and connect with community-led priorities. Excellent public leaders will be open to the sharing of expertise and will bring positive benefits to their own and other partner organisations. Key stakeholders include members of the public service itself, the community, officials from other public services, and policymakers;

Secondly, they shape the future through a shared vision which encourages and motivates coactive responses;

Thirdly, they secure accountability to, and with, key stakeholders in relation to clearly-defined shared outcomes, and they readily engage in dialogue to further secure continued progress;



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Fourthly, they build capacity through the establishment of effective relationships between, and with, partners and enable others to achieve. Excellent public leaders should be dedicated to the development of others, and be aware of self development to enable the leader to deal with the complication of the role;

Fifthly, they manage their organisations through the improvement of organisational structures and functions based on a sound understanding of the need to respond to change;

Sixthly, leaders encourage a positive culture that develops a 'can-do' attitude throughout the organisation through their own self development, the development of others and in encouraging, appreciating and implementing good practice; and

Finally, they lead delivery through raising quality based on high expectations and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of public service and partnership outcomes, namely improved community well-being and public value.

EMPHASIS ON LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

Public managers, as public leaders, can help to improve the system of governance. Public governance envisages an increased role for the public and complex array of stakeholders that cuts across the boundaries of the public and private sectors and across different spheres of government (Bovaird 2005). Broussine (in Bovaird and Loffler 2004:176-177) maintains that the emphasis on leadership of today's public services is remarkable, and further suggests that a changing environment requires a new type of leadership because:

- the growing need to address interconnected problems in a public policy context of shared power demands that leaders pay more attention to policy coherence;
- leadership is a key component in making the public sector a competitive employer;
- a knowledge-intensive economy which makes the public sector calls for a new type of leadership that inspires others to generate and share knowledge;
- there is a continuing need for public sector organisations to adapt and this requires leadership, not just among senior managers, but amongst all public officials, elected and appointed.

Public service leaders listen deeply as a way of finding common position for action and results. Public service leaders hold their ground, stay connected and are ethical. According to Kramer (2003:10), public service leaders, who have the capacity to listen sincerely to themselves and others, know five things. They



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know: what values are and what other peoples' values are; how to communicate what they need in order to get co-operation from peers, political superiors and others; how to build coalitions to support the needs of peers, political superiors and others; how to say no to illegal or unethical acts of government; and how to build social capital.

The following points again emphasise the need for good public leadership:

- Leaders must draw power of public acknowledgement to them. 'Public acknowledgement' refers to a willingness to listen to them and to be influenced and co-ordinated by them. Power means acknowledgement. Power is best when it is acknowledged, not when it is imposed;
- In studying public leadership people are interested in the use of the voice to motivate, inspire, and organise public action. Interest is exclusive to the leadership that stimulates co-ordinated responses to the problems that the public accepts; and
- Public leadership pulls a group of people (a society) together and co-ordinates their response to their world
(www.wam.umd.edu/~jklumpp/comm461/lectures/Intro.html).

By exercising leadership, public managers can make government more democratic and more effective. Public leaders need to have a concern about preserving the long-term political legitimacy of public institutions and the system of governance.

New demands for public leaders

Leaders, especially public leaders, now need to manage and lead an empowered workforce and go beyond the consultative, co-operative and democratic styles of today. According to Childs (2004:1-2) these new demands include:

- *consultation and involvement*, but leaders still get criticised for not having and not communicating a compelling vision and purpose;
- *autonomy and freedom*, but leaders are still expected to take full responsibility when things go wrong;
- *opportunities for growth, challenge and glory*, but leaders must be on hand to coach and mentor for people to develop their potential; and
- *inclusion and team spirit*, but people still want their leaders to give individual recognition and acknowledgement.

There are not, however, enough talented (i.e. super-human) individuals who can meet all these demands (Childs 2004:2). The biggest challenge facing public leaders is how to incorporate or reinvigorate desirable traditional civil service values, such as impartiality, integrity and dedication to public service, while at



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the same time promoting management innovations and efficiency improvements and encouraging more open and responsive forms of administration (United Nations World Public Sector Report 2005:ix).

Implications for public administration practice

Understanding the notion of public leadership provides an opportunity for Public Administration (PA) to understand its practice in more specific ways (Fairholm in Morse, Buss and Kinghorn 2007:114-117).

The *first* is the Public Law or Traditional approach. In this approach, public administrators/leaders execute the will of the people as determined by the political and legal process.

The *second* perspective is New Public Administration. This approach viewed the politics-administration dichotomy as suspect and urged an understanding of the important role of administrative discretion in the work of public administrators/leaders. This approach embraces the idea that bureaucrats are in a wonderful position to influence and facilitate community activity.

The *third* perspective is New Public Management (NPM). In this idea of public administration practice, public administrators/leaders should effectively run government by breaking the grip of bureaucracy through the application of business approaches (See also Milner and Joyce 2005:80).

The *fourth* perspective is what is now being called 'New Public Service'. New Public Service claims that a return to the public administrator/leader's responsibility to serve and empower citizens is critical. Fairholm (in Morse, Buss and Kinghorn 2007:117) maintains that the crucial work of public administration is to build public institutions marked by integrity and responsiveness, through service to citizens who, along with notions of citizenship and public interest, are at the forefront of the very work being done. These challenges and criticism of NPM led to a new discourse of governance and public management that took into account 'whole of or joined up government' or has variously been called simply public governance (Tripathi 2009:84).

The spaces for public leadership are shaped at the interface between a reworking of boundaries of public and private, politics and administration, politics and delivery, delivery and citizens. According to Pedersen and Hartley (2008:334-335) this means that public sector leadership and governance is no longer exclusively about formal authority and standard procedures. Rather it is also about communicating strategically. The basic challenge for public service leaders lies in the various layers of re-regulation and self-governing, inspection and self-formation, in the variety of steering roles, and in the range of stakeholders that must be incorporated in deliberations, networks and games of regulation.



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CONCLUSION

The ability of public leaders to function effectively either as individuals or groups is a key element in resolving public issues in the public service. Many public service leaders now recognise the value of finding the space to reflect critically on how they are doing. They must demonstrate competence and educate the citizens, and in order to achieve all this they have to have initiative. To exercise initiative, a public manager as a public leader needs to go looking for and creating circumstances that provide an opportunity to educate and motivate people, change administrative systems, correct mistakes, check excesses, or even launch new authorised activities.

The article has highlighted the fact that public leadership is seen as an important underpinning of public service modernisation. A noteworthy finding of this article is that public leadership is seen as a matter of great significance for all states. The focus is on leadership in public sectors or organisations and those leaders in government who assume responsibility for creating the public good. Leadership is not just a right of public managers, it is an obligation and this has to be displayed through public leadership qualities. Public leadership, the way it is practised and how it is conceived, is undergoing a transformation, corresponding with changes in the public sector generally that some have termed the *new governance*.

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A constitutional engineering perspective on the election of the president in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

In September 2008 the executive committee of the ruling African National Congress recalled President Thabo Mbeki as president of South Africa. The South African president is indirectly elected by the National Assembly and can be removed from office by this body either by a motion of no-confidence, or an impeachment procedure in the case of serious misconduct or incapacity. Mbeki's recall by his party – in effect a motion of no-confidence – led to calls for the direct election of the South African president. This article considers the present electoral procedure by which the South African president is elected – and removed from office – in the context of the “perils of presidentialism thesis” in constitutional engineering. In the article the various schools of thought regarding the perils of directly elected presidents are considered. Both the theoretical and philosophical debates as well as extensive empirical evidence regarding the risk of having a directly elected president are taken into account – especially with regard to the fact that South Africa is a newly democratised and as yet unconsolidated democracy – and a deeply divided society to boot. The article concludes with some comments on the present procedure to elect the South African president.

INTRODUCTION

During the 2009 general election campaign in South Africa, at least three of the larger opposition political parties, The Congress of the People (Cope), the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the United Democratic Front (UDM) called for the



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direct election of the President of South Africa by “the people.” The arguments advanced by the parties can be summarised as follows: the recall of President Thabo Mbeki in September 2008 by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) was undemocratic. Measures should be put in place to prevent an elitist cabal in a political party to arbitrarily remove the country’s president “at the drop of a hat”. The NEC of the ANC does not represent the electorate of South Africa and is not directly accountable to the voters. The people of South Africa should choose / elect their own president – and by implication get rid of her / him. The DA went so far as to demand in their electoral manifesto that all premiers of South Africa’s nine provinces as well as mayors of towns and cities should be directly elected.² Instead of voting for a party, the voters should elect a person to the high executive offices.³

In my judgment these proposals have not been properly considered and the reform of the South African system of appointing a president is quite unnecessary. The main argument which will be presented in this article is that a directly elected president for South Africa is neither needed nor desirable. The article is structured as follows. First an overview of the “perils of presidentialism”⁴ will be presented. Second empirical evidence will be presented showing studies and examples of how presidentialism leads to dictatorships, authoritarianism and the overthrow of democratic regimes. Third, the status quo in South Africa regarding the election of the president will be defended.

THE PERILS OF PRESIDENTIALISM

In a seminal article, *The perils of presidentialism*, published in 1990, Juan Linz argues that there are four principal problems with presidential (extra parliamentary) forms of executive. His argument is built mainly on the two ideal types of executive, namely presidential (extra parliamentary) and parliamentary (prime ministerial). The two types are represented historically and empirically by the United States presidency and the UK premiership. Linz begins by observing that empirically most of the stable forms of democratic regimes are parliamentary, and that most unstable democracies are presidential. According to Linz, there are four shortcomings in presidential systems (Linz 1990:53).

First the president and legislature have contending bases of legitimacy. Both are elected by a popular vote and their continuation is independent of one another. Should the president’s party be in the minority in the legislature, a dramatic conflict between the president and the legislature is a distinct possibility. There is no credible democratic mechanism to resolve a deadlock between the president and the legislature – in the sense of who properly



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represents the popular “will of the people”. Such deadlocks have historically led to violent conflict, coups, forced resignations of the president and other crises in developing and emerging democracies. This state of affairs delegitimises the political system undermines investor confidence as well service delivery to the public (Linz 1990:53, 54).

The second drawback of presidentialism is that the fixed term of office of the president brings in inflexibility in the political system which is less advantageous for democracy than the flexibility of the parliamentary system. The continuation / persistence of a parliamentary government is dependent on the confidence of parliament. If serious conflict between the executive and parliament develops, it can be resolved by a motion of no confidence in the executive / government and the recomposition of cabinet. If that proves impossible, the premier can dissolve parliament and “go to the country” for a fresh mandate from the electorate. In the case of conflict between the president and the legislature, this mechanism is not available. The president cannot strengthen his position by asking for a vote of confidence, nor can he dissolve parliament to ask for a fresh mandate. Parliament cannot get rid of the president by a motion of no confidence. It has to resort to the cumbersome and divisive procedure of impeachment. And usually impeachment is only available in cases of ‘high crimes and misdemeanours, serious misconduct or mental incapacity’. A president cannot be impeached simply because s/he has fallen out of political favour – for whatever reason. The idea behind fixed terms of office in a presidential system is to engineer political stability. Again, historically, the inflexibility of presidential systems have given rise to political crises, forceful removal of a president or trumped up impeachments in emerging democracies (Linz 1990:55).

The essence of a parliamentary executive is that the premier is continuously dependent on the confidence of the legislature, and to boot is accountable to it in person. The presidential head of government is not accountable to the legislature, but to “the people”. Such a president cannot be brought to order by the legislature during his term of office. A one term president or a president in the last term of office is politically and publicly accountable to no one – except for the metaphoric “people of the republic”. And herein lies the rub.

The term of office of the typical president is not only fixed, but usually there are term limits to presidents. More than two terms of office are rare, one term of five to seven years seems to be common, as are two shorter terms of four years. Presidents quite often have a limited time within which to implement their political programmes and are obliged to try for short term ‘quick win’ strategies. This more often than not leads to hasty and sloppy policy making, frustration with objections and criticism by the opposition. Many presidents have the power of decree and administrative directives – which leads to conflict with the legislature and the loss of legitimacy of a proper law (Linz 1990:55).



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Third, presidentialism is inherently a zero sum game, or winner takes all. Direct, popular election of the president means that winner and loser(s) are sharply defined against one another. Since the president may judge that formation of a coalition and compromise in the legislature is unnecessary, conflict between president and legislature is inherent in the system. Losers of the presidential race may have to wait as long as six years to run again. The president could also judge that the majority in the legislature can be ignored, since s/he carries an individual popular mandate. The attitude is complicated by an electoral system that determines that the candidate with the most votes wins, and does not need an outright majority (50% + 1 votes). In the case of more than two candidates, the winner usually carries less than an outright majority and indeed only has minority support. Conflict, deadlocks and political immobilism follows and can precipitate a government and or a regime crisis (Linz 1990:56, 57).

Four, a president is usually both head of state and head of government. This means that the president has to play contradictory roles: first as symbol of national power and national unity and second, as divisive and partisan head of government. A nominal head of state in a parliamentary system can stand above partisan politics in times of crisis and stabilise the polity. In presidential systems, the absence of a unifying figure, has led to many a president's downfall (Linz 1990:54, 55).

THE REACTION TO LINZ'S QUESTIONING OF PRESIDENTIALISM

Linz's article literally led to a sub-school of studies on the advantages and disadvantages of presidentialism. Not all authors were *ad idem* that presidentialism necessarily leads to a political or regime crisis that would be the basis of the fall of a government, the downfall of a democratic form of regime and the concomitant instatement of a dictatorship. The most important challenges to the Linz hypothesis and scepticism regarding presidentialism is summarised below. Authors have even suggested that one can discern three waves of criticism against Linz. According to Robert Elgie the first wave conceptualises the executive as an independent variable and the consolidation of democracy as the dependent variable; the second wave takes the executive as well as the party system and presidential powers as independent variables and good governance as the dependent variable. The third wave weighs the relative merits of the two forms of executive (presidential and parliamentary) against the background of general theories of politics (Elgie 2008:49). Below these three waves are discussed separately.



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The first wave of criticism against Linz goes more or less as follows. It argues that Linz ignores the effect of the electoral system on the stability of the executive. Horowitz 1990:74-79 argues that certain forms of parliamentary executive also advances winner takes all politics (like presidential politics) and therefore excludes minorities. In his book on South Africa, prior to the 1994 transition to democracy, Horowitz calls for a directly elected president (Horowitz 1991:206,207). This criticism in my view is not of decisive importance against the central Linz thesis. The accountability of the head of government is far more a determinant of the desirability of a presidential executive than the electoral system according to which a legislature is chosen. The point is that a popularly elected president cannot be held directly accountable by either the legislature or the electorate. As long as the president holds office and is not guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours, even though s/he may be grossly incompetent and / or politically unpopular, nothing can be done to get rid of the person – until the term ends. US president GW Bush comes to mind. Governance suffers and in newly democratised states, can lead to regime illegitimacy.

The second wave of studies argues that Linz focuses on a pure or ideal type of presidentialism. In these studies authors try to show that the form of the presidency and its powers ought to be put on the scales. These studies show a strong correlation between a stable two party system and a stable presidency. Mainwaring, 1990:168 argues that a multiparty system and presidentialism are a difficult and unstable combination – which supports Linz’s argument. Shugart and Carey, on the other hand, show that there are different ways in which a president’s powers can be contained and accommodated *vis a vis* the will of the legislature and the electorate. When a president’s powers are limited, e.g. when s/he does not have a veto or a very limited veto, has limited powers of appointing a cabinet – e.g. needs Senate approval–then the possibility of presidential abuse of power is also limited. Their principal finding however, is that powerful presidencies are problematic. When a president has full power of veto, unlimited powers to appoint and dismiss a cabinet together with the power of decree, abuse of power follows easily, and the concomitant government and regime crises tend to follow (Shugart and Carey 1992:33).

What distinguishes the second generation of studies on presidentialism from the first generation is that every single presidency and parliamentary executive is judged on its own merits. The argument is that when an executive is studied, the electoral system, powers of the executive, the political culture, history and other relevant factors variables should be taken into account – not merely ideal types. Authors such as Elgie show that the powers of a presidency can be tempered by limiting the legislative powers of a president. These include limits on veto power and the power of decree, parliamentary rules to further party discipline in the legislature and electoral system rules regarding crossing the



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floor and support thresholds in the case of proportional representation systems (Elgie 2008:65,66).

THE THIRD WAVE AGAINST LINZ

In the third wave of studies questioning and interrogating the Linz hypothesis, explicit research strategies are followed. Veto-players, rational choice theories, principal agent theories and new institutionalism are engaged to analyse the consequences of the presidential form of executive. In 1993 Scott and Mainwaring concur that presidentialism is not well represented in the democratic world. They found that out of 31 states that have been continuously democratic for longer than 25 years, only four – the US, Colombia, Costa Rica and Venezuela had presidential executives. Mainwaring also studied 50 failed democracies and the majority – 27 had presidential executives. Of the successful and enduring democracies 58% had parliamentary executives (Scott and Mainwaring 1993:4). In addition, it is noteworthy that in this study, the authors also found that the failures of presidentialism occurred almost exclusively in deeply divided and developing societies. The question is whether it is the institution of presidentialism or the level of socio-economic development that were the independent variables in this study. On the other hand, democratic parliamentarism also has a bad track record in deeply divided and developing societies. Scott and Mainwaring agree with Linz: double legitimacy of president and legislature and the rigidity of their terms of office are severe problems in presidential systems. They also agree that a president as head of government cannot play a unifying role in the body politic (1993:11).

Scott and Mainwaring's findings are corroborated in 2008 by Marstreidet and Berntzen. They studied 20 presidential interruptions in the third wave of democratisation since 1987 in Latin America. These interruptions include: military coups, impeachments, popular recalls, motions of no confidence and the calling or early elections. The information below illustrates the extent of the problem (Marstreidet and Berntzen 2008:21-24).

Coups d'état

- Haiti 1990, 1991, 2004
- Peru 1990, 1992
- Ecuador 1998, 2000
- Venezuela 1992 (2x), 2002
- Paraguay 1996
- Guatemala 1993

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- Bolivia 1984

Impeachments

- Brazil 1992
- Venezuela 1993
- Paraguay 1993
- Peru 1991 (unsuccessful)
- Colombia 1996 (unsuccessful)
- Paraguay 2003 (unsuccessful)

Resignations / recalls

- Bolivia 1985
- Argentina 1989
- Argentina 2001
- Ecuador 2000
- Peru 2000
- Bolivia 2003

Two presidents had to resign as a consequence of motions of no confidence, five cases of early elections were recorded, in five cases presidents had to resign after popular uprisings and the legislature appointed a replacement president (Marstreidet and Berntzen 2008:25). The authors come to the conclusion that the presidential interruptions studied were not regime crises, but government and government succession crises. Latin American presidential systems in the post cold war environment have been able to handle government crises without imperilling democracy as form of regime. What did become clear in this study, however is that impeachment is a very cumbersome way of removing a president. In the studied cases presidents were forced to resign by way of a motion of no confidence – for which the system and constitution does not really provide. A president has a fixed term of office. Their removal had to be artificially and sometimes unconstitutionally engineered. Moreover 12 cases of *coups d' état* were recorded. It means that this peril of presidentialism has not been totally eradicated from Latin America.

The crisis around President Manuel Zelaya of Honduras which erupted in June of 2009, in my view underlines the Linz hypothesis that the perils of presidentialism are alive and well in Latin America. Zelaya evidently lost popular legitimacy as well as the support of the Honduras Congress, the Supreme Court, the Attorney-General, his own political party (the Liberales), and the Defence Force. This loss of support emanated from his proposal regarding a non-binding



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plebiscite on the immutable sections in the Honduran constitution. These refer to the term limitation on the office of the president, the form of regime (democratic) and the position of the Supreme Court. His call for a plebiscite was declared as unlawful by Congress, the Defence Force as well as the Supreme Court. When Zelaya insisted on declaring a plebiscite the Supreme Court issued a writ for his arrest (on the grounds of contempt of court) and he was banished to Costa Rica. The President of Congress (Speaker) Mr. Micheletti, was appointed acting president. The legality of these actions was questioned by the international community (Wikipedia October 2009: Zelaya). The crisis was resolved in November 2009 by the scheduled presidential election. A conservative candidate was elected in Zelaya's place and inaugurated in January 2010. These events in my judgment strongly illustrate that the problem of the independent mandates / legitimacy of Congress and the Presidency could also not be resolved democratically or procedurally in Honduras. On the contrary, it led to a serious and ongoing national and international crisis for the Honduran body politic. The fact is, the President is not politically accountable to Congress. Had he been legally accountable to the legislature, he could simply have been removed by a motion of no confidence.

THE EXPERIENCE IN AFRICA

In Africa the track record of presidentialism is underwhelming. The information below between 1960 and 2004 illustrates the circumstances of leaving office of presidents in Africa (Daniel *et al.* 2006).

Table: The circumstances of leaving office of presidents in Africa

Reason	1960-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	00-04	Total
Coup	27	30	22	22	4	105
Assassination	1	1	1	2	1	6
Nat. death	2	3	4	3	0	12
Retirement	1	2	5	9	8	25
Impeachment	6	8	4	14	8	40
Loses Election	0	0	1	12	3	16
Total	37	44	37	62	24	204

Source: Daniel *et al.* 2006



In the period under review (1960-2004) 51% of presidents lost their offices as a result of a *coup d' état*; 12,2% retired voluntarily; 19,6% lost their offices due to impeachment or popular pressure and 7,8% resigned as a result of having lost an election. Therefore 70,6% left office due to unusual circumstances such as a regime crisis, coup or political unpopularity (Southall, Simutanyi and Daniel 2006:2).

The overwhelming majority of forms of executive in Africa can be described as hybrid: the president is popularly elected and a prime minister sees to the day to day governing of the state. This follows in broad outline, the constitution of the Fifth French Republic. Even in former British colonies, the presidential executive is common (Southall *et al.* 2006:9, 10). Tordof 1993 and Okoth-Ogendo 1991:13, 15 argue that presidencies in Africa tend to be "imperial" where the president is neither popularly / politically or legally accountable for his/her actions. Parliament / legislature are subordinate to the president – in the sense that it can be dissolved by the executive. This, for instance is impossible in the US. Moreover there are few correctives on the president by way of the court system via a Supreme Court or a Constitutional Court. Some presidents in Africa have also developed modern versions of the divine right of kings such as Banda, Bongo, Biya, Nguesso, Museveni, Ben-Ali, Nujoma, Mugabe, Qadafi, Bgabo, Bokassa and Mubarak (cf. Southall *et al.* 2006:11).

The perils of presidentialism in Africa are further underlined by the experience of Zimbabwe. At the time of writing, May 2010, the position was as follows. President Robert Mugabe won the 2008 direct presidential election. There were widespread and well reported instances of electoral fraud with this election as well as with previous elections dating back to at least 2000. His party, Zanu-PF, did not receive a governing majority in parliament. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change received a small majority in the legislature. However, they could not form a government, since that prerogative rests with the president. After months of politicking, and through the intermediation of the Southern African Development and Cooperation states (SADC), Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the MDC, was administratively appointed as prime minister (it is not a constitutional post). Despite majority support in parliament, Tsvangirai cannot appoint his own cabinet. Mugabe manipulates this prerogative to his minority party's advantage. The whole accord between the two contending parties is fragile and unstable. Parliament cannot remove Mugabe through a motion of no-confidence and the country lurches from one economic and political crisis to another. More than 2 million Zimbabweans have become economic refugees in South Africa and her neighbouring states. Of democracy there is very little to be discerned, the form of regime in Zimbabwe has become illegitimate, it is not merely a government crisis.



THE EXPERIENCE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Since the fall of communism in 1990, Central and Eastern European states almost without exception have chosen a hybrid form of executive – similar to the Fifth French Republic. In other words there is a directly elected president with real executive powers and a premier charged with executive authority, but appointed by the president. The president usually has the power of appointment and dismissal of the cabinet. The cabinet may fall due to a lack of confidence in the legislature, but the president cannot be removed from office by a lack of political confidence in his leadership. This constitutional arrangement has the theoretical and practical consequence of intra-executive conflict, should a situation of “cohabitation” develop (meaning that the president and the prime minister and cabinet come from opposing parties). In a study of eight hybrid systems of executive, i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, the Ukraine and Russia, Sedelius and Ekman make the following conclusions.

First, intra-executive conflict leads to cabinet instability, meaning that cabinets have to resign prematurely. New cabinets are then appointed, the conflict continues and cabinet is forced to resign, a new one is appointed, *da capo al fine*, until fresh elections solve the impasse. Thus there is strong evidence of high cabinet turnover in this system. Second, the authors argue, that while they could not find direct evidence of the consequences of cabinet instability in the states studied, they argue that high executive turnover could destabilise democracy in the longer run. Weimar Germany and the Fourth French Republic are evidence to this effect. Executive crises in the former led directly to the rise of Hitler and the Nazis. In France, executive turnover and lack of political leadership brought the French to the brink of a civil war in 1957-58 (Sedelius and Ekman 2008:2). The following table illustrates the problem (from Sedelius and Ekman 2008:22)

THE EXPERIENCE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

In 2005 Fukuyama *et al.* in a study of presidential systems in four South East Asian states, i.e. Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan, come to the following conclusions. All four states suffered serious governmental crises within a period of five years where efforts were made to get rid of the president by an impeachment process. In all four states the president suffered a serious legitimacy crisis. In addition the president did not have a group / faction in the legislature with a working majority to support him / her and therefore could not execute an own governmental agenda. The crises were judged against Linz's



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Table 1: State intra-executive conflict 1991-2007

Bulgaria	5
Croatia	2
Lithuania	6
Moldova	1
Poland	7
Romania	4
Russia	4
Ukraine	6

Source: Sedelius and Ekman 2008:22

initial fourfold critique against the perils of presidentialism (Fukuyama *et al.* 2005:102). These were as follows.

The problem of a minority president in terms of the electoral system which allowed for only a plurality of votes instead of an outright majority (50% + 1 vote). In Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan the respective presidents only had minority support in the election. The combined opposition immediately questioned their popularity, mandate and legitimacy. In an effort to get rid of them, impeachment procedures were instigated despite the fact that impeachment does not really provide for solving legitimacy problems. Impeachment in the first place is about “high crimes and misdemeanours” (US terminology) (Fukuyama *et al.* 2005:113).

Second, the problem of an inflexible term of office. In all four instances the president became politically unpopular and efforts were made to get rid of him by an impeachment process. In all the cases the impeachment in reality was a sham. The president could not be removed from office legally by a motion of no confidence by the legislature. The impeachments failed in Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines. In Indonesia it was successful, but it was probably illegal. In the Philippines president Estrada was forced to resign by street protests. There is still some doubt about the legality of the succession of vice president Macapagal-Arroyo (Fukuyama *et al.* 2005:114). Double sources of legitimacy in three of the four cases meant that the president found it difficult to proceed with an own political agenda because there was insufficient popular support in the legislature for the programme (Fukuyama *et al.* 2005:114).



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Third, election of unknown outsiders. In all four cases outsiders were elected to the presidency: Estrada in the Philippines; Wahid in Indonesia; Roh in South Korea and Chen in Taiwan. It is doubtful, according to Fukuyama, whether these candidates would have made it to the premiership in a parliamentary system. Politics was personalised and the candidates won the election due to their personalities rather than having vested and institutionalised support through a political party (Fukuyama *et al.* 2005: 114).

The general consequence of the governmental crises was not such that the form of the regime changed – i.e. democracy as such was not threatened. There was no fall back to a coup to get rid of the president. Thus these were governmental crises rather than regime crises. The courts made a contribution to the resolution of the conflicts rather than the military. The conclusion of the authors therefore is that the governmental crises were a learning opportunity for the democratic regime, rather than a weakening thereof. Their plea is for institutional reform, rather than finding presidentialism a peril (Fukuyama *et al.* 2005:114). However their research does support the Linz hypothesis that presidentialism leads to political crises and pseudo coups – exactly as a consequence of the rigidity of the term of office of the president.

THE FINDINGS OF NORRIS

In her book *Driving Democracy*, 2004; Pippa Norris undertakes a comprehensive study of presidential and parliamentary forms of executive. She analyses executives in 190 states between 1972 and 2003 with the aid of advanced statistical analyses. She tries to determine decisively whether the democratic form of regime is significantly determined by the form of executive and to which extent the resilience of democracy is determined by factors such as socio-economic development, colonial history, ethnic divisions and the type of party and electoral system. She finds that there were 5 000 cases that could be classified according to the type of executive that was used by 190 states over a period of 31 years – 1972-2003. She focuses on two dependent variables, to wit level of democracy and democratic consolidation as indicators of regime stability – such as coups, and assassinations. Should the Linz hypotheses be correct, one should expect that all forms of presidential republics (non-elected, indirectly elected and directly elected) should be less democratic than parliamentary forms of executive (Norris, 2004, chapter 5:15).

The evidence for the dependent variables is as follows. Regarding the four indices of levels of democracy (*Freedom House, Polity IV, Vanhanen and Cheibub*) all cases of democratic parliamentary executives had higher scores of



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democracy than presidential democracies. On a 100 point scale the differences are statistically significant. Presidential governments are between one third and fifty percent less democratic than parliamentary executives. Moreover, these scores are not dependent on whether the president is directly or indirectly elected. Not one of the presidential executives is as democratic as a parliamentary executive. Linz's hypothesis is therefore substantiated (Norris chapter 6, 2004:15).

Linz's hypothesis furthermore argues that presidentialism is associated with a higher frequency of political crises than parliamentary ones. The analysis by Norris also shows in this case that presidentialism is statistically significantly more associated with political crises than parliamentary executives. Presidential governments are confronted with political crises twice as frequently as parliamentary executives (Norris 2004 chapter 6:16). Linz's major point of departure that empirically, most stable democracies have a parliamentary executive, and that most unstable democracies are presidential, is therefore corroborated by Norris's comprehensive study. It is not merely the opinion of an authoritative political scientist.

The findings of Norris, together with the evidence and analyses presented above, confirm that parliamentary executives have definite advantages for a democratic form of regime. The division of the offices of symbolic head of state and political head of government offers a bastion against political instability and political crises. In the parliamentary executive democracy is not immediately threatened by a governmental crisis. The government leader can readily be exchanged for a politically more acceptable person. The backbenchers of the ruling party need not trump up impeachment charges against the prime minister. The premier is immediately accountable to a political institution with real power. The term of office of the premier is flexible and political leadership can be changed / replaced without a serious constitutional crisis. Politically inexperienced "personalities" cannot easily be elected to head of government since the leader of the governing party has to earn his / her political credentials through a parliamentary route. Moreover, members of cabinet are also members of the legislature and have widespread experience of politics and administration. They also balance the powers of the prime minister, since they could challenge his / her leadership at any time. This advances the stability of the democratic form of regime.

Lastly, in parliamentary executives, the leader of the government does not have a fixed term of office, and can lead for many years, contingent upon winning elections. Long terms of office are not out of the ordinary. One can point to Margaret Thatcher 11 years, Kohl 18 years, and Blair 10 years. But also, a flexible term of office means that misuse of power, or politically weak premiers, are quickly replaced; since 1948, Italy, Japan and Israel are typical examples of democracies with short prime ministerial terms of office.



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SOUTH AFRICA'S PARLIAMENTARY PRESIDENT

With the acceptance of the “new” Constitution of 1996, it was determined that the executive authority of the Republic of South Africa vests in the president (sections 83 and 85); that the president exercises his authority “jointly with other members of cabinet”; and, that the president and cabinet are jointly and individually accountable to parliament for the exercise of their powers and functions (section 92). Moreover, the National Assembly can accept a motion of no-confidence in the president with an ordinary majority, at which occasion the president and the cabinet is obliged to resign (Section 92). The president is elected to his office by an electoral college consisting of the members of the National Assembly (Section 86). To be eligible for election, the president must be an elected member of the National Assembly. Immediately upon his election, he ceases to be a member of the National Assembly, but remains accountable to that body and must answer questions regarding his office and his government (Sections 87 and 92). Accountable government is thereby reinforced by the constitution – it is not merely a convention, such as in Britain. The term of office of the president is limited to two terms of a maximum of five years each (Section 88). The office of the South African president is therefore a formalised (or codified) parliamentary form of executive. It is not a “presidential” or extra-parliamentary executive.

Linz’s concerns regarding the perils of presidentialism are not wholly applicable to the South African President – precisely because it is a parliamentary executive. The most important point that Linz advances is the one of dual legitimacy in the case of presidential executives. The South African president and the National Assembly do not have dual sources of legitimacy. The president enjoys the same legitimacy as the typical prime minister – i.e. he is the leader of the strongest (and therefore the most legitimate) party or grouping in parliament. Moreover, it is unlikely that the South African president will rise to the office “from outside party politics” on an individualised mandate. The president therefore has the benefit of a relatively long party political career before being elevated to the highest executive office. The office of the president is also not a zero sum game with parliament. He can only govern with the consent of parliament. He would also be obliged to form a coalition government should his party be the strongest but not outright majority party in the legislature. Thus the South African constitution allows a flexible arrangement should the president lose his popular support in the assembly – he can be removed swiftly and legally by a motion of no confidence, or the threat of such a motion may cause him to resign pre-emptively. No coup, artificial impeachment or other devious device, as have been used in the empirical examples quoted above in pure presidential systems is needed. In other words, the South African



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president is continuously accountable to the National Assembly and can lose his post if there is a lack of political confidence in him. This is a most important political pressure release mechanism surrounding the persona of the president. A political deadlock between president and National Assembly can be solved democratically – in contrast to that of a pure presidential system.

The evidence above suggests very strongly that the most important challenge of a presidential system is overcoming a political crisis when the assembly and / or the people lose their confidence in the president. Such a governmental crisis can often lead to a legitimacy crisis in the form of regime. Linz's last objection to presidentialism is valid in South Africa: the president is both head of state and head of government and cannot really be a unifying figure above the fray of party politics in a deeply divided society.

THE POLITICAL STRESS TEST OF THE MBEKI PRESIDENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA IN SEPTEMBER 2008

In South Africa, the office of the presidency was put through a political “stress test” in the crisis surrounding the Mbeki presidency in September of 2008. It is common knowledge that Mbeki had lost the confidence of his party, the ANC, at its quinquennial General Conference in December of 2007. At this meeting, he was challenged for the party leadership of the ANC by his party deputy president, Jacob Zuma. Mbeki lost the contest with a 40% support of delegates, as against Zuma's share of 60%. However, Mbeki's term of office as president of South Africa would continue for another 18 months, until April 2009, the date of the next general election. The policy of the ANC is that an outgoing party president, need not sacrifice his formal governmental office until the government's term of office has been completed. Thus one had the position in South Africa that between December of 2007 until April of 2009, the President of the country would not also be leader of his (ruling) party, in this case the ANC. Trouble started for Mbeki in September of 2008. His party leader, Zuma, faced corruption charges in the Natal division of the High Court of South Africa. Zuma was challenging the case of the state (led by a National Prosecutor) in the same high court on procedural matters. In his judgment, on 10 September 2008, the trial judge, Mr. Chris Nicholson, uttered an obiter dictum. In South Africa an obiter has no juridical standing. It is a personal opinion expressed by the trial judge, this opinion might be quite uninformed, or it could be well informed. However, it is not a finding on points of fact or of law, as in a proper judgment. In this obiter, judge Nicholson expressed the opinion that there seemed to be evidence that suggests that Mbeki had meddled (illegally) in the prosecution of Zuma.⁵ Zuma's supporters in the



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ANC immediately called an emergency meeting of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, to consider Nicholson's judgement. Without properly distinguishing the difference between a legally binding judgment of a court, and an obiter of a judge, the NEC of the ANC decided that Nicholson had "found that Mbeki had improperly meddled in Zuma's prosecution", and decided to "recall" him from his office as President of South Africa.⁶ Now this recalling has no formal constitutional status. However, as the ruling party, the ANC can decide who is to be its candidate for the formal presidency of the country. Recalling Mbeki in fact meant that the ANC had passed a party vote of no confidence in Mbeki's leadership. Should he have refused to resign the office of president, the party would simply follow the constitutional route and call for a motion of no confidence in Mbeki in the National Assembly. Mbeki saw the writing on the wall and resigned on 24 September 2008. The ANC put up its deputy president, Kgalema Motlanthe as presidential candidate and he was duly elected to the presidency of South Africa. His term of office was widely understood to mean to last only until the general election of 2009, when the president of the ANC, Jacob Zuma would be installed for the next five years as President of South Africa. As has happened.

South Africa's political system withstood the leadership crisis surrounding Mbeki fairly well. It was not even a governmental crisis; it was a crisis of confidence of the ruling party in its member who was the President of South Africa. The transition to the new presidency was smooth. Some ANC cabinet members resigned their positions as Ministers in sympathy with Mbeki's recall. Some went on to form an opposition to the ANC, the party is known as Congress of the People, Cope. South Africa did not need a trumped-up impeachment process, street protests, court rulings or the like. In typical parliamentary fashion, the government leader resigned once his party had lost confidence in him.

The case could also be seen from another angle. Suppose that South Africa had a direct, popularly elected president in 2008, with a fixed term of office who could not be dismissed by a vote of no confidence in the National Assembly. Suppose that the same obiter was made by judge Nicholson, and that the ANC had lost confidence in Mbeki. An impeachment process would have to be instigated and Nicholson's obiter tested in public in the impeachment trial. Mbeki would have defended himself, and parliament would have had to act as a court. The case would have dragged on for months. South Africa, as a developing democracy would have faced a first class political crisis. The "people", meaning Zuma supporters, could have run amok in the streets, investor confidence would have sagged, capital flight could have followed, and interest rates would go up, portfolio investors would have withdrawn their money, with a concomitant weakening of the currency (the Rand). Mbeki could



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have been forced out of office by foul means. This scenario could conceivably weaken the democratic form of regime. The real historical events support in my judgment, the Linz hypothesis about the perils of presidentialism.

CONCLUSION

This article reviews the advantages and disadvantages of a directly elected, extra parliamentary president. Despite a two decades long debate regarding the correctness (or feasibility) of Linz's 1990 article on the perils of presidentialism, his four main theses are supported by powerful and persuasive empirical evidence. Admittedly some of his arguments are partly essayistic rather than strictly empirical, but these have found solid empirical support in the years gone by. The latest empirical survey conducted by Pippa Norris analyses 5000 empirical cases of presidential governments and offers empirically the most solid and wide ranging support for Linz's point of view. The research suggests that presidential governments / executives are not recommended to stabilise and consolidate democracy in newly democratised, deeply divided, pluralistic societies. Moreover, the literature overview presented in this article supports the notion that presidential government is prone to governmental as well as regime crises and that this characteristic makes it unsuitable for deeply divided and developing societies. On the strength of these findings, as well as the political stress test of the Mbeki presidency in 2008, my argument is that the status quo regarding the election of the South African president should be maintained.

The constitutional engineers of the 1996 South African constitution made a wise choice regarding the parliamentary executive. The most important ingredient of this choice, viewed in the context of the Linz hypotheses, is that the president is directly accountable to parliament. His legitimacy rests on majority parliamentary support and therefore the president of necessity has to maintain the confidence of his party / and or ruling grouping. Moreover, without much ado, the South African president can be removed from office, without precipitating a constitutional or governmental crisis. There is no compelling evidence or constitutional engineering reason for South Africa to reform the election of its head of government.

The arguments from South African opposition circles that the direct election of the president is a desideratum in order to prevent an "unelected cabal" from appointing the country's president flies in the face of empirical evidence to the contrary. A popularly elected president is to be avoided in a deeply divided, plural society, such as South Africa. A popularly elected president is not accountable to any political institution, save "the people" and is twice as prone



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as parliamentary executives to slide into authoritarianism. The compromise of the 1996 Constitution regarding the indirect election of the President still eminently deserves to be kept in place.

NOTES

- 1 The author is professor emeritus of Politics at the University of Johannesburg as well as a research fellow at the Sanlam Centre for Public Governance.
- 2 Compare *Daily Dispatch*, 26 January 2009 for the UDM-Holomisa point of view; *Mail & Guardian Online*, 21 January 2009 for the DA-Zille point of view; *Mail & Guardian Online*, 17 November 2008 for the Cope-Lekota point of view.
- 3 South Africa follows the parliamentary form of executive at all three levels of government. I.e. the president, premiers and mayors are formally indirectly elected, but in fact appointed, by the strongest party / grouping in the respective legislatures. The British example being normative, given our colonial heritage.
- 4 I borrow this term from Juan Linz.
- 5 The full text of justice Nicholson's judgment and obiter can be read at www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/news/0,,2-7-1442-2392604,00.html.
- 6 See *Beeld*, 22 September 2008, page 6, for a summary of events that led to Mbeki's downfall.

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Innovations in governance for biodiversity conservation

The case of the Conservation Stewardship Programme, Western Cape¹

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ABSTRACT

South Africa boasts one of the world's richest and most diverse natural landscapes and is world renowned for its biodiversity. The Cape Floristic Region (CFR) is the world's sixth and smallest floral kingdom and the only one housed within the confines of a single country and predominantly within the Western Cape Province. It is also the richest, with more than 9 000 plant species. This region is considered as one of the world's 25 most threatened biodiversity hotspots and most of the priority areas fall outside of existing statutorily protected areas and are mostly on privately owned land.

This article focuses on the introduction of a new governance approach and policy instrument in 2003 to contribute towards the conservation of globally important "off-reserve" biodiversity remnants in the Cape Floristic Kingdom in the Western Cape, known as the Conservation Stewardship Programme. The governance paradigm is characterised by a growing use of non-regulatory policy instruments such as the so-called 'new' environmental policy instruments (NEPIs), which include economic and voluntary approaches as well as persuasion. These are proposed, designed and implemented by non-state actors, sometimes working alongside state actors, but sometimes also independently. The co-management solution rests on the assumptions that local people must have a stake in conservation and management, and that the formation



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of partnerships between government agencies and resource users is essential. The programme will be described, analysed and evaluated as a case study before some concluding remarks are offered.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa boasts one of the world's richest and most diverse natural landscapes and is world renowned for its biodiversity. The Cape Floristic Region (CFR), in particular, is the world's sixth and smallest floral kingdom and the only one housed within the confines of a single country and predominantly within the Western Cape Province. There are more than 9 000 plant species in this region, which is half of South Africa's total biodiversity in only 4% of the country's surface area. This region is considered as one of the world's 25 most threatened biodiversity hotspots, with 2 400 species considered threatened and another 300 species critically endangered. Most of the priority areas fall outside of existing statutorily protected areas and are mostly on privately owned land.

Conservation Stewardship is a co-management approach to biodiversity conservation based on a contractual agreement with government-backed economic incentives. For the purposes of this article it is prudent to focus *firstly* on the co-management model as a governance approach; *secondly* on voluntary agreements (VAs) as a so-called New Environmental Policy Instrument (NEPI) sub-type within the context of environmental policy instruments; *thirdly* on the enabling legislative and policy setting, before the Conservation Stewardship programme in the Western Cape Province will be described, analysed and evaluated as a case study. *Finally*, some concluding remarks will be made.

THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

The shift in terminology from "government" to "governance" signified, according to Salamon (2002:8), the central reality of public problem solving, that is the reliance of government on third parties to address public problems. Although the government plays an important role with regards to natural resource management policy formulation and implementation, an increasing amount of evidence shows the failure of state-centric resource management models (Hara 2003:20). The search for solutions led to a proliferation of *tools* of public action and of *instruments* or means used to address public problems, as well as to the realignment of relationships between the regulators and the resource users.



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In the environmental sector the traditional regulatory **instruments** dating from the 1960s are typically understood as straightforward regulation and control through laws and enforcement by appropriate regulatory bodies (Connelly and Smith 1999:168). But lately the sector has seen the emergence of many types of 'newer' instruments or NEPIs, which include economic and voluntary approaches as well as persuasion. A particularly useful classification of NEPIs is that of Jordan, Wurzel and Zito (2005). They distinguish four main sub-types of NEPI, namely *market-based instruments*, *eco-labels*, *environmental management systems* and *voluntary agreements* (Jordan, Wurzel and Zito 2005:481-482). Depending on the purpose, voluntary agreements take on different formats, but most relevant to this discussion are the negotiated agreements in the form of formal contracts whose aim is to address quite specific environmental problems negotiated between public authorities and relevant stakeholders.

As far as realignment of relationships between the regulators and the resource users goes, one of the promising tools which has emerged is the *co-management* approach, which involves a sharing of management between the state and a responsible user group (Symes 1997:110-112). The co-management solution, according to Hara (2003:20), rests on the assumptions that local people must have a stake in conservation and management, and that the formation of partnerships between government agencies and resource users is essential. For co-management to be feasible, Hara (2003:25, quoting Berkes 1997) suggests that it should address the following four questions positively. *Firstly*, are there appropriate local and governmental institutions? *Secondly*, is there trust between the actors? *Thirdly*, is there legal protection of local rights. And *lastly*, are there economic incentives for the local communities involved to conserve the resource? To evaluate the success of co-management Conley and Moote (2003:375) suggest developing a set of criteria which could typically include *process* criteria (e.g. shared vision, inclusive participation, consensus-based decision-making), *environmental outcome* criteria (e.g. improved habitat or water quality, biological diversity preserved) and *socioeconomic outcome* criteria (e.g. building of relationships and trust, gaining of knowledge and understanding, improved capacity for dispute resolution, changes to, or creation of, new institutions).

POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

According to Borrini-Feyerabend, Pimbert, Farvar, Kothari and Renard (2004:342-344) locally negotiated and implemented co-management agreements are likely to be ineffectual unless supported by enabling and coherent legislation and policies. The policy instruments that are of relevance



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for co-management extend beyond the regulation of institutional partnerships or the protection of the environment; they deal rather with ecological sustainability, livelihoods, democratic and accountable institutions, social justice and equity in the political and economic arena.

Since democratisation there has been a flurry of activity in the environmental policy context in South Africa. Some of the environmental policy reforms and legislation introduced from the mid-1990s, and which are of particular importance for biodiversity protection, include the following:

- The *National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) 107* of 1998 was promulgated in 1998 as the outcome of a three-year comprehensive participatory policy process. It created a fundamental, over-arching legal framework to ensure that environmental rights are adhered to by all spheres of government as well as private entities within South Africa, as set out in the Constitution. It also set out fundamental principles upon which all environmental decision-making should be based. The NEMA also promotes special attention to stressed, sensitive or vulnerable ecosystems at management and planning levels, especially where these ecosystems are specifically threatened by development activities. This obliges the identification of such areas and active execution of protective measures (RSA 1998);
- The *National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10* of 2004 was promulgated to establish the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and provide for the management and conservation of South Africa's biodiversity within the framework of the NEMA. According to Driver, Maze, Rouget, Lombard, Nel, Turpie, Cowling, Desmet, Goodman, Harris, Jonas, Reyers, Sink and Strauss (2005:22), this makes South Africa one of the few countries in the world to have a national public sector institute dedicated to biodiversity monitoring and reporting. The Act obliged the Minister to prepare and adopt a national biodiversity framework and to monitor the implementation of such a framework by reviewing and amending it at least every five years. This led to the conception and realisation of the *National Biodiversity Strategy and Assessment Programme (NBSAP)*, which goes hand in hand with the *National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment (NSBA)*, both completed in 2005. This Act therefore plays a fundamental role in the conservation of biodiversity, whether on- or off-reserve, as it allows for bioregional plans and for legislative management plans for maintaining biodiversity in ecosystems (RSA 2004);
- The *National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act 53* of 2003 was promulgated with the aim of providing protection for those areas that are ecologically viable and representative of South Africa's natural assets. The Act further allows the Minister or MEC to provide certain areas with



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protection by means of a range of different options, from the declaration of such areas as special nature reserves, enjoying a high protection status, to more flexible agreements regarding management, subject to a process of public participation and consultation with organs of state. This means that any land, be it private or communal, can receive formal, statutory protection and the management authority can be assigned by the minister to the landholder/s, or any suitable individual or organ of state. This has had a major impact on the way we undertake conservation. No longer does it have to be the state, with all its capacity constraints, that ensures the protection of our natural resources, but this important responsibility can now also be delegated to private individuals or groups (RSA 2003);

- A recent innovation was the development of *fiscal mechanisms* to support biodiversity protection on private land by landowners. Following the publication of the draft policy paper on a *Framework for considering market-based instruments to support environmental fiscal reform in South Africa* in 2006, the *Revenue Laws Amendment Act 60 of 2008* was promulgated at the beginning of 2009. The purpose of this policy reform process was to provide tangible incentives in recognition of landowners' commitment to secure biodiversity (which is essentially a public good) on their respective properties for conservation purposes. These fiscal mechanisms aim to ease the financial burden of land management in assisting landowners to recover their costs and take the form of tax incentives (RSA 2008).

CASE STUDY – CAPENATURE CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME

This section describes the rationale of the Conservation Stewardship Programme as a novel approach to biodiversity conservation in the Western Cape in terms of its goals, what it entails, the key stakeholders involved and the different options for implementation.

Main Goals and Objectives

According to the manager of the Conservation Stewardship Programme of the provincial conservation agency in the Western Cape known as CapeNature, 80% of priority conservation areas in the Western Cape are situated on privately owned land (Martens pers.com. 2010). Since these areas (which are threatened by poor land management, invasive species and land transformation) consist of small and dispersed fragments of land, the existing networks of formal protected areas cannot adequately protect these threatened species and ecosystems.



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(Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB)), [undated] and Martens & Hamman [undated]). Since existing networks of formally protected areas in the Western Cape are also not ideally situated in critical or priority biodiversity conservation areas, simply increasing the size of large protected areas will therefore not capture highly dispersed and fragmented pieces of land (Martens pers. com. 2010). The private landowner therefore plays an essential role in contributing towards sustainable conservation.

In an attempt to make provision for procedures and mechanisms to facilitate co-operative environmental governance and to harmonise environmental plans, policies, programmes and decision-making, CapeNature initiated a stewardship programme with the underlying goal “to secure and maintain the conservation status of land in high-priority conservation areas of the Western Cape” (Jackelman, Von Hase, Balfour and Ferreira 2008:11). This programme, known as the *Conservation Stewardship Programme*, or CSP, allows for land owners to enter into agreements with conservation agencies to conserve parts of, or entire, properties and is set to become an important mechanism for conserving these fragmented areas (Martens & Hamman [undated]:2). The CSP has a threefold vision: *first*, to ensure that areas with a high biodiversity value receive secure conservation status and are linked to outer conservation areas in the region to form a conservation corridor; *secondly*, to ensure that the landowners enjoy tangible benefits for their conservation effort; and *lastly*, to expand biodiversity conservation by ensuring good biodiversity management and practice in such a way that empowers the land owners to become responsible decision makers (CAPE 2008c and CAPE 2007).

Defining Stewardship

In broad terms *stewardship* refers to “the wise use, management and protection of what’s entrusted to you” (CAPE 2008c and CAPE 2007). In CapeNature’s Conservation Stewardship Implementation Plan for 2009-2012 (Jackelman *et al.* 2008:11), *land stewardship* is referred to as carefully practising land usage to ensure that natural systems and biodiversity are maintained or improved for future generations. It is based on the principle that landowners are the custodians of the land that they occupy and have a responsibility to future generations to pass it on in the same or in a better condition by conserving and protecting the land (Martens 2008).

Conservation stewardship is a sub-component of land stewardship and entails securing the conservation status of private land. This ensures that natural resources are used in a sustainable manner, that threats to natural systems and biodiversity are managed effectively, and that important ecosystems are protected (Jackelman *et al.* 2008: 11). CapeNature refers to conservation



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stewardship as “wisely using resources entrusted to you on your property, protecting important ecosystems, effectively managing alien invasive species and fires and grazing or harvesting without damaging the veld” (CAPE 2008c and CAPE 2007).

Stewardship is a completely voluntary commitment between landowners and conservation agencies and it is implemented in a bottom-up way through partnerships. It can take place on private, communal or state-owned land or a mixture of such land. The landowners in the stewardship agreement retain ownership of the farm and will remain the key managers and users of the land. Stewardship focuses on relationship building between landowners and conservation agencies with the intention of conserving land on off-reserve properties (Martens 2008). Stewardship forms part of the national protected area expansion strategy that has been adopted by the National Department of Environment Affairs (previously known as Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism, or DEAT). Stewardship has been implemented in South Africa over the past few years and is a powerful mechanism that supports the protection of land outside of formal reserve areas (CAPE 2008a).

Key Stakeholders

The Western Cape Conservation Stewardship Programme (CSP) is a Cape Action for People and the Environment (CAPE) initiative and is implemented by CapeNature, which is a public institution responsible for the protection of biodiversity in the Western Cape (Olen 2005:3). CAPE is founded on a partnership approach that ensures that local social and economic benefits are derived from elements such as biodiversity in a particular area. Although the key participants in the CSP are the landowners and the operational staff within CapeNature, other institutions and organisations also have a very important role to play. Among these institutions are provincial departments such as the Department of Environmental Affairs and Planning; Agriculture and the national Department of Water Affairs; Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries; NGOs; CapeNature; the City of Cape Town and the Botanical Society of South Africa.

The Different Stewardship Options

Although there are currently more than 20 stewardship options available, the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB) has narrowed them down to three basic options. These options are entered into on a voluntarily basis and are customised to suit the specific needs of the property and the landowner (Martens and Hamman [undated]: 3). It is also important to bear in mind that the



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owners in no way cede ownership rights to the WCNCB or any other agency; they remain the owners and main users of the land. The three options available for a portion of, or an entire, property are: contract nature reserves, biodiversity agreements and conservation areas. These options range in degree of land use limitations as well as associated benefits received (Western Cape Nature Conservation Board [undated]). The higher categories, i.e. categories with more land use limitations, offer more incentives and support by CapeNature (WCNCB [undated]). *Contract nature reserves* are legally binding contracts on private land to protect biodiversity in the long term. These sites enjoy increased benefits and assistance with increased limitations, and are recommended for critically endangered or priority areas. *Biodiversity agreements* are negotiated legal agreements between landowners and conservation agencies for protecting biodiversity on conservation-worthy private land in the medium term. These options receive benefits such as assistance in conservation management and limited conservation-friendly development can take place on these sites. *Conservation areas* are flexible agreements with no defined time periods where the land manager receives an above-normal level of advice and assistance, and only a few land use limitations are imposed on the land (CAPE 2008c and CAPE 2007).

DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

Stewardship and the Organisational Paradigm Shift

The nature of today's environmental problems is too complex, diverse and fragmented for traditional policy instruments and approaches applied by public agencies. Traditionally formal reserves were prioritised, leading to the failure of authorities to acknowledge the importance of putting policy instruments in place for engaging private landowners in biodiversity conservation efforts (Olen 2005:10). The formal organisational structures and culture of conservation agencies did not create space for significant innovation to take place in terms of biodiversity conservation (Olen 2005:14). One of the biggest challenges was the unwillingness/reluctance of top management to undergo change in terms of the formal reserve mindset to one where the focus shifts towards biodiversity conservation of off-reserve areas (Olen 2005:9). As Martens (pers. com. 2010) explains, the most significant stumbling block was overcoming the organisational culture and resultant resistance to change. Botha (2004:1) observes that stewardship "had to overcome a national resistance to working with landowners to conserve and played a key role in changing national biodiversity and protected areas legislation to support stewardship approaches."



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The stewardship programme also encompassed new ideas and structures that took a lot of time to teach and explain to those involved (Martens pers.com. 2010). The traditional paradigm with its embedded bias towards formally protected areas was overcome and the CSP successfully changed the way in which CapeNature functions and approaches biodiversity conservation (Botha 2004:1).

Stewardship and Co-management

Without collaboration and the forming of partnerships between land owners and CapeNature, stewardship is impossible. Co-operation is an underlying principle and fundamental to the stewardship programme. It was found that relationship building with landowners was a key factor to the success of the programme, while the importance of sharing the responsibility for conservation also empowers people and allows for more innovation (Martens pers.com. 2010).

For example, in the *Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor* (GCBC) an outreach programme has been successfully implemented to see to it that all role-players and communities are empowered and given the capacity to ensure meaningful participation (CapeNature 2008b). A civil society strengthening project has identified several farm workers in the Cederberg area to be empowered and given the capacity to become field guides or managers (CapeNature 2008b:18), and in the Paardeberg area near Malmesbury 20 farm workers and their families were given vocational training by CapeNature extension staff (CapeNature 2008b:22).

In the GCBC, where vegetation loss is occurring at an alarming rate and time is of the essence, it was found that a one-on-one approach was much more successful than trying to convince all the landowners to join the programme (CapeNature Stewardship Programme 2009 and CapeNature and the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor (GCBC) 2006).

The Conservation Stewardship Programme (CSP) can also be considered in terms of the four elements of successful co-management, as suggested by Berkes (1997, cited in Hara 2003:25).

- **Appropriate local and governmental institutions involved:** The environmental policy and legislative reforms introduced in South Africa from the mid-1990s, with their emphasis on co-operative governance and citizen participation, created a facilitating context for co-management to flourish. The CSP can also realise its targets through the formation of partnerships with other organisations and initiatives (Martens pers. com. 2010).

Important institutional *stakeholders* are the provincial departments of Agriculture and of Environmental Affairs and Planning, the national Department of Water Affairs, NGOs such as the Stewardship Association,



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South African National Parks (SANParks), CapeNature, the City of Cape Town, the Botanical Society of South Africa, the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative, the Gouritz Initiative, the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor, and other CAPE teams. NGOs play an important role in promoting relationship and trust building between conservation agencies and landowners, as many of them already have good relationships with some of the landowners (Martens pers. com. 2010; CapeNature Stewardship Programme 2009).

A collaborative mechanism, the *reference team* on which the different stakeholders are represented, was created to generate co-operation across agencies and to support CapeNature and SANParks in implementing stewardship (CAPE 2008a). The reference team, which meets twice a year, also assists in finalising the project and setting special targets, and it facilitates stewardship by aligning resources (Martens pers. com. 2010). The engagement between the agency and landowners take place through specifically designated *extension officers* for the purpose of building relationships and brokering contracts with landowners (Cape Biosphere 2009 [online]). In most of the stewardship projects it was found that extension staff need to be equipped with people skills relating to relationship building, conflict resolution, land negotiations and knowledge in terms of conservation issues; they also need to be flexible and must be able to cope under pressure and be able to deal with diverse cultural groups, personalities and farming practices (CAPE, [Undated]b:3 and CapeNature 2009). In 2007 an extension course was developed that focuses on the softer skills needed to communicate and interact with communities and landowners, and for the successful finalisation of agreements (CapeNature2008:22).

- **Trust between the partners:** Building trust between the state and the resource-user group is a critical component in co-management and it is therefore not surprising that this was one of the biggest challenges CapeNature faced. Initially some landowners were sceptical about the stewardship programme and expressed fears about losing ownership or user rights to their land (Olen 2005:12, Martens pers. com. 2010), and CAPE [undated]b).As transparency is an important element in building trust and co-management, the extension staff found that they needed to be completely upfront with the landowners about their conservation objectives and have no hidden agendas (CAPE [undated]b). In one site (Agter Groenberg) the agency found that ‘success builds interest’; when hesitant landowners were referred to other landowners who had signed conservation stewardship contacts and received benefits, they will be more likely to consider the idea (Martens pers. com. 2010).
- **Legally protected local rights of people:** The legal system traditionally did not provide long-term or permanent protection of private nature



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reserves. Although the stewardship programme is a completely voluntarily commitment, both *Contract Nature Reserves* and *Biodiversity Agreements* are legally binding contracts or agreements. In breaching any of the stewardship agreements, there are consequences and damages or fines that need to be paid to CapeNature by the landowner. But it is important to realise that the landowner remains the owner and key manager of the land and thus retains all ownership rights in terms of access or farming practices.

- **Economic incentives to motivate local communities to conserve the specific resource:** The programme stands on the principle that although it is possible to convince people of the importance of their land in terms of conservation, incentives that offer more tangible benefits are needed to influence landowners' decisions on how to utilise their land. Farmers basically donate the use of their land (but not their land itself) to conservation; they thus need something in return (Martens pers. com. 2010). The key advantage of the stewardship programme is the fiscal incentives involved for the land owners. In the case of 'nature reserves' the land is made exempt from property rates as provided for in the *Property Rates Act 6 of 2004*, while with 'biodiversity agreements' or protected environments rate rebates can be negotiated with the local authority (Martens pers.com. 2010).

The second fiscal incentive, made possible by the 2008 amendment of the *Revenue Laws Amendment Act 60 of 2008*, allows tax relief to landowners by creating mechanisms whereby management costs or the loss of right to use the land can be deducted from income tax. The fiscal mechanisms relating to the different conservation agreement options – each one more secure – have varying degrees of commitment and financial costs: the contracts of a minimum of five years are allowed to deduct conservation and management/maintenance expenditure (excluding capital expenditure) from income derived either off the conservation area or an area in its immediate proximity, meaning neighbouring property. The 30- to 98-year contracts can claim the same conservation and management expenditure, but as a deductible donation. This means it can be deducted from their gross taxable income instead of just their tradable income. Whereas the 99-year perpetuity contracts can deduct the same management expenditure as a donation as well as the value of the portion of the land secured for conservation (RSA 2008:69-72).

Other advantages to landowners include extension services in terms of advice and support, the mapping of farms, marketing exposure, discount at CapeNature accommodation sites and the provision of management plans (Olen 2005:5). The stewardship programme also gives assistance to farmers by publishing and distributing fact sheets that can guide landowners on different elements of environmental management.



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PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Various **challenges** have presented themselves in the development and implementation of the Conservation Stewardship Programme:

- The first and main stumbling blocks was the fact that in the beginning of the project the *priority biodiversity areas* outside reserves were not yet identified, recorded or mapped, and CapeNature could thus not direct attention to priority areas from the start. Fortunately, CapeNature could collaborate with CAPE, which conducted surveys and provided mapped information on the critical biodiversity areas (Olen 2005:8);
- *Legal issues*: the legal framework did not provide long-term conservation or protection on private nature reserves as these statuses could be renounced as the property changed ownership. It was critically important to get the right legal systems in place that could secure conservation on private properties (Martenspers. com. 2010);
- The *lack of co-operation* between the funding agencies and the conservation stewardship team in terms of conflicting expectations (Olen 2005:10). The funding agencies did not fully understand the issues at the ground level and were not flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate changes in the goals of the programme that became necessary after the implementation;
- Building trust between the partners was initially very challenging, but over time this has become easier as the landowners and the extension staff from CapeNature started to build solid relationships;
- The *lack of institutional capacity* in terms of human resources such as full-time dedicated extension officers to honour commitments made to landowners in terms of assistance and support and management interventions, considering the long-term nature of some of the stewardship options (CAPE [undated] b:39).

Research and experience to date have shown that the following factors also inhibit effective conservation on privately owned land: poor co-ordination; a lack of understanding in terms of the options available; limited conservation management skills and capacity; and lastly, a lack of experience at all levels (Martens and Hamman [undated]:2). Furthermore, there is a lack of complete understanding regarding the economic decisions that influence landowner behaviours (CAPE [undated]a).

To reflect on the **advantages** of the Conservation Stewardship Programme, the framework of Conley and Moote (2003:375), which includes environmental outcome criteria, process criteria and socioeconomic outcome criteria, could be utilised.



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- As far as *environmental outcomes* are concerned, the Conservation Stewardship Programme provides a cost-effective and long-term alternative to acquiring land for reserves to expand protected areas by forming partnerships with landowners and allowing them to conserve on their properties (CAPE 2008a). The programme contributes successfully to the national targets for protecting threatened ecosystems and preserving the diversity of natural systems. More than 80 000 ha of land on private properties are now under conservation management made up of 13 Contract Nature Reserves, 13 Biodiversity Agreements and 11 Voluntary Conservation Areas (CAPE 2008a and Martens pers. com. 2010).
- The formulation of the management plans which were based on a collaborative approach, where the landowners and the conservation authority both make inputs and jointly decide on and share responsibility for biodiversity conservation, is an important process outcome of the programme. Co-operation across agencies is facilitated by the establishment of a stakeholder representative reference team as a new collaborative mechanism to generate co-operation across agencies (Martens pers. com. 2010).
- The building of relationships and trust between the landowners and the conservation agency so critical to the success of the programme can be considered as a key *socioeconomic outcome*. Other positive spin-offs include the outreach programme to empower all role-players and communities to ensure meaningful participation; vocational training for farm workers and their families; addressing poverty in local towns by employing project teams from local communities; and the tangible economic incentives the landowners receive upon signing on to the programme (Cape Nature, 2008).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The indications are that the Conservation Stewardship Programme could provide a cost-effective and long-term alternative to acquiring land for reserves to expand protected areas by forming partnerships with landowners and allowing them to conserve biodiversity on their properties. The programme also successfully contributes to the national targets for protecting threatened ecosystems and preserving the diversity of natural systems, while providing social, political, economic and environmental benefits.

The introduction of voluntary agreements as one of the newer non-regulatory policy instruments (at least in South Africa) and incorporating the principles and characteristics of co-management signifies a paradigm shift in the governance



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approach of public agencies to biodiversity conservation. The project has successfully changed the way in which conservation agencies function; it has attracted a new generation of committed conservation professionals, who operate in an extensive network of support and unity from the top down to grassroots level – the biggest advantage is that it secures a platform for a significant attempt to meet the extensive conservation targets set for the Western Cape Province in South Africa.

NOTES

- 1 This article is a partly adapted version of a paper titled *Innovations for Biodiversity Conservation: the Case of the Conservation Stewardship Programme, Western Cape, South Africa* delivered at the **28th International Congress of Administrative Sciences** in Bali, Indonesia, 12-17 July 2010 and forms part of a project supported by the National Research Foundation.

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A conceptual framework for preparing effective municipal councillors

Ensuring the future of local government through skills identification

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to investigate the skills of municipal councillors and the resulting effect on their performance and ultimately the municipalities they serve. The effectiveness of municipal councillors in respect of service delivery is being increasingly questioned in the wake of high-profile service delivery protests, as well as various negative reports on the state of the local sphere of government. Although there are no formal academic and/or skills qualification requirements for municipal councillors in South Africa, the current state of affairs raises questions about the skills required to perform the duties of a municipal councillor. It could be argued that the practice of electing councillors on the basis of (mainly) party-political loyalty, with only limited training being provided for the role they must perform, places councillors at a disadvantage regarding their ability to ably perform their duties, while also proving detrimental to the local communities insofar as the quality of services they receive is concerned. The year 2011 sees the next round of municipal elections being contested, which many regard as a watershed period in the existence of municipalities in a democratic South Africa. Although there has been a tendency to expose newly elected councillors to training programmes in the immediate wake of their election, the impact of such



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training is in serious doubt. Therefore, the aim of this article is to firstly investigate the role to be played by municipal councillors and, on the basis of that, to investigate the skills they require to equip them for that role.

INTRODUCTION

Local government management in South Africa has lately come under severe scrutiny, with the necessity of the current system of local government called into question. However, if the arguments for and against the necessity of such institutions are carefully analysed and compared to their objectives, it becomes clear that such arguments should not be about the necessity of local government, but rather the management of the system and the leadership applied to govern. It is therefore important to determine how both the management and leadership of the system have adapted to the current changing environment and how more efficient and effective services can be rendered.

The core function in the local sphere of government is service delivery. It is evident from the specific role given to local government in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 that municipal councils are key participants in the effort to achieve government objectives. As members of these locally elected legislative bodies, municipal councillors therefore play an important role in policy-making, as well as the subsequent process of implementation, analysis and evaluation – that is policy management. The political nature of the local sphere of government at this time also means that the relationship between councillors and senior municipal officials is often a complicated one, especially in view of the policy of deployment.

The efforts to fully transform local government from racially divided entities into fully democratic structures of the State can be regarded as a noble exercise characterised by an integrated and consultative approach. The establishment of an extensive legislative framework for local government also allows this era in the transformation process to stand out as a crucial and significant time in the development of local government. There is no question that the recent development of local government in South Africa has set the scene for many significant events, but regrettably, ever since the first democratic municipal elections in 1995, effective municipal management has been cause for concern. As evidence of this are several qualified audit reports, frequent mismanagement of property and public resources, nepotism in tender processes, the awarding of excessive remuneration packages and performance bonuses, and ultimately inadequate services to local communities. Against this



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backdrop and the upcoming municipal elections in 2011, this article focuses on the local government service delivery milieu in South Africa, discussing the requirements for service excellence and the role of the municipal councillor in local government. The article concludes with a suggested framework of the skills requirements for municipal councillors.

SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE LOCAL SPHERE OF GOVERNMENT – CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The South African government has adopted a holistic approach to service delivery throughout all three spheres of government. To this end, section 40(1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (hereafter called the Constitution) refers to government as being constituted of national, provincial and local government spheres, which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated (RSA 1996). This means that while the work of each government sphere is interlinked and there is a degree of interdependency, each sphere has a distinctive character that should be respected and utilised to the benefit of the specific area being served. Together with Chapter 7 of the Constitution, which enshrines the existence of local government, this provision emphasises the equal role played by municipalities in the service delivery chain. In this regard, Section 152(1) (b) explicitly states one of the primary objectives of local government as being “the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner”. From this perspective, the mandate for the decision-makers in local government is clear.

As far as decision-making is concerned, Section 151(2) of the Constitution states that “the executive and legislative authority of a municipality is vested in its municipal council”. This provision describes a significant difference between local government and the national and provincial spheres of government. At national and provincial level, legislative authority is vested in Parliament and the provincial legislature respectively, with executive authority vested in Cabinet and the provincial executive council respectively. This differs from the local sphere of government where both legislative and executive authority is vested in the municipal council. The municipal council must therefore determine local policies in the form of bylaws while also being accountable for the implementation and execution of such bylaws. In addition, the municipal council is responsible for administering the local government matters with which it has been entrusted in accordance with Schedules 4 (Part B) and 5 (Part B) of the Constitution (Thornhill 2008:73).

As far as the composition of the municipal council is concerned, all municipalities consist of elected political office-bearers, known as councillors, who are elected through a combined electoral system of proportional representation



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and the ward system in geographically demarcated wards. Although the Local Government: *Municipal Structures Act 117* of 1998 (hereafter called the Structures Act) provides for a variety of structures and functionaries within the ranks of municipal councils, based on the category or type of municipality in existence (RSA 1998), all councillors should hold office on the premise of serving that local community. The Constitution and other enabling legislation therefore provide basic guidelines as to the role of municipal councils. For purposes of this article, however, the role of the municipal councillor is scrutinised more rigorously.

ROLE OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS IN SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

According to Paradza, Mokwena and Richards (2010:11) the role of the municipal councillor can broadly be defined as follows: To provide residents with a progress report explaining the decisions made by the council in committing resources to development projects and programmes affecting the local community; to assess whether his/her particular municipality's programmes and plans are having their intended impact and whether services are being delivered fairly, effectively and in a sustainable way; to determine whether capital projects meet the requirements of the council's integrated development plan (IDP); and to maintain close contact with the community to ensure that the council is informed of all issues on the ground and to convey important information from the council to the residents.

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA 2006:59) stipulates seven functions to be fulfilled by councillors: (i) To participate in policy-making and monitoring of the effective implementation of policy (incorporating the dual legislative and executive function in terms of the Constitution, as previously mentioned); (ii) To represent community needs and expectations in an accountable and transparent manner; (iii) To communicate with the public in view of getting their input into council decisions and to collect information on any serious concerns related to municipal service delivery; (iv) To fulfil their leadership responsibilities in executive positions such as that of mayor, executive mayor, member of the executive committee or executive mayoral committee, depending on the category/type of municipality within which they serve; (v) To behave ethically in accordance with the code of conduct contained in Schedule 1 of the Local Government: *Municipal Systems Act 32* of 2000 (hereafter called the Systems Act) (RSA, 2000); (vi) To delegate certain council functions to the relevant committees so as to improve the efficiency of the council decision-making process; and (vii) To promote the concept of developmental local government, as stipulated in the legislative framework for local government.



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SALGA (2006:61) emphasises that councillors should perform the above functions within key municipal processes, which include municipal integrated development planning, budgeting and performance management, as well as public participation and citizen involvement.

When considering the aforementioned functions of municipal councillors and the predominantly management processes in terms of which these are applicable, two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, a municipal councillor's functions are, briefly, to provide representation and leadership, to promote participation in decision-making, and to exercise delegation and legislative powers. Secondly, the question that arises is whether the role played by councillors does in fact include a management component.

Traditionally, the accepted role of the municipal councillor has been limited to policy-making, while the responsibility for executing such policies has fallen on the appointed municipal manager and/or senior managers (heads of departments). However, within the context of the new municipal legislative environment, it is difficult to isolate councillors from the management environment. As an example, the case of the mayor of a municipality can be considered. In terms of Sections 16(2) and 87(3) of the Local Government: *Municipal Finance Management Act* 56 of 2003 (hereafter called the MFMA) (RSA 2003), the mayor (as a councillor) is responsible for the process of drafting the municipality's annual budget and ultimately tabling it to council (Fourie & Opperman, 2007:215). Although this does not imply the physical compilation of the budget, it does imply the presence of a management responsibility. Furthermore, according to Section 16(1) [a] of the Local Government: *Municipal Systems Act*, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), councils (and by implication councillors) are required to consult with the citizens to deliberate and seek inputs on, inter alia, the budget, the IDP and the performance management system, before these processes can be approved and implemented. Once again, this implies a management responsibility on the part of councillors. On this basis, one could therefore argue the benefits of councillors having not only political leadership responsibilities but also certain management skills if municipalities are to be successful in the current environment. Within this context, it is therefore necessary to briefly consider the management versus leadership role of the municipal councillor.

EFFECTIVE LEADERS ALSO MANAGE, AND EFFECTIVE MANAGERS ALSO LEAD – A MUNICIPAL COUNCILLOR PERSPECTIVE

Although the term “management” has been defined by numerous different authors over the years (for example Minnaar & Bekker 2005:94), the



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explanation most suitable for this article is that of Fox and Meyer (1995:77) who define management in the public sector as that part of public administration in which a person is charged with certain functions, such as policy-making, planning, organising, leading, control and evaluation. "A manager is anyone whose duties in the main involve responsibility for the work of others" (RSA 1997:19). Again, leadership is about firstly conceiving a vision and strategy and secondly engaging people to achieve that same vision (Fox 2006:38). According to Shonhiwa (2006:16) leadership therefore focuses on the ability to influence people and resources in a manner that will result in the achievement of one or more identified goals. When considering these management and leadership concepts for the public domain, and having considered the role of the municipal councillor, it becomes clear that a municipal councillor in the South African local government sphere is indeed charged with both managerial and leadership responsibilities. While it is true that the extent of these responsibilities may vary, ignorance of their existence may be one of the main reasons for the current crisis in local government.

Many scholars have researched the genesis of management and leadership (for example Minnaar & Bekker 2005, Moorosi-Malopo 2005, Shonhiwa 2006), concluding that the main difference between management and leadership lies in the manner in which a task is perceived. A leader creates a vision for an institution and strategies for achieving that vision, whilst a manager creates a resource system that can be used to implement plans as effectively and efficiently as possible, based on the view that effectiveness relates to goal achievement – "doing the right things" – while efficiency relates to transforming inputs into outputs – "doing things right" (Minnaar & Bekker 2005:128). In local government, municipal councillors as leaders must determine the short-, medium- and long-term strategic vision for the municipalities in which they serve. This is prescribed in Chapter 5 of the Systems Act, which addresses the IDP. In fact, section 25(1) of the Systems Act refers to the IDP as the municipality's strategic plan (a vital component in the management domain of any current organisation), once more making a compelling argument for the link between the leadership and managerial responsibilities of municipal councillors. While the IDP should serve as the roadmap for achieving service delivery in the area, municipalities should, according to Gaffoor and Cloete (2010:4) subscribe to management theory that enhances the human (in terms of leadership) and intellectual (in terms of management) ability of councillors, in terms of the need to "create a resource system that can implement plans as effectively and efficiently as possible and thereby attaining a competitive edge". Although it is the responsibility of municipal managers to manage council resources in daily operational activities, it remains the prerogative of the municipal council to decide how the available resources are to be allocated and directed towards



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service delivery. This is mainly reflected in the decisions taken by the council in respect of the budget and the alignment thereof with the IDP.

Another factor to be considered in terms of the management/leadership responsibilities of councillors is the importance of a close working relationship amongst councillors and senior municipal executives. These days, most strategic managerial decisions in municipalities are, in fact, politically based. This can be ascribed to what Thornhill (2010:7) refers to as the “open secret of deployment or the appointment of senior municipal officials according to the affiliation to a particular political party”. Whether acknowledged or not, this practice has caused the boundaries between managerial executives and political leaders in municipalities to be rendered essentially non-existent.

It can therefore be concluded that municipal councillors are elected representatives of local communities who on the one hand represent the needs and interests of local communities through the making of locally based policies, and on the other hand are involved in the management of municipal organisations by virtue of their involvement in the allocation and management of resources in order to achieve their policy intentions. It is safe to assume that if the councillors are to carry out these responsibilities effectively, they will require certain skills and must therefore be exposed to suitable training and development opportunities. This is discussed in more detail in the next section.

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS

According to Memela, Mautjane, Nzo and Van Hoof (2008:6) councillors are generally unclear about the role they must play and are consequently not properly equipped to function effectively, often resulting in interference in administrative matters. This should be regarded as a serious indictment to the country’s political parties as the bodies that nominate these leaders and ultimately expose them to the challenges of governing within the local sphere of government. Prior to election, political parties should make a concerted effort to not only prepare candidates for their political leadership role, but to follow a systematic approach in exposing candidates to training as early as possible. It cannot be overemphasised that once elected, a councillor is not the exclusive representative of his or her particular political party and its supporters, but rather the representative of the entire community.

It should be noted that the skills discussed in this section are not to be regarded as an exhaustive list of competencies required by municipal councillors. Rather, they are based on the earlier discussion of the role of the municipal councillor



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in a South African context. Effective and efficient management is derived from the application of managerial skills or expertise – an attribute that a municipal councillor can only acquire through experience. Skill can thus be defined as professional expertise, such as management entrepreneurship or the ability to perform a series of actions related to a definite outcome (Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen & Wessels 2005:15). According to Du Toit, Van der Walt, Bayat and Cheminais (1998:199), the term “skills” encompasses the individual’s qualities (what he/she can do), as well as abilities (what he/she knows). Fox, Schwella and Wissink (2004:5) concur, referring to skills as an individual’s personal abilities that may be applied to practical tasks. Selected skills that are expected of municipal councillors include: Community and organisational leadership skills; policy-making, implementation and analysis skills; strategic thinking and planning skills; the ability to delegate authority; decision-making skills; sound communication and negotiation skills; conflict management skills; ability to manage change; ability to manage diversity; entrepreneurial skills.

Community and organisational leadership skills

According to Craythorne (2006:98), the leadership role of a municipal councillor as community representative includes the act of representing the community by ensuring that group and individual interests are represented in council activities. Municipal councillors must ensure that when decisions on policies and the allocation of resources are made, the principles of fairness and justice are applied in the effort to achieve a balance between competing interests, as well as during the process of consulting members of the public on matters concerning them.

The skills required by public leaders when dealing with communities, as proposed by Cloete (1996:211), can also be applied to municipal councillors, namely the ability to identify community needs and to pursue suitable interventions to address those needs, the ability to show sensitivity to the personal circumstances and needs of the community members, and the ability to clearly and regularly communicate information on council decisions and activities. One of the major concerns of local communities is the irregularity of feedback from councillors, and there is a widespread perception that many councillors only interact actively with communities when there is something in it for them as politicians, such as in times of pending elections. The main focus, according to Cloete (1996:212), is thus for public leaders to have the ability to develop communities to the extent that they are eventually able to work collectively with council, and individually as communities, to address their own needs, that is through capacity building and motivation.



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It should be noted, however, that the leadership role of councillors is not limited to their interaction with local communities, but also pertains to their role as employer of managers and staff in the municipal organisation. To this end, councillor interaction with the management corps of the municipality is crucial and is in fact one of the aspects often seen as compromising the effective functioning of municipalities. It is essential that a councillor has the necessary knowledge, expertise and skills pertaining to the functional area in which he/she works, for example knowledge of the key processes that define the existence of a municipality (municipal bylaws, IDP, budgeting and performance management). These circumstances often require that municipal councillors recognise their own shortcomings and subsequently show a willingness to undergo training and development initiatives in an effort to address these shortcomings.

According to Thornhill (2010:7), “the interference of politicians in administrative matters is especially rampant in the municipal sphere of government”. It is imperative that councillors understand their role in relation to municipal managers and that they act accordingly. In this regard, municipal councillors, as leaders, must be able to command co-operation from municipal managers and staff and must function well in group activities.

In addition, the municipal councillor needs to be aware of the individual employees’ values, needs, interests and self-image so as to be able to motivate them to achieve the objectives that have been set. The present-day councillor should be able to recognise differences in principles and values amongst employees (especially in the politically charged environment in which municipalities function) and lead accordingly. Finally, the act of leadership must involve activities that facilitate productive behaviour (Minnaar & Bekker 2005:157). If a workforce is to be productive, there will have to be a leadership component that is not afraid to give direction. The ability to make firm decisions is a skill that forms part of the development of a councillor and his/her vision for the future.

Policy-making, implementation and analysis skills

The policy-making process entails a series of pragmatic steps with the main purpose of addressing specific needs or problems, such as broad external goals (Erasmus *et al.* 2005:14). As an enabling function (Cloete, Wissink & De Coning 2006) it is aimed at providing the municipal councillor with the means to deliver services, by virtue of policy, in order to promote the general welfare of the community. Reference has been made to the constitutional and legislative framework directing municipal plans and activities, within which councillors must pass local policies such as IDPs, budgets, and performance management



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systems. In doing so, they must take cognisance of legislative directives and know what is required from them within the context of legislation.

In addition to understanding and ultimately executing their policy-making responsibility, councillors must be aware that no policy is of worth unless it is effectively implemented and periodically analysed. For example, section 69(3) [a] of the MFMA requires of councils to annually approve the service delivery and budget implementation plans (SDBIPs) as an implementation strategy for the IDP. For the SDBIP to be approved, the council obviously needs to understand what it entails and its intended impact on service delivery to their communities. Furthermore, Section 34 of the Systems Act requires of municipalities to annually analyse their IDPs through an IDP review process. Training on the above processes within the theoretical context of policy-making, implementation and analysis therefore seems non-negotiable for municipal councillors.

Strategic thinking and planning skills

Fox *et al.* (2004:47) define planning as a process that focuses on the formulation of institutional goals and objectives and includes the means and methods of achieving these objectives. Planning, one of the basic management functions, is of the utmost importance if changes in the macro-environment – as is the situation in South Africa – cause a degree of instability. It is expected of municipal councillors in such circumstances to apply various conceptual and technical competencies. Conceptual competencies refer to those areas of proficiency that should be employed to minimise threats and optimise opportunities, whereas technical competencies refer to issues such as the identification of the responsible person and the activities to be performed, including how, when, where and why those activities should take place (Erasmus *et al.* 2005:15).

Minnaar and Bekker (2005:149) are of the opinion that strategic thinking can be viewed as an important addition to traditional public planning. This especially becomes essential in the municipal context where proactive management and planning need to keep up with the changing environment. It is furthermore relevant in terms of the strategic policy-making, implementation and analysis processes required of municipalities, as discussed previously. Although the principles of strategic planning should obviously be adapted to the unique local government environment, councillors should be trained to understand the basic steps in strategic planning, namely formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Ability to delegate authority

Although strategic thinking and planning could be discussed as an independent skill, it is intertwined with, and relatively important to, other managerial activities



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such as delegation of authority (Minnaar & Bekker 2005:61). It has become evident that councillors need considerable working knowledge of the most important municipal processes. It should, however, be emphasised that their role in these processes involves mainly oversight, and although the problems relating to interference in the administrative affairs of municipalities are well-documented, councillors should be able to delegate authority to relevant structures and functionaries within the municipality and, most importantly, adhere to the conditions of these delegations. In too many instances, functions are delegated but councillors continue to interfere with the municipal employees' authority to execute these delegations. Councillors therefore need to be trained to identify which functions can and should be delegated, and what exactly delegation entails.

Delegation of authority suggests the need to expose councillors to certain theoretically based training initiatives so that they may understand and execute their functions properly. However, certain practical skills should also not be ignored and are of particular importance in the context of local government in South Africa. For a municipal councillor, a positive attitude towards his/her management style and a good self-image will serve as a valuable support mechanism.

Decision-making skills

A councillor should be able to define community-related problems, investigate and examine the facts and/or causative factors, consider alternatives, take the opinions of other role-players into consideration, and decide on a possible course of action to address such problems. This is of particular importance for ward councillors in their constituencies and in the functioning of their respective ward committees. Decisions taken may not necessarily be binding, but can provide a relevant source of direction for the rest of the council.

Councillors should be able to make rational decisions that are objective and judiciously designed to achieve organisational objectives (Du Toit *et al.* 1998:210). These decisions should be based on factual information pertaining to the available alternatives for intervention. The decisions should therefore be preceded by an intensive process of information gathering to ensure that all possible alternative solutions are generated (Fox *et al.* 2004:228).

Additional decision-making responsibilities of the municipal councillor typically include the implementation of regulations and policies, the appointment of employees, the management of resources, and the implementation of skills development initiatives. Decision-making can therefore be seen as an essential part of the councillor's task – a highly technical skill that requires thorough knowledge on the part of individual councillors (SALGA 2006:50)



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Sound communication and negotiation skills

Communication occurs between individuals when facts, emotions and attitudes are transmitted in such a way that the conveyed message generates a reactive process (Erasmus *et al.* 2005:498). In any organisation, this reactive process necessitates specific arrangements to facilitate communication amongst different people. It thus acts as an enabling function as part of the organisational process. Councillors are predominantly involved at two levels of communication, namely communication with the community, and communication with municipal staff. It is therefore important for structured methods and intervals of communication to exist, for example regular ward and community meetings during which community inputs are facilitated and information is disseminated. From an organisational point of view, communication must take place through periodic council and committee meetings, while more informal communication methods such as discussion forums should also be pursued.

Negotiation is also an important part of the councillor's task, and can include negotiations with disgruntled citizens regarding service delivery, or negotiations with employee unions regarding working conditions. Negotiation can be regarded as a specialised field of communication, since it requires a higher level of skill than mere communication (Fox 2006:126; Fox *et al.* 2004:195). Although not all councillors might be involved in the aforementioned processes at all times, negotiation skills can be regarded as an essential skill, particularly in an environment that has recently been marred by service delivery protests and wage strikes by unions.

Conflict management skills

According to recent publications and news reports that the current local government environment also experience different levels of conflict. However, conflict need not be destructive and dysfunctional (Fox 2006:128; Fox *et al.* 2004:190), and the task of the councillor is therefore not to suppress conflict, but rather to manage it in such a way that the constructive application thereof can benefit the institution. Councillors must familiarise themselves with the sources and consequences of conflict by establishing effective communication channels that can be used to air grievances and suggest solutions (Erasmus *et al.* 2005:481, Fox *et al.* 2004:19). The grievances of community members and employees should therefore not be disregarded, but instead addressed in a manner that demonstrates the seriousness with which the council views those grievances.

A major cause of local government conflict is not council action, but rather council inaction. When staff and community members are uncertain about the direction being taken by the municipality, they are often left with feelings of



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intense frustration that can lead to anger, violence and destruction (as has been the case in several past incidents in the country). It is of the utmost importance that the municipal councillor realises that there will always be the potential for conflict, and that as a natural occurrence, conflict must be dealt with rather than ignored (Erasmus *et al.* 2005:468, Fox *et al.* 2004:190).

Ability to manage change

The actions of an institution are guided by its vision, and therefore the employees of the institution must know how this vision is to be implemented (Minnaar & Bekker 2005:120). Municipalities are no exception, and municipal councillors and employees have the potential to make a unique contribution to the effort to accomplish the institutional vision. The South African public sector thrives on having a diverse workforce that is rich in culture and tradition, with the potential to succeed and the ability to come up with innovative ideas. The councillor as an individual and as a member of the collective council is expected to facilitate the creation of an environment conducive to the management of diversity, thus acting as an agent of change in pursuit of the vision (Fox *et al.* 2004:165).

The entire structure and therefore the management of the three spheres of government in South Africa underwent considerable changes after 1994 and, in the case of municipalities, the changes were even more fundamental after the amalgamation process of 2000. A new and innovative approach was adopted, which brought about a series of changes to be managed by the municipal councils. Much of the new legislation mandated institutions to adapt their policies to make provision for principles such as employment equity, transformation, skills development, performance management and service delivery, in addition to the more specific municipal processes as referred to earlier in this article. In this regard, municipal councillors require conceptual skills, as well as the ability to view the institution from a holistic perspective (Fox 2006:32). This does not mean that the councillor should necessarily have an exhaustive knowledge of the change process, but, as was mentioned earlier, he/she should create a climate for change in which employees are encouraged to participate and where they can make use of every available opportunity (Fox *et al.* 2004:166).

Ability to manage diversity

According to Minnaar and Bekker (2005:156) diversity management is a comprehensive managerial process aimed at developing a workplace environment that is conducive to sound human relations and increased productivity. Diversity management therefore focuses on the creation of an



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environment that exploits the potential of every employee and appreciates the diversity amongst them. Diversity in municipalities is manifested in various forms, such as gender, race, culture and religion. According to Greybe and Uys (2001:194), with the existing employment equity legislation, a regular oversight is an exclusive focus on race and to a lesser extent disability, but this should not be the case. The municipal councillor should participate in creating an environment that is tolerant of the various manifestations of diversity within the municipality. Council decision-making should furthermore be sensitive to diversity within the organisation and take it into consideration. For example, younger employees can add value by contributing new technological expertise, whilst older employees can contribute through hands-on institutional experience.

Entrepreneurial skills

Burke (2006:62) defines entrepreneurship as taking things that are already being done and doing them in a new way. Fox *et al.* (2004:37) are of the opinion that being an entrepreneur requires specific skills, the first being the ability to deal with uncertainty. Public sector entrepreneurs should have the ability to face and endure uncertainty and also take risks in pursuing opportunities. Risks should, however, be qualified and quantified before a project is initiated (Minnaar & Bekker 2005:146). Public sector entrepreneurs should furthermore act in response to challenges and display creativity and innovation to achieve more effective and efficient service delivery.

The above is of particular importance in a local government context, given the service delivery and development challenges faced by municipalities at present. Newly created municipalities are faced with an expanded customer base without necessarily having an expanded revenue base. Client needs are therefore often enormous in comparison with available resources, with the result that municipalities can no longer depend on their traditional sources of revenue and must be innovative in attracting financial resources in particular. In this regard, it is important that municipal councillors develop an entrepreneurial environment where networking with possible business and service delivery partners become more the rule than the exception.

Thus, when considering the above discussion, it becomes evident that there is a myriad of skills that municipal councillors must possess if they are to make a constructive and meaningful contribution to their municipalities and communities. Individuals who stand for election as municipal councillors, or who are nominated as such by a political party, must be fully aware of what is expected of them. Mere financial considerations and the social status that is often associated with becoming a municipal “highflyer” should be avoided at all costs. An oft-neglected question in this regard concerns the responsibility for



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ensuring that candidate councillors and elected councillors are indeed exposed to proper training and development initiatives.

CONCLUSION

This article provides evidence of the major challenges that exist in local government in respect of service delivery. Furthermore, the important role to be played by municipal councillors in the pursuit of quality service delivery is highlighted. All aspects are considered in view of the fundamental changes – constitutional and legislative, as well as structural – that have taken place in the municipal environment.

This article contributes to the effort to determine the skills and competencies required by municipal councillors, especially in view of the specific municipal processes in which they must participate, namely integrated development planning, budgeting, performance management, and community participation. Some general matters over which councillors exercise decision-making discretion and control also receive attention.

What is clearly evident is the fact that councillors cannot be fully isolated from performing traditional management functions, even though they might not be responsible for the operational implementation of such managerial decisions. Councillors can therefore be regarded as fulfilling both managerial and leadership functions for which they require tailor-made training and development initiatives.

The final point made in this article is that the responsibility for ensuring that councillors are indeed exposed to the above-mentioned training lies with the political parties, SALGA and the individual municipalities, and that this will require a concerted and integrated effort by all.

In addition to the training initiatives launched by SALGA, it is imperative that individual municipalities embark on an intense process of analysing training needs. The notion of “one size fits all” in respect of municipal councillor training is simply not working, as local conditions and requirements differ in almost all of the 283 municipalities that exist in South Africa. Therefore, in addition to generic training, councillors should be exposed to training and development initiatives that will enhance their capabilities in the context of their specific environments.

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Integrated Development Planning and the primacy of community participation

A case study of eThekweni Municipality's Integrated Development Plan

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ABSTRACT

Local Government in South Africa is at the forefront of service delivery to citizens. However, in realising its constitutional and developmental mandate, municipalities are challenged to strike a balance between Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and service delivery, which is currently high on the Government's agenda. The ushering in of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000* (Act 32 of 2000) has made it compulsory for IDPs to be operationalised to facilitate efficient, effective and participatory local governance. One of the legislative requirements of the IDP process is popular participation and is central to the activities of a municipality. Community participation is an important element in integrating development planning. Local communities have to be consulted on their development needs and priorities. Among others, the IDP determines the efficacy of community participation in Local Government is. Of considerable significance is the fact that the success of community participation is not only through the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* framework, but also from the creativity



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municipalities display in their own policies and by-laws to evoke public participation. This article examines the IDP as a tool for community participation and local empowerment, and provides an integrated approach for enhancing local delivery. The findings of a community survey on public participation in the IDP process are presented using comparable data of a survey using eThekweni Municipality as a case study. More specifically, the article critiques the extent to which the local community benefits. This includes a lack of knowledge of local participatory processes, insufficient consultation and representation of communities' interests and the IDP as a councilor-wide plan to regularly interface with communities.

INTRODUCTION

Public participation forms an integral part of the notion of developmental Local Government in South Africa. The transformational agenda of Local Government has been initiated via the White Paper on Local Government published in 1998. One of the seemingly insurmountable challenges Local Government faces today is that of translating the essence of the *White Paper* from mere commitment to local development and delivery. Three important aspects form the cornerstones of community participation in Local Government, namely integrated development planning, performance management and working together with local citizens in order to ensure that municipalities are developmentally focused. Public participation is a constitutional right for all citizens. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996* places an obligation on Local Government to establish community participation structures and systems in an attempt to promote good governance in Local Government. Through the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000*, normative strategic planning, popularly known as Integrated Development Planning (IDP), has been conceived for local municipalities. Whilst the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act* makes it necessary for Local Government to focus its activities on the local needs of citizens, this effort is further visualised through the IDP. This article therefore seeks to analyse eThekweni Municipality's long-term strategic vision, by examining the extent of community participation in its first IDP (for the period 2006/7-2010/11). Furthermore, the article focuses on the lessons to be learnt for the next phase (2010/11) through an empirical survey conducted in 2007/8. This discussion is copiously demonstrated via the following constitutional perspective of developmental Local Government.



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DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Coetzee (in Van Der Waldt 2007:19) emphasises that the notion of developmental Local Government emanates from the objectives of Local Government, as espoused in the Constitution. Developmental Local Government is intended to have a major impact on the daily lives of people, as it is committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways of meeting their social, economic and material needs in order to improve the quality of their lives. Pycroft (in Van Der Waldt 2007:19) further states that it thus seeks not only to democratise Local Government by introducing the notion of elected representatives, including rural areas, but also to transform local governance, with a new focus on improving disadvantaged communities' quality of life. According to Van Der Waldt (2007:20), developmental Local Government seeks to promote sustainable economic and social development by providing community leadership, promoting social and economic wellbeing, coordinating and integrating all efforts to develop the area, as well as promoting and building local democracy.

A scientific research enquiry is presented in this article to examine the concept of developmental Local Government and how it translates into local governance and beneficial outcomes, such as participatory democracy, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness and improving social equity.

OBJECTIVES AND CRITICAL QUESTIONS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The key objectives of the study were to:

- Understand the link between the IDP, the vision and mission of eThekwini Municipality and its Long-term Developmental Framework.
- Examine the role of key stakeholders (council officials, citizens and councillors).
- Establish ways of enhancing these stakeholders' public participation and devise an integrated approach/model to address community engagement.

Within a field of systematic study, the objectives were examined using a case study of eThekwini Municipality.

The study aimed to answer the following critical questions:

- Who are the key stakeholders and the extent of participation in the IDP of eThekwini Municipality?



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- What are the key aspects contributing to the Municipality's long-term strategic planning objectives?
- What are the mechanisms to improve community participation in the IDP process?
- What models/approaches currently inform the Municipality's strategic plan?

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The hypotheses provided clarity, specificity and purpose to the research problem. It focused on perceptions of three types of stakeholders relating to community participation in the IDP, namely: local communities from selected areas in the greater Durban area, as well as a representative sample of local councillors and the council officials. The hypotheses were verified through the sampling procedure, method of data collection, data analysis, statistical procedures applied, recommendations and conclusions drawn. Through the hypotheses, the research presented the gap between perceptions of public participation in the IDP and the empirical reality. Furthermore, it highlighted the *fit* and significant relationship between these variables validated through the research inquiry. A brief presentation of some pertinent statistically significant results is also presented in this article to provide support for the hypotheses. The starting point for community participation in Local Government is through a brief analysis of the legislative framework governing community participation, which follows in the next brief discussion.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK GOVERNING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

There are several pieces of legislation focusing on community participation. The following are briefly cited as significant to the discussion in this article:

Development Facilitation Act, 67 of 1995

This Act aims to encourage efficient and integrated land development, by promoting the integration of the social, economic, institutional and physical aspects of development. The integrated development planning process is regarded as the main organising device for encouraging municipalities to identify key delivery targets, such as land development objectives (Nel & Binns in Van Der Waldt 2007:97).



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Local Government Transition Act, 1996 (Act 97 of 1996, Second Amendment)

This Act requires all municipalities to prepare integrated development plans as part of the municipal government planning process. It sets out the specific financial and budgeting requirements, as well as institutional arrangements and review procedures (Van Der Waldt 2007:97).

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution provides an integral framework within which development has to take place. The key objects of Local Government include to:

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.
- Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
- Promote social and economic development.
- Promote a safe and healthy environment.
- Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of Local Government (*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*).

Much emphasis is being placed on the role of Local Government within the current dispensation.

White Paper on Local Government, 1998

The White Paper on Local Government, 1998 set the tone for the transformation of Local Government. To achieve the development outcomes of Local Government, three inter-related approaches that can assist municipalities to fulfill their developmental mandate are identified. These include integrated development planning, performance management and working together with local citizens and partners.

Furthermore, civil society participation is strengthened through various mechanisms and key variables. This includes the following:

- Forums initiated from within or outside municipalities to allow initiation of policies and participation in monitoring and evaluation.
- Structured stakeholder involvement in certain council committees.
- Participatory budgeting initiatives aimed at linking community priorities to programmes.
- Focus-group participatory action research on needs and values.
- Support for organisational development of associations, where skills and resources for participation are less developed.



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Following the White Paper on Local Government, 1999, emphasis was placed on reviewing the article regarding the focus and emphasis of civil society. A brief discussion of civil society focus follows:

Review of the White Paper on Local Government: A Civil Society Perspective

A critical discussion of Local Government in South Africa following the White Paper on Local Government is currently under review. Some key questions include: To what extent

- is participatory democracy being realised at Local Government level in South Africa?
- is Local Government responsive to the needs and concerns of citizens?
- are politicians and officials held accountable for their decisions and actions?
- are the key instruments of State delivery at Local Government level, IDPs and budgeting geared towards effective, pro-poor delivery and integrated sustainable development?
- are municipalities making sufficient inroads into reducing service delivery backlogs, and how are they doing this?
- are municipalities fulfilling their envisaged development role as vehicles for poverty reduction?

(Local Government Law Bulletin 2007:12)

From the above discussion, it is clear that this *Act* gives district municipalities the responsibility for integrated development planning. Whilst each municipality must produce its own IDP and conduct its own participatory processes, the IDPs must be aligned with one another.

Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000

Chapter 4 of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000* requires that municipalities involve the public in the IDP process. However, the Act does not prescribe any mechanism, process and procedure to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of a municipality. Heller *et al.* (in Kambuwa & Wallis 2002:28) emphasise that, "... contrary to the zero-sum equation implied in the argument that process comes at the expense of product, or delivery at the expense of participation, a very strong case can be made that high levels of participation support more effective interventions, more efficient allocation of resources and greater sustainability. Participation in and of itself, moreover, is the most important means of building citizenship".



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According to Pycroft (in Van Der Waldt 2007:98), this Act outlines an integrated approach to address the existing system weaknesses and integration of municipal budget, including the performance management system. Section 25(1) of the Act requires all municipalities to adopt a single, inclusive plan for the development of the municipality that:

- Links, integrates and co-ordinates plans and takes into account proposals for the development of the municipality.
- Aligns the available resources and capacity with the implementation of the plan.
- Forms the policy framework and general foundation on which annual budgets must be based.
- Is compatible with national and provincial development plans and planning requirements.

Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003

This *Act* aims to modernise budget and financial management practices by making Government finances more sustainable. It serves to maximise the capacity of municipalities to deliver services to all their residents, customers, users and investors. One of the major reforms is the new budget process and its link to the IDP (Van Der Waldt 2007:99). The resultant effect is the notion of linking planning to spending patterns, which culminate in programmes, and projects as outlined in the IDP. Following the legislative and institutional framework governing community participation is the fact that communities have a voice and a choice. To this end, the rationale for community participation is presented.

RATIONALE FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

According to Bekker (1996:45), the rationale for community participation is that the public should partake in development planning at the initial stage rather than after officials become committed to particular choices. Bekker (1996:45) coheres to the following key aspects:

- Providing information to citizens.
- Obtaining information from and about citizens.
- Improving public decisions, programmes and projects.
- Enhancing acceptance of public decisions.
- Altering political power patterns and resource allocations.
- Delaying or avoiding complicated political decisions.



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The critical success factor will ultimately depend on the cogent relationship between Local Government and the community.

eTHEKWINI METROPOLITAN COUNCIL: A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The quest for a new post-Apartheid Local Government dispensation in South Africa started in earnest in 1993 prior to the ushering in of a new non-racial and democratic government in 1994. Local democracy, non-racialism, redistribution, efficiency and effectiveness in a new redefined developmental context constituted the basis for introducing a three-phase model for the restructuring and transformation of Local Government. The *Local Government Transition Act*, 1993 (Act 209 of 1993) facilitated the framework for legitimate and democratic local governance. Notably, this Act also constituted the first phase of the restructuring and transformation process. The third and final phase incorporated three important pieces of legislation, namely the *Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act*, 1998 (Act 27 of 1998), the *Local Government Municipal Structures Act*, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998), and the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act*, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), which played a pivotal role in ushering in the new Local Government dispensation. The final phase culminated in the 5 December 2000 elections, which also marked the end of the transition period. Following the demarcation process held prior to the election, the number of local authorities was reduced on a national level from 843 to 283 ([\).](http://www.uovs.ac.za/apps/law/appealfiles/soo6/3/839/Howick%)

According to Reddy (2003:441), forty autonomous municipalities in the Durban Metropolitan Area was amalgamated in terms of the *Local Government Transition Act*, 1993 to establish the then first Durban Metropolitan Council. The Council was formally established on 1 June 1995 (David 1999:113). It consisted of four sub-structure councils, and, as this was still the pre-interim phase of the transition, all the councillors were nominated. Following the first Local Government elections on 26 June 1996, the then Metropolitan Council was replaced with six sub-structures, namely North Central Council, South Central Council, Inner West Council, Outer West Council, North Local Council and South Local Council.

Following the demarcation process, Durban was declared a Metropolitan Area and a Category A Municipality (consisting of a single political council with executive and legislative powers). Following the December 2000 elections, a single unicity metropolitan council replaced the Durban Metropolitan Council (and six local councils). The City's boundaries were extended by 68% and the population increased by 9% following the demarcation process (Reddy



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2003:439). Although it constitutes a total area of 1.4% of KwaZulu-Natal, the current population is approximately a third of the province's population. At least 60% of the province's economic activity takes place in the Durban Metropolitan Area (eThekweni Municipality, undated). There are about fourteen areas under the Amakhosi that have been included in the new City.

The Council has 200 councillors and six standing committees, chaired by members of the Executive Committee. The latter consists of 10 councillors chaired by the Mayor, assisted by a Deputy Mayor (Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee) and a Speaker responsible for the efficient management of meetings and related administrative functions. Each councillor serves on one of six standing committees of the Council (Reddy 2003:444). An advantage of the Executive Committee

System (as opposed to the Executive Mayor) is the "team approach", given that councillors have different life experiences, skills and ideas. Executive decision-making is also subject to the required checks and balances. Given the collective decision-making, there is very little possibility of biased or unfair decisions. Should it become necessary, powers can also be delegated to a smaller group of councillors to facilitate speedy and effective decision-making (Reddy 2003:444).

It was felt that an integrated City would facilitate equitable service delivery and that integrated development planning would ensure equitable redistribution and cross-subsidisation (*Independent on Saturday*, 22 April 2000 in Reddy 2003:442-443). A key consideration is the developing a vibrant economy, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life for local citizens. At that stage, a long-term planning framework with linkages to the consolidated budget was also proposed (*Independent on Saturday*, 22 April 2000). Other advantages cited were a rationalised rating system using market principles; a life-line system for the indigent who would be subsidised; and a new accounting system that would enable residents to pay their bills at any convenient point (Reddy 2003:443).

STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Council facilitates infrastructure-based development and the provision of municipal services, thereby enabling the local communities to reach their full potential and access opportunities. This will, in turn, create a vibrant and sustainable economy with full employment, which will ultimately improve local citizens' quality of life (eThekweni Municipality undated:2). The strategic vision for the next twenty years is detailed in the Long-Term Development Framework (LTDF). It seeks to strike a balance between addressing basic needs, developing the economy; skills and a technology base for the future. Some of



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the development challenges that have to be addressed over the short and long term are highlighted below (eThekweni Municipality 2006:103-104; eThekweni Municipality, undated: 2 and (eThekweni Municipality 2007:76-78):

- The economic basis responsible for job creation and improving the quality of life. Unemployment levels are between 30% and 40% and there has been a net loss of approximately 49 000 jobs since 1997.
- Inadequate access to jobs, infrastructure and the full range of opportunities. Societal inaccessibility due to low-income levels is an indicator of poverty. Approximately 40% of the households are ultra-poor or poor and poverty is concentrated among Africans (67%), Indian and Coloured (20%) communities. It has also impacted on women and children, who have also fallen in the “extremely poor” and “poor” category respectively.
- Approximately 75% of all households have access to basic services; despite 75% of all households having basic services, there are service delivery backlogs.
- 16% of adults are functionally literate, 38% have passed matric and 8% have tertiary qualifications which points to low investment in people.
- Promoting skills development and addressing the skills gap is a major challenge.
- Managing the HIV/AIDS pandemic which is the highest in the country. Progress has been made to deal with the pandemic, but much more needs to be done.
- A pre-requisite for socio-economic development and investor confidence is safety and security. Other issues prioritised are high level of road accidents, susceptibility to air and other types of pollution, slow response time to fire emergencies, poor information on the nature and levels of risk, as well as flood risk. Information gathering and dissemination techniques in relation to risks must be improved.
- Sustainability is key to promoting economic development, providing infrastructure and services; managing finances; citizen involvement; protecting threatened ecological species as well as balancing the social, economic and environmental needs of the City.
- Non-developmental and archaic laws and processes are a stumbling block to customer-focused service delivery. The co-ordination of service delivery into the institutional framework is a key factor in the organisational restructuring and transformation process. www.durban.gov.za/durban/government/mayor/policy/idp.2004.

Sixteen areas incorporated are currently under traditional leadership and more specifically the Amakhosi. This presents a major challenge to the Council, given the fact that the Government has not yet addressed the concerns of



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the Amakhosi. Traditional leadership and governance is a new area for the Council, as it has had no experience in dealing with this issue. Subsequently, there is some tension between the traditional leaders and the municipality, as land released for development has to be properly planned; densities have to be increased to provide services more efficiently and planning has to be more flexible to accommodate existing culture, such as cemeteries within homesteads. Furthermore, cemeteries would have to be centralised in geotechnically suitable locations (Reddy 2003:457-458). Local participatory structures in the form of ward committees have been created in Durban. The cost of managing hundred wards/development committees could prove to be a major organisational challenge and, furthermore, quite costly (Ferguson 2000).

eTHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY'S 2020 VISION: LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LTDF)

The vision statement of the Municipality is highlighted as follows:

“By 2020 eThekweni Municipality will enjoy the reputation of being Africa’s most caring and liveable city, where all citizens live in harmony. This vision will be achieved by growing its economy and meeting people’s needs so that all citizens enjoy a high quality of life with equal opportunities, in a city that they are truly proud of.” (May 2001 in LTDF November 2001:7).

eThekweni Municipality set a process in motion to launch a Long-Term Development Framework (LTDF) and the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the Durban Metropolitan area. The LTDF focuses on the Municipality’s strategic vision and mission over the next twenty years, and within this framework, the strategic priorities over intervals of five years will be examined. The long-term framework is thus concentrated on programmes, projects, performance budgets and key indicators to stimulate economic growth and development over the medium to long term. In the past, Local Government was seen as just a mere provider of services to communities from the *“cradle to the grave”*. The analysis reveals that services were not always well coordinated and citizens were not always consulted on what their needs were. There has been a paradigm shift in the Municipality in the manner in which it conducts its core business – service delivery. The approach is to reorganise itself, so that it can serve the citizens of Durban better and be committed to listening to what the people want and build needs around that process. <http://www.durban.gov.za/durban/government/mayor/policy/ltdf>.



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NEW APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

“The role of the Municipality is to facilitate and ensure the provision of infrastructure, services and support, thereby creating an enabling environment for all citizens to utilise their full potential and access opportunities, which enable them to contribute towards a vibrant and sustainable economy with full employment, and thus create a better quality of life for all” (LTDF November 2001:6).

The Municipality has embarked on a new approach to managing development in the metropolis. The paradigm shift essentially focuses on the citizens as contributors of this new understanding of the Council’s responsibility to deliver its outputs. The role and actions of the citizens will contribute to the quality of outputs that the Council delivers (LTDF November 2001:6).

FOCUS ON INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Municipality views the IDP as a participative process where it does not see itself as being solely responsible for preparing the IDP for the citizens, but to act as a facilitator. This allows all stakeholders to not merely prepare the plan collectively, but to contribute and be part of the transformation process that will ultimately enhance all citizens’ quality of life. Since community participation is one of the key elements to ensure enhanced delivery, it stands to reason that the Municipality will need to support, stimulate and revitalise collaboration with communities. Furthermore, it will need to develop community action support programmes to ensure the desired outcomes (LTDF November 2001:15).

eTHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY’S INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FROM 2010 AND BEYOND)

With the crafting of a Long-Term Development Framework to guide all actions over a 20-year period and a strategic and clear five-year Integrated Development Plan, a sustainable development plan was mapped out for the City. The City’s second five-year Integrated Development Planning process moves beyond a concerted effort to reduce poverty through job creation and functions within a deeply embedded sustainability framework. The IDP has therefore become a strategic framework, while the community-based planning process becomes a vehicle for participation in the IDP within all sectors of the community. The focus of the review has been on fine-tuning programmes and projects to align them with strategies for 2010 and beyond as follows:



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- New demands, most significantly the 2010 soccer world cup expenditure;
 - Updating of statistical information;
 - Adjustment in targets as backlog figures are refined against the access modeling exercise;
 - The revised needs of communities; and
 - Refining of the economic development strategy.
- (http://abahlali.org/files/_IDP2007.04%20June%2007.pdf)

The above typology is enhanced by the following research survey that was conducted in 2007/8 on the extent of community participation, as well as the community's views on the Municipality's Integrated Development Plan. A triangulation approach gauging the views of the community, councilors and council officials informed the survey.

SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Residents

The sample survey was drawn from five different areas, each consisting of sixty respondents. The locations chosen were representative of social status and racial composition, as most respondents from a particular area were of a similar race group.

Table 1: Area of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Inanda	60	19,4	19,4	19,4
	Chatsworth	60	19,4	19,4	38,8
	Pinetown	60	19,4	19,4	58,3
	Umlazi	64	20,7	20,7	79,0
	Mount Edgecomb	65	21,0	21,0	100,0
	Total	309	100,0	100,0	



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Figure 1: Racial and area composition of communities

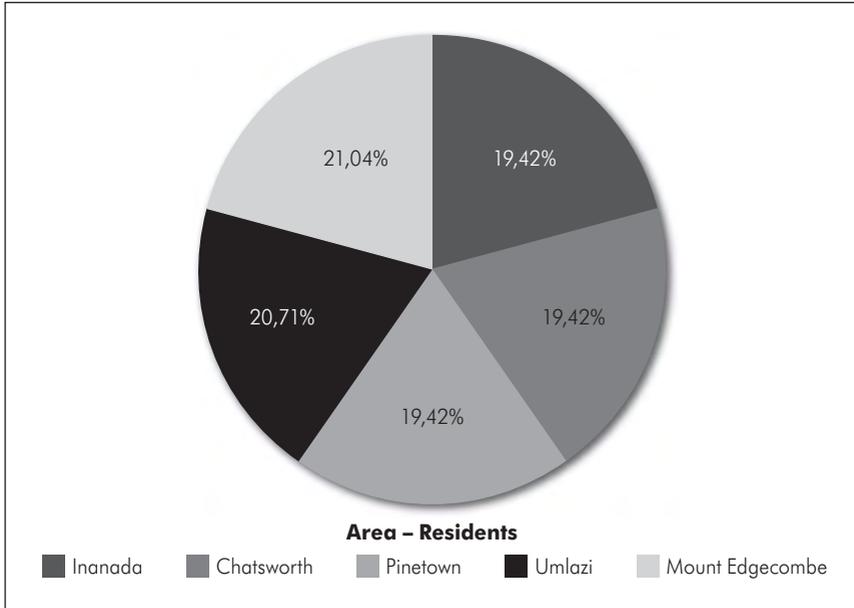


Table 2: Occupation of councillors

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Professional	11	11,0	11,1	11,1
	Technical Operator	1	1,0	1,0	12,1
	Clerk	8	8,0	8,1	20,2
	Labourer	9	9,0	9,1	29,3
	Other	70	70,0	70,7	100,0
	Total	99	99,0	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,0		
Total		100	100,0		

Figure 2: Occupation of councillors

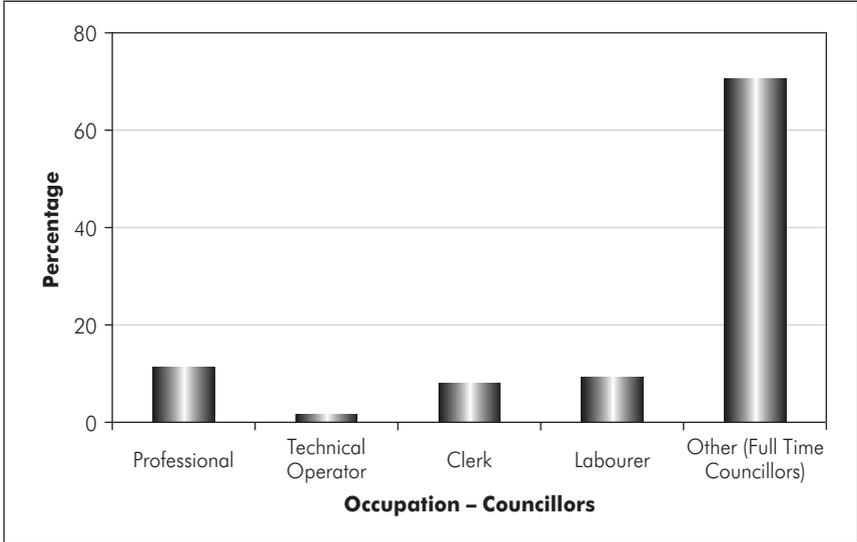
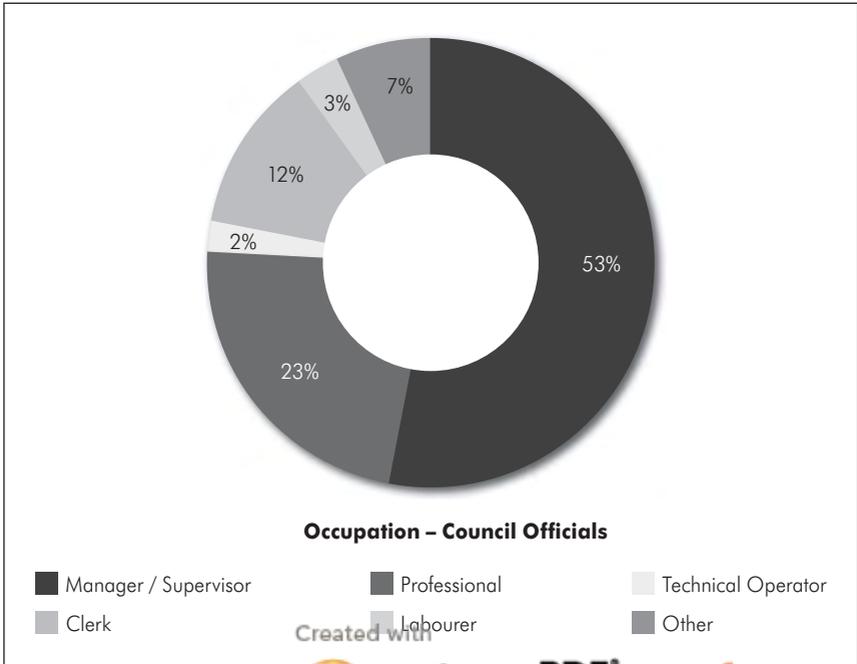


Figure 3: Occupation of council officials



The above figures highlighted that majority of the councillors (71%) were employed solely as councillors. 11% of the overall councillor-respondents were professional individuals. The significant percentage of full-time councillors could translate to their level of commitment to advance the political and socio-economic interests of their local communities. However, it is not conclusive whether surveys have been done to gauge the measure of effectiveness of councillors as elected and proportionally represented councillors. Therefore, in the absence of such results, although worth mentioning, this view may not be upheld.

Three quarters of the respondents held senior positions as professionals or managers. The significance of this indicator is that many council officials, given their years of experience in council matters, may possess the embedded knowledge relating to the IDP and public participation processes in Local Government.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Through factor analysis a combined table of the rotated component matrix is given below:

Table 3: Triangular views on role of council officials in the IDP process

Residents	Councillors	Council Officials
0,86	0,64	0,84
0,93	0,64	0,90
0,94	0,61	0,92
0,91	0,74	0,94
0,92	0,70	0,87

The matrix loaded perfectly for each of the factors. This implied that they measured the same common theme. However, values for the councillors were appreciably smaller than those for the other groupings. The significance here is that all respondents scored similarly in terms of what they perceived the Council's role in the IDP process. The significance of this finding is that both residents and councillors view the Council as a means of implementing an integrated approach to social development, both as a process and an outcome. Furthermore, the IDP is seen as an integral instrument for deepening local democracy and enhancing empowerment. This perspective is viewed as an important finding for eThekweni Municipality.

A combined table of the rotated component matrix is given below:

Table 4: Triangulation of views for role of councillors

Residents	Councillors	Council Officials
0,94	-0,22	0,93
0,93	0,25	0,92
0,91	0,96	0,81

A dominant negative value for the councillors on their role in providing a mechanism for communicating with the community is that this value indicates a strong inverse relationship for the factor of the variable. The perception revealed is that local residents want councillors to be more cooperative, committed and involved in the IDP process. This is however, a fundamental challenge, on how to truly make the IDP a local expression of a councillor-wide plan with clearly defined accountabilities and responsibilities. This strategic aspect needs to be factored into the councillor-council interface, and has significance for the municipality in general.

Rating of current participatory mechanisms in the IDP process of the municipality

A combined table of communalities for similar factors follows:

Table 5: Rating participatory mechanisms of the municipality

Residents	Councillors	Council Officials
0,78	0,84	0,69
0,80	0,36	0,72
0,79	0,67	0,74
0,83	0,68	0,84
0,81	0,52	0,93
0,80	0,65	0,91

Since the view of low income households in rating the municipality are poor, as opposed to being effective in financial management, there is a perception that these residents do not have much confidence in the manner in which the municipality manages its finances, or they are perhaps uninformed of what goes on in the municipality's financial affairs. The large percentage of households that are unsure indicate a need for the municipality to provide more information for public consumption on its municipal budgeting process, annual reports and its transparent, accountable and responsive-oriented budgeting. Thus, there is room for greater public participation here. This discussion links up with the first key objective of this study regarding the vision, mission and impact on the IDP, as emphasised in the introductory section of this article. Notably, the average scores for residents and council officials are 0.80, while that for councillors is 0.62.



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A combined table of the rotated component matrix is given below:

Table 6: Triangulation of views – participatory mechanisms

Residents	Councillors			Council Officials
0,88	0,04	0,00	0,91	0,83
0,90	0,60	-0,02	-0,01	0,85
0,89	0,13	0,75	-0,31	0,86
0,91	-0,08	0,75	0,35	0,92
0,90	0,71	0,14	-0,04	0,96
0,90	0,80	-0,05	0,06	0,95

Factors loaded perfectly for residents and councillors. Again, factors for residents and council officials loaded perfectly along one factor. However, the same measurements for councillors resulted in the variable being split into three components. This means that three finer themes were measured for the variable. The councillors divided the variable into the components of analysis, implementation and monitoring of the process. Due to non-commonalities, the variable has been measured along the three themes above. Significance of this discussion links up with the third key objective of this study. A common trend that appears in this section of the analysis is that the councillors tend to score in the opposite manner to that of (especially) the residents. The implication is that even though the councillors purport to serve the interests of the communities, the expectations of the residents do not match the service delivery of the councillors.

It is significant to note that some residents had low scores in this category. This implies that the sectors of local communities across the spectrum were not completely aware of the processes involved with the IDP. The result reveals that in the IDP, local economic development projects and programmes, providing basic services and community health centres (including mobile clinics), feature as priorities to improve local residents’ the quality of life. The residents obviously feel that these aspects, which should be the main thrust of the IDP, must be given adequate attention. Although the study is not based on the living standard measurement (LSM), a key factor that could emerge from this analysis as a determinant of participation is income and living standards, as well as accessibility to the municipality, level of satisfaction with municipal service delivery and/or lack of knowledge of the local participatory processes within the IDP. Evidently, the Municipality must do more to familiarise the communities with the IDP process – this point links up with the third key objective as a significant focus of this study.

Residents and councillors scored along similar lines for this variable. Council officials’ scores were markedly lower than the other two groupings.



Figure 4: Familiarity with IDP – some common trends are as follows:

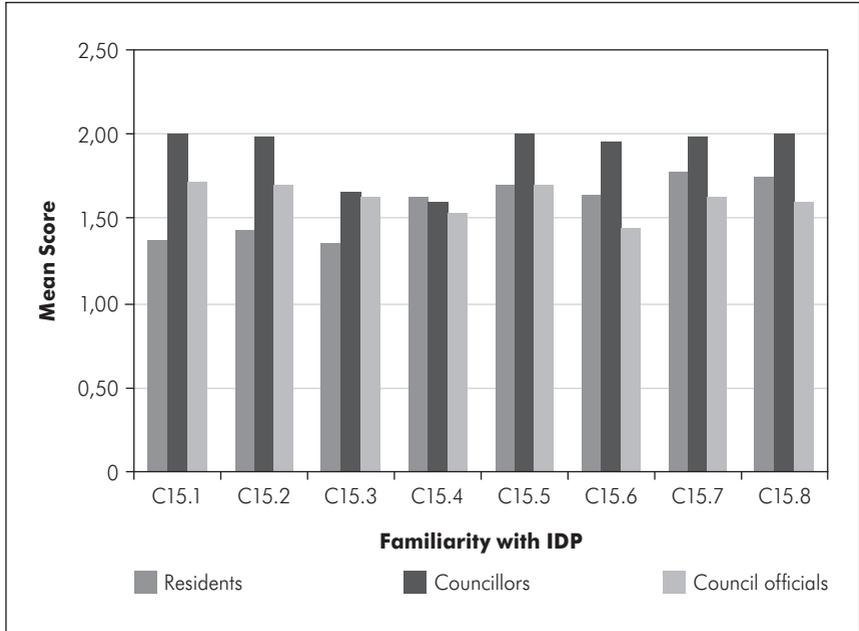
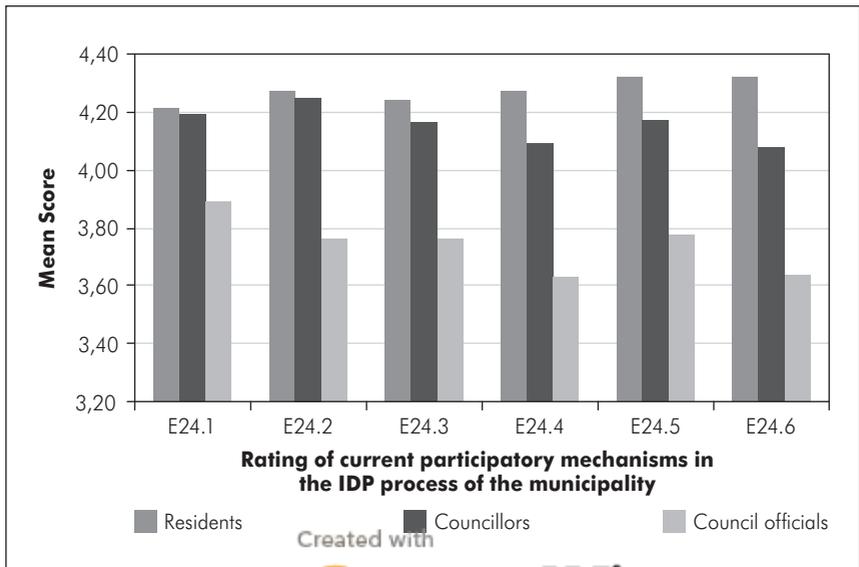


Figure 5: Participatory mechanisms of IDP in the municipality



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Pearson correlation scores (reflected in the table below) indicate that residents had inversely related opinions regarding the rating of current participatory mechanisms in the IDP process of the Municipality, compared to councillors and council officials.

According to Hague, Harrop and Breslin (1999:171), interest groups and stakeholders form an important link between society and government. Therefore, the role of stakeholders should not be underestimated in integrated planning. The study revealed that low-income households are more aware of the stakeholders involved in the IDP because of their level of interaction with interest groups and ratepayer associations. The study demonstrates the necessity for reinforcing greater stakeholder interaction in view of huge disparities in lower-income households.

Other comments

The implication is that there is a need for all parties to become more involved in the IDP process. The intention is to ensure a collective commitment, shared vision and common implementation strategy of the cumulative impact of integrated planning versus social development.

CROSS TABULATIONS

The information below presents a summary of the cross tabulations for residents and various factors. Only significant r-values have been highlighted. The rest imply that it is not significant for this study.

Table 7: Pearson r-value – participatory mechanisms

Variables	Pearson r-value
Residents vs Councillors	-0,379
Residents vs Council Officials	-0,565
Councillors vs Council Officials	0,727

Councillors and council officials showed a strong positive correlation, indicating that their thinking (scoring) was along the same lines. Even though all respondents agree that the IDP process is vital and necessary, residents’ expectations exceed those of the council and municipal officials. Residents expect the municipality to provide the mechanisms listed in this variable. The importance of this is clearly depicted in the graph above. Residents believe that more can be done to involve/include them in the IDP process. They are of the opinion that the process is not sufficiently consultative and representative of their views, which is a significant notification for the municipality in general and Local Government overall.



Table 8: International Impact – Tourism

	Residents	Councillors	Council Officials
Little or no communication from the Municipality.	17,11	–	–
Some councillors are not effective in information and service delivery.	11,84	–	–
The Municipality is attempting to advance development and the idea is supported.	50,00	–	–
Benefits to communities are given due to political affiliations to parties.	19,74	–	–
The Municipality should provide learnerships for scarce skills.	1,32	–	–
Total	100,00	–	–
<p>17% of residents believed that there was no communication from the municipality regarding the IDP process. A majority of the positive comments are from African communities in Inanda and Umlazi. Among these are the advances in development, such as infrastructure. The study revealed that at least 20% of residents believed that benefits were allocated to communities along party-political lines and political affiliations of community sectors. They believed that politicking and operating within a political milieu had a far-reaching impact on the kind of development initiatives they would receive in their respective areas. It can be said that political will and political rhetoric relating to participatory governance is a force to be reckoned with. According to the <i>City Press</i> (29 July 2007:23), this view is highlighted and upheld by the following: the ANC is of the opinion that widespread protests are politically motivated, but the poor say that they have been betrayed by politicians and demonstrations are motivated by the slow pace of service delivery (http://www.news24.com.citypress/home).</p>			

It is noted that 5.7% of the respondents have a definite view regarding this question and 21.3% believed that the process had some success in local participation. Most of the contributions were from lower- and middle-income residents. Although communities’ income levels are marginal in this research, it can be viewed as a determining factor in citizen participation. The poverty gap in local communities can be cited as one of the major factors for non-participation of citizens in Local Government structures. The attempt is to focus on pro-poor strategies in addressing communities’ development needs in the Municipality’s long-term strategic plan. This view links up with the Municipality’s long-term plan through the three-pillar strategy and strategic focus areas.

The Pearson correlation value ($r = -0.174$) is low and close to zero. That means that there is little or no relationship between the variables, that is, the



Table 9: Rating of citizens' participation in the IDP processes

		Area Rating			Total
		Low Income	Middle Income	High Income	
If you participated in the IDP processes in the e-Thekwini Municipality, how would you rate the processes for your participation?	Strongly not successful	Count 5 2,0%	1 0,4%	0 0,0%	6 2,4%
	Not Successful	Count 9 3,7%	3 1,2%	8 3,3%	20 8,1%
	Unsure	Count 67 27,2%	27 11,0%	47 19,1%	141 57,3%
	Successful	Count 51 20,7%	24 9,8%	3 1,2%	78 31,7%
	Strongly successful	Count 1 0,4%	0 0,0%	0 0,0%	1 0,4%
	Total	Count % of Total	133 54,1%	55 22,4%	58 23,6%
If you participated in the IDP processes in the e-Thekwini Municipality, how would you rate the processes for your participation? *Area Rating Cross Tabulation					



Table 10: Symmetric measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-,174	,058	-2,760	,006 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman's Correlation	-,202	,058	-3,226	,001 ^c
N of Valid Cases		246			
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis. b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis. c. Based on normal approximation.					

process rating was independent of area type. In all other instances, there is a difference in the way the respondents scored by grouping, as the p-values are all less than 0.05, for example for “Rating of mechanisms for facilitating IDP amongst communities and other stakeholders.” Thus residents and council officials have differing opinions. The direction of the opinions was indicated earlier through a graphic representation of the mean values. The variation in responses, as evident in this survey, highlights the need for a more coherent approach to the local processes in public participation, through co-operation, commitment and involvement.

From the above discussion, the summary of findings centred on a debate of the research study’s key objectives. These objectives included, amongst others, to understand the link between the IDP, vision, mission and LTDF of eThekweni Municipality and an examination of its plan; to identify the key stakeholders and explore the extent of their participation; and to establish ways of improving participation in Local Government processes.

KEY LESSONS

In the course of elaborating on the underlying themes of this article, some key lessons to be learnt from the study include:

- Municipalities should play a leading role in supervising and monitoring development projects to improve and ensure the quality of their IDPs.
- Municipal-community partnerships should be forged with epistemic communities to ensure systemic change in metropolitan governance and development.



- Municipal officials should be focussed and committed to development. Furthermore, they should guard against symbolic investment of citizen participation in municipal delivery. Many municipalities are now establishing IDP Representative Forums to enable discussions with communities on the various stages of the plans.
- It is essential to mobilise local communities on a socio-economic level and to empower households through the strategic intent of IDPs.
- Information and on-going public dialogue is necessary to ensure that the needs of the poor are addressed.

It is hoped that some of the key recommendations will serve as a benchmark for replication in analogous situations regarding the role of public participation in integrated development planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A typology of the key recommendations arising from the empirical research of this study includes the following:

- **Regular feedback on performance budgeting and reporting with regard to public resource allocations and service delivery**

The Municipality's IDP and budget are *not driven* by the people, but by municipal officials. *Ongoing feedback* regarding the performance budgeting system at the Municipality was considered a critical aspect of strategic planning.

- **Increase political leverage of communities' interests through a more visible role and interaction with councillors**

Councillors must play a more visible role in representing or interfacing with the community and its interests, rather than merely engaging in political rhetoric. The study revealed that councillors tend to score in the opposite manner to that of residents, as they often purport to serve the interests of local communities. Furthermore, the expectations of residents do not match the level of service delivery expected from some councillors. The relationship between the political and management interface needs to be managed with circumspection. At least 12% of residents indicated that councillors were not efficient in managing their portfolios.

- **Necessity for ongoing dialogue between local communities and the Council**

Two key themes that emerged from the study of good governance that should be addressed included communication channels and measuring the Municipality's performance. This will serve as an instrument to improve advocacy planning, where the needs of local citizens will be established.



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The survey revealed that if 64% of residents were unaware of the vision and mission of the IDP, then public participation is clearly not as effective as it ought to be. Residents must become familiar with the objectives, goals and strategic intent of the Municipality and its developmental outcomes. The desire is to deepen democracy and public participation in decision-making around IDPs. Furthermore, the lack of understanding of institutional processes and mechanisms around the IDP was a reason for concern.

- **A need for increased representation of communities through ward committees as a municipal-wide plan**

Citizens felt that the Municipality must do more to familiarise the communities with the IDP process. One of the effective ways of deepening democracy and promoting public participation is through the use of ward committees. Municipalities need to consult with key stakeholders on a more regular basis during the IDP process. Section 153 of the Constitution gives municipalities a mandate to structure and manage their administration, budgeting and planning processes to prioritise the community's basic needs, as well as to promote the social and economic development of the community. This is a statutory requirement and a moral obligation of all municipalities. According to Eckardt (2008:13), the specific and multi-faceted relationship between the levels of participation via ward committees needs a more nuanced analysis.

- **Increased consultation and representation of epistemic communities as strategic networks**

Epistemic communities are the “reservoirs” of knowledge-generating collectives. Notably, a more vigorous interaction can result in shared commitment to finding practical solutions to local problems. Local residents are of the opinion that the processes at hand are not sufficiently consultative and representative of their views. They believe that more can be done to involve and include them in the IDP process. Mechanisms within the Municipality must be designed to facilitate people's participation in development and IDPs in a more vigorous manner, and in so doing, to focus on a more redistributive, inclusive and integrated City development strategy.

- **Promoting capacity building, community engagement and management as a multi-disciplinary approach to public participation**

Proactive steps should be taken to build capacity that will optimise service delivery. As reflected in the Constitution, it is necessary to build a level of education and intellectual sophistication in the Council, councillors, ward committees, local communities and other relevant stakeholders to better understand the demands and actions. In other words, there is a need for responsible and responsive rule. It is therefore necessary to enforce accountability in municipal officials and internalise the level of effectiveness



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of the accountability. Ultimately, the intention is to be consultative and sensitive to public needs and maximise service delivery. This is a good strategy for the Municipality's capacity to gauge people's needs and strengthen the link between the Municipality and civil society.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to understand both theoretically and empirically, how citizen participation can impact on IDPs. Emphasis has been placed on understanding how the IDP as a strategic plan can affect the developmental focus of municipalities. The general hypotheses tested in this research is that the IDP must adequately cater for citizen participation, and that a significant relationship exists between key variables such as the municipality, councillors, citizens and more briefly yet quite significantly, ward committees. One should guard against interpreting the results of the empirical study as causality in a strict sense. However, they still provide an interesting pattern that should be addressed in further empirical research. It can be argued that the benefits of public participation far outweigh the costs involved to set the processes in motion. To ultimately elevate the level of service delivery and promote the quality of life of the citizenry, there is a need for an overall strategy for public participation that works with the IDP cycle, as well as a high level of commitment from officials and hands-on project management in a municipal milieu.

There is a political utility in public participation and this underpins local development. One cannot deny the utilitarian value of strong participation and that participation in the IDP can enrich development planning overall. Recognising local and participatory governance as vital instruments to help foster efficiency in municipal delivery is an achievement beyond measure. Successful implementation of the new system of local governance through the current legislative context will depend on the commitment of all stakeholders. To conclude, a holistic and responsive understanding of public participation is a step towards achieving a synergy between various operationally relevant variables, as well as moving along developmental lines to expand service delivery to politically contested and resource-poor environments, and in so doing, to contribute to the economic expansion of impoverished communities. Since the survey's target population was drawn mainly from middle- to lower-income households, they felt that the IDP has the net effect of improving their living standard in some tangible way. Notably, there is a need to build mutual trust as an optimising factor. A mindset shift is necessary to invoke public confidence in municipal affairs. The IDP is an ideal construct to address societal concerns, but should



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not be viewed as a panacea for all the challenges municipalities experience on a national level. It is a means of achieving the end result!

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Challenges for developmental local government and public participation in contemporary South Africa

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of democracy in South Africa, local government councils have been confronted by numerous challenges including, *inter alia*, enhanced service delivery through greater public consultation and participation initiatives. Municipalities are now required to proceed beyond their traditional roles as providers of local services though recent violent demonstrations throughout the country, because of poor service delivery, remain a matter of concern for government.

In this article, the new developmental mandate assigned to local authorities in South Africa, is reviewed. Reference is also made to findings from an empirical survey of councillors from the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) on issues pertaining to the new mandate. Legislative prescriptions that require enhanced community consultation and participation are discussed with emphasis on the role ward committees can play. The article concludes with a number of recommendations based on the analysis of the empirical survey conducted at the NMBM on how to enhance local service delivery and public consultation and participation.



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INTRODUCTION

What are the important implications of the transformation of developmental local government in South Africa and what are the current issues pertaining to this mandate in terms of the role of ward committees that require community consultation and participation as required by law. These are the questions that this article attempts to address. The first implication is that in terms of a variety of legislative prescriptions, the status of local government has changed. Municipalities have been assigned additional responsibilities and structures have changed to suit these new functions. Planning must be integrated and developmental, and municipal performance must be measured and judged by municipalities themselves, by residents and by the provincial and national governments. As part of its developmental role, municipalities are now required to form partnerships with their communities. This is prescribed in terms of the new definition of a municipality, which includes a municipal structure and its residents.

In South Africa, public participation is not a privilege but a Constitutional right. This is given greater prominence by the fact that chapter 1 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, emphatically states that the Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic and that any other law or conduct in conflict with it is invalid and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled (Tsatsire 2008:163). The need for public participation in government, as required by the Constitution must, therefore, be met. This Constitutional provision places an obligation on government to establish public participation structures and systems. Tsatsire (2008:164) argues that public participation must be pursued, not only to comply with legislative prescriptions, but also to promote good corporate governance. In support of the 1996 Constitution, subsequent local government legislation and policy papers include local residents under the definition of local government. Although public consultation and participation are part of the new developmental mandate assigned to local government, they remain part of the challenges confronting municipalities.

NEED FOR ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY

Ababio (2007:615) states that participatory democracy means the provision of services based on the existence of a legislative framework that facilitates consultation, involvement and mobilisation of civil society in the formal processes of policy making and implementation. In this regard, several pieces of legislation have been passed by Parliament imposing specific obligations on



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local government to consult with local communities in an effort to, *inter alia*, enhance service delivery. Chapter 11 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (Batho Pele White Paper), 1997, identified certain strategies to promote and improve the quality of service delivery and include the following:

- Mission statements for service delivery, together with service guarantees;
- Priorities, the principle of affordability, and the principle of redirecting resources to areas and groups previously under-resourced;
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and structures designed to measure outcomes;
- Progress and the introduction of corrective action, where appropriate;
- Plans for staffing, human resource development and organisational capacity;
- Potential partnerships with the private sector, NGOs or communities;
- Development of a culture of customer care and of approaches to improved service; and
- Delivery that is sensitive to issues of race, gender and disability.

The above White Paper states that the concept of a customer may seem inappropriate at first glance. Fox (2005:59-60) states that the concept customer can be perceived as suitable in the context of improving public service delivery because it encompasses certain principles that are fundamental to public service delivery as they are to the provision of services for commercial gain. Against this background, the White Paper on the Batho Pele Principles is of significant importance as it prescribes how members of the community should be treated by public officials and the levels of service that should be delivered by government. Local communities form an important component of the new developmental mandate assigned to local government. Local inhabitants are customers who consume numerous services provided by government and municipalities. This implies that politicians and officials should:

- Listen to the views of communities and take cognisance thereof when making decisions about which services should be rendered;
- Treat all customers with respect; and
- Always be considerate, respond sympathetically and rapidly should the level of service fall below the promised standard.

A significant point of integration of the Batho Pele (People First) Principles is that of the normative and ethical dimension. The importance of articulating values and norms that define and underpin the public service cannot be understated. This is seen as critical to providing both public officials and the public with a common frame of reference regarding the principles and standards to be



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applied and in assisting public officials to develop an appreciation of value issues involved in effective and efficient public service delivery (Hondegheem 1998:30). Public institutions in managing their relationship with customers must take due cognisance of their normative and moral responsibility, which is emphasised in Chapter 10 of the 1996 Constitution.

In his State of the Nation Address on 11 February 2010, President Jacob Zuma's key message was that after months of bedding down new departments and planning, his reconfigured government was ready to commence service delivery and obtain results. Zuma stated that government must work faster, harder and smarter with an expectation on the executive and public service to comply with this vision (State of the Nation Address, <http://www.gov.za>). One of the outcomes identified during the address is a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient local government system which is expected to improve service delivery in 2010 (*Sunday Times* 14 February 2010:4). The lack of service delivery protests, which have become a feature of many South African municipalities, are indicative that the expectations of communities are generally not being met by government. Maphazi (Interview held on 20 August 2009), holds the view that the escalation in violent service delivery protests at the local government sphere are due primarily because of a weak and ineffective ward committee system, lack of institutionalism and adequate monitoring and evaluation of public participation processes and programmes. It is against this background that the Zuma-led administration has pledged accelerated service delivery for communities with a new focus on industrial policy to spur growth and job creation (*Herald* 12 February 2010:2).

In the section that follows, a review of the new developmental mandate assigned to municipalities in South Africa is undertaken. One of the primary requirements of the new developmental mandate is the need for enhanced community consultation and participation strategies, which also form part of an innovative approach to diversity management. In this regard, communities now have an important role to play in local government and their participation is outlined in a number of legislative prescriptions, which will be reviewed for purposes of this article. Local government structures in South Africa have moved away from their traditional approach towards a developmental approach to meet the ever-increasing needs of a diverse society. However, according to Mc Lennan (2007:6), delivery is political because it implies the use of institutional power through the state to ensure the effective management of resources for development. It involves complex relationships between the stakeholders and the distribution and utilisation of power and authority networks which legitimise resource distribution and development (Mc Lennan 2007:8).



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THE NEW DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANDATE

The adoption of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, heralded a new phase in the South African local government transition process. In terms of section 40(1) of the 1996 Constitution, government is constituted into national, provincial and local spheres, which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. This establishes local authorities as a distinctive sphere, with a mandate to govern, to provide services and to promote social and economic development.

The above responsibilities establish a new mandate for local government in South Africa, which requires that each local authority develops specific policies aimed at meeting the particular needs of local communities. In order to meet these Constitutional provisions, the national government engaged in a process to develop an inclusive and consensually based policy for local government, which ultimately resulted in the publication of the White Paper on Local Government in March 1998. The focus on local government shifted from transition to transformation in terms of the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 (Tsatsire 2008:65).

Local government in South Africa, like any other sphere of government, is governed by the principles and rules laid down in the 1996 Constitution. In addition, the Constitution describes the framework within which other spheres of government must adhere to in dealing and interacting with local government. As the Constitution is the supreme law of South Africa, this highlights the importance accorded to the local government sphere in South Africa (Tsatsire 2008:72).

The South African Communist Party prescribes the following broad principles underlying the new developmental system of local government:

- The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, grants local government original powers. Local government is no longer a function of provincial government, or a third level of government. It has now become a sphere of government in its own right. It is part of a system of co-operative government and governance, which includes the provincial and national spheres;
- Local government is no longer a site for the delivery of services only, but a crucial site for social and economic development. Local government has to have a strong developmental focus to achieve this;
- Local government, within its constraints, has to appropriately contribute to both economic growth and social redistribution;
- Local government is a key arena for the democratic participation of ordinary citizens;



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- Municipalities constituting the new local government system have to be financially viable and sustainable; and
- Over time, through appropriate negotiations, more powers and functions can be devolved to local government (<http://www.sacp.org.za>).

The above prescriptions now require local government to proceed beyond its traditional manner of conducting its business in order to meet the new developmental mandate that has been assigned to the third sphere of government. In this regard one of the primary responsibilities is the encouragement of local communities in matters of local government. This must be achieved through public consultation and participation strategies as prescribed in terms of a variety of developmental legislative prescriptions, which are discussed in the next section.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

Dauids *et al.* (2005:19) citing Yadav (1980) states that public participation should be understood in the sense of participation in the decision-making processes; participation in the implementation of development programmes and projects; participation in the monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects; and participation in sharing the benefits of development. Taken further, the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, classifies community participation under 4 categories:

- **Consumers and Service Users:** From a local government perspective, it is important that municipalities are responsive to the needs of local communities, in (in essence their clients).
- **Voters:** When voter participation declines, democratic accountability is diluted.
- **Partners in resource mobilisation:** This means local communities should be at the forefront of identifying opportunities, forming strategic partnerships to the benefit of local communities.
- **Participating in the policy process:** Municipalities are required to develop mechanisms to ensure citizens' participation in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, and also in decision-making and implementation.

According to Kaizer (2008:5), none of the following pieces of legislation, entrenching public participation in local government matters, provide a clear **definition** of public participation:

- The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*;

- The *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*;
- The *Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000*;
- The *Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000*;
- The *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*;
- The *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003*; and
- The *Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004*.

The White Paper on Local Government, 1998, however, states that municipalities are required to develop mechanisms to ensure citizens' participation in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, as well as decision-making and implementation (Kaizer 2008:6).

Ismail, Bayat and Meyer (1997:3) state that the shift in emphasis from 'government' (the power to govern) to 'governance' (the act of governing) is linked to the global acknowledgement that organs of civil society need to be empowered to share the responsibility for governance. In essence, they argue, government institutions require a new citizen-oriented management approach. Public consultation and participation strategies have accordingly become more important and must be taken into account in terms of managing diverse In light of the above, the local government sphere in South Africa has undergone three major restructuring phases since 1993. Each has involved the creation of new municipalities as they moved from interim (1993) to transitional (1995) and to new (2000) municipalities. Ward committees play a critical role in addressing challenges, and must actively participate in determining core municipal processes, such as Integrated Development Planning, municipal budgeting and municipal performance management processes. Without ward committees, the system of democratic government and developmental local government cannot be said to be rooted among the people (Kaizer 2008:3).

An overview of selected legislative prescriptions pertaining to public participation will now be undertaken.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In terms of section 152(1)(e) of the 1996 Constitution, one of the objects of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. The White Paper on Local Government, 1998, prescribes that municipalities are required to develop mechanisms to ensure citizens' participation in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, as well as decision-making and implementation.



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In terms of the Preamble to the Local Government: *Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998*, the requirement of public participation is cemented as a constitutional obligation of municipalities to encourage a safe and healthy environment by working with communities in creating environments and human settlements in which all citizens can lead dignified lives. The *Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000* aims to actively promote a society in which access to information will empower citizens to more fully exercise and protect their rights.

Section 4 of the *Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000* deals with cases where an administrative action materially and adversely affects the rights of the public, and states that public hearings must form part of the process of public inquiries into such matters. In terms of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, provision is made for, amongst others, the manner in which municipal powers and functions are exercised and performed to provide for community participation. The Act deals with the legal nature of a municipality and defines under section 2 (b)(ii) the community as part of the municipality. Section 17 deals with the mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation.

Section 22 of the *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003* stipulates that the accounting officer of a municipality must, immediately after an annual budget is tabled in a municipal council, make public the annual budget and invite the local community to submit representations in connection with the budget. Section 23 states that when the annual budget has been tabled, the municipal council must consult and consider any views of the local community. Section 4 of the *Local Government: Municipal Property Rates Act 6 of 2004* pertains to community participation in adopting its rates policy and states that a municipality must follow a process of community participation in terms of the *Municipal Systems Act, 2000*, prior to adopting its rates policy (Kaizer 2008:6).

In terms of section 5 (1) (a) – (e) of the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, members of local communities have the right to:

- Contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality;
- Submit written or oral recommendations, representations and complaints to the municipal council or to another political structure or political office bearer or the administration of the municipality;
- Prompt responses to written or oral communications, including complaints, to the municipal council or to another political structure or political office bearer or the administration of the municipality;
- Be informed of decisions of the municipal council or another political structure or a political office bearer of the municipality;
- Regular disclosure of the state of affairs of the municipality; and



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- Demand that the proceedings of the municipal council and those of committees must be open to the public.

In terms of section 6.1 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1997, the public service alone cannot develop a truly service-oriented culture without the active participation of the broader community. At the local sphere of government this implies that the views of local communities must be considered by municipal councils in terms of prescriptions contained in a variety of legislation. It is clear that the current government has provided for a legal framework that necessitates the establishment and institutionalisation of, *inter alia*, ward committees as vehicles to entrench participatory governance at the grassroots level. Vaughan (2003) regards the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, as a stepping-stone between the Constitution and the Municipal Structures and Systems Acts. According to Davids, Theron & Kealeboga (2005:60), the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, represented a radical reorientation for local governance in South Africa, and gave substance to the paradigm shift in terms of how municipalities should integrate development planning with community-based goals. Putu (2006:11) states in this regard that the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, puts forward the vision of a developmental local government which centres on working with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. Southall (2004:8), in turn, argues that this participatory democracy can only come into being when ordinary men and women, young and old are afforded an opportunity to actively and meaningfully contribute to their own development and well being.

Against this background Davids, *et al.* (2005:112) argue that the birth of a new South Africa has accelerated the search for appropriate strategies to increase the participation of the public in all spheres of government, particularly the local sphere of government.

A brief discussion on the role of ward committees in terms of public participation now follows.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THROUGH WARD COMMITTEES

When the new system of local government was introduced in South Africa in 1995, it was correctly placed as the sphere of government closest to the citizens so that it can give meaning and substance to the basic political commitment that the people shall govern. This noble idea of bringing democracy to where people live was to be achieved through ward committee engagements with the public.



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Despite the good intentions of the legislations and policies aimed at promoting ward committee based participatory democracy, Makubalo (2004:109) concludes that in order for ward committees to become more effective they require more decision making powers. This conclusion appears to agree with the study and recommendations made by the former Department of Provincial and Local Government which, confirmed that there is very little delegation of powers to ward committees. This conservative approach limits ward committees from fulfilling their roles of public consultation and participation.

According to Kaizer (2008:8), ward committees have been established in more than 80% of the wards countrywide with the main objective to enhance participatory democracy at the local government sphere. In practice, ward committees in South Africa ought to operate in the following manner:

- Raise issues about local ward matters to the ward councillor;
- They are the link between the ward councillor and the community;
- They have a say in decisions, projects selection & prioritisation, the Integrated Development Planning, performance management of the municipality and allocation of funds (budgeting) by the municipality; and
- Engaging with communities and the general public in matters of their local government.

A further legislative requirement that municipalities are required to adhere to is the formulation and adoption of an annual Integrated Development Plan (IDP). For purposes of this article, it is proposed that the involvement of communities in the IDP processes should be seen as a new approach in terms of enhancing service delivery. The voices of communities are now required to be heard by local government structures and their input must feed into the IDP processes, which are aligned with the capital budgets of municipalities. The following legislation defines the nature of the IDP (Integrated Development Plan 2006-2011 NMBM):

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*

This Act stipulates that a municipality must give priority to the basic needs of its communities and promote their social and economic development to achieve a democratic, safe and healthy environment.

- *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*

This Act prescribes the need for each and every municipality to develop and adopt an IDP, which should be reviewed annually. In addition, it outlines the IDP processes and components.

- *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003*

This Act makes provision for alignment between the IDP and the municipal budget. A Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan is the mechanism that ensures that the IDP and the budget are aligned.



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- Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001.

The above-mentioned regulations make provision for the inclusion in the IDP of the following:

- The institutional framework for the implementation of the IDP;
- Investment and development initiatives in the municipality;
- Key performance indicators and other important statistical information;
- A financial plan; and
- A spatial development framework.

It can be inferred from the above that ward committees have a significant role to play in conveying the needs of diverse communities that need to be met by their respective municipal councils. It can be argued that public participation at the local sphere of government is of critical importance as it is at this sphere of government where councillors and officials need to be sensitised to the new environments within which they are required to function.

CABINET APPROVAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TURNAROUND STRATEGY (LGTAS) 2010

Cabinet approved a comprehensive Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) on the 2nd of December 2009. The Strategy is underpinned by two important considerations. The first is that a **“one size fits all”** approach to municipalities is not useful or acceptable. Each municipality faces different social and economic conditions and has different performance levels and support needs. Thus a more segmented and differentiated approach was required to address the various challenges of municipalities (<http://www.cogta.gov.za>).

Cabinet further recognised that the problems in local government are as a result of **internal factors** within the direct control of municipalities as well as **external factors** over which municipalities do not have much control. The internal factors relate to issues such as quality of decision-making by Councillors, quality of appointments, transparency of tender and procurement systems, and levels of financial management and accountability. The external factors relate to revenue base and income generation potential, inappropriate legislation and regulation, demographic patterns and trends, macro and micro-economic conditions, undue interference by political parties and weaknesses in national policy, oversight and Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR). The twin over-arching **aim** of the Turnaround Strategy is to:



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Restore the confidence of the majority of people in the governing of their municipalities, as the primary delivery machine of the developmental state at the local sphere. Re-build and improve the basic requirements for a functional, responsive, accountable, effective, and efficient developmental local government (<http://www.cogta.gov.za>).

The five strategic objectives of the LGTAS are to:

- *Ensure that municipalities meet basic needs of communities.* This implies that an environment is created, support provided and systems built to accelerate quality service delivery within the context of each municipality's conditions and needs;
- *Build responsive and accountable local government.* Make sure that systems and structures and procedures are developed and enforced to deal with corruption, maladministration and ensure that municipalities communicate and account more to communities;
- *Improve functionality, performance and professionalism in municipalities.* Ensure that the core administrative and institutional systems are in place and are operational to improve performance;
- *Improve national and provincial policy, support and oversight to local government;* and
- *Strengthen partnerships between local government, communities and civil society.* Ensure that communities and other development partners are mobilised to partner with municipalities in service delivery and development (<http://www.cogta.gov.za>).

The notion of the developmental state includes to some extent the more traditional understanding of the state that drives development and service delivery through regulation. However, in South Africa the developmental state is also seen as a strong administrative state, that is, a state that should deliver on its promised mandate and, more specifically, a state that benefits the poor and marginalised (Levin 2004:35).

It is proposed that despite specific legislative prescriptions pertaining to service delivery and expectations created by government, the vast majority of South Africans remain in dire poverty with limited access to enhanced local service delivery. The lack of, *inter alia*, adequate housing, job creation, health services and poverty alleviation could be some of the reasons for the increase in violent demonstrations throughout the country (*Herald* 12 February 2010:1).

Against the above background the findings from an empirical survey to test attitudinal responses from certain councillors and senior officials from the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality now follow.



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FINDINGS FROM AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY OF OFFICIALS AND COUNCILLORS

An empirical survey was undertaken by Tsatsire in 2008 at the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM) to test attitudinal responses to, *inter alia*, the institutional capacity of the NMBM to deliver basic services, to promote public participation and to meet prescribed developmental challenges assigned to municipalities. The sample comprised of 75 officials and 11 standing committee chairpersons from the NMBM. The sample was justified on the grounds of the positions occupied by the officials and the chairpersons of the standing committees who are full-time councillors. The quantitative approach using the 5-point Lickert Rating Scale was employed after the questionnaire had been refined by way of a pilot study to meet the aims and objectives of the research.

Responses to predetermined questions on the new developmental mandate revealed the following results. A response rate of 77.9% was achieved for the empirical survey. The research findings are, therefore, based on 67 completed questionnaires from a target population of 86 respondents (Tsatsire 2008:228-229):

Statement 1: Municipalities have not yet come to terms with their developmental role.

7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement while 36% disagreed, 12% were undecided and 45% agreed. In terms of section 153 of the 1996 Constitution municipalities are required to structure and manage their administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of communities and to promote the social and economic development of the community. It is accordingly of concern that 45% of the respondents agreed with the statement.

Statement 2: Developmental local government starts with service delivery and if this is failing, then local government cannot be said to be developmental.

48% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 22.38% strongly agreed, 4.47% were undecided while 25.37% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. It should be noted that in terms of prescriptions contained in, *inter alia*, the *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*, municipalities are required to give priority to the basic needs of communities, promote its development and ensure that residents have access to at least the minimum level of basic services.

Statement 3: Municipalities have huge service delivery backlogs that are affecting their ability to be developmental.

75% of the respondents supported the statement, 22% responded negatively and 3% were undecided. The responses to this statement indicate that service



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delivery is the starting point in a developmental state. Service delivery and socio-economic development should, therefore, go hand in hand.

Statement 4: Local government in South Africa is over legislated.

Tsatsire's study found that altogether 42% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, 37.31% agreed, 10.44% strongly agreed and 10.44% were undecided. The responses indicate that inasmuch as legislation is needed to provide a broad framework for local government, aspects of its implementation and compliance are equally important. Tsatsire (2008:251) argues that legislation should be enabling instead of impeding delivery. It should simplify and not complicate matters. Furthermore, the issue of skills and capacity to implement legislation should be given attention. This is an area in which the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) should play an important role in ensuring municipal capacity development to enable both service delivery and compliance.

Statement 5: Recent service delivery protests are an indication of the lack of public participation and regular communication between municipal councils and communities.

The response to this statement revealed that 52.23% of the respondents agreed, 7.46% strongly agreed, 31.34% disagreed and strongly disagreed and 9% were undecided. The result indicates that there is a lack of communication between municipalities and local communities. The new system of developmental local government is constitutionally embedded in residents and requires a constant flow of information and feedback.

Statement 6: The ward committee system is not functioning properly in deepening democracy and promoting public participation in government.

The study found that the majority of the respondents, 55.22%, agreed with the statement while 16.41% disagreed and 28.37% were undecided. It is proposed that these responses indicate a weakness in the ward committee system as envisaged in developmental local government legislation (Tsatsire 2008:252).

Statement 7: Lack of understanding of the way local government operates is affecting the ability of local communities to participate in key local government activities.

Altogether 73.13% of the respondents agreed with the statement while 7.46% strongly agreed, 3% were undecided and 16.41% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. It should be noted that in terms of, *inter alia*, the *Systems Act 32 of 2000*, municipalities are required to inform communities of their rights and duties and the special needs of women, the disabled, the illiterate and other



disadvantaged groups must be taken into account when formulating public participation strategies.

Statement 8: Local government is not fully abiding by the eight Batho Pele Principles relating to service delivery.

The survey revealed that 19.40% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 4.47% were undecided, 69% agreed and 7.46% strongly agreed. An analysis of the responses indicates that the majority of the respondents believe that local government is not abiding by the Batho Pele principles, which is a matter of concern.

Statement 9: Municipalities do not have stable financial resources to be able to sustain service delivery without national government support.

The survey responses indicate that 66% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 27% either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 7% were undecided. These results imply that municipalities are not perceived as financially autonomous.

Statement 10: Local government is less competent than the other two spheres of government.

The majority of the respondents, 81% either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, 3% were undecided and 16% either agreed or strongly agreed. Tsatsire (2008:250) argues that these results imply that local government is confronted by numerous challenges beyond the control of most municipalities and that the three sphere system of government in South Africa needs a review in its totality.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that public participation and consultation in South Africa are both a legislative imperative as well as a core value of the country's democracy. However, in terms of the new developmental mandate it is argued that for communities to make a more meaningful contribution towards decision-making processes in local government, additional powers and responsibilities will have to be evolved to community structures like ward committees. The ward based community participation model used in South Africa has numerous shortcomings and challenges especially in terms of discharging their roles and responsibilities, which include public participation and consultation. The findings from the empirical survey conducted by Tsatsire (2008) further highlight the challenges faced by municipalities in meeting the new developmental mandate.



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Tsatsire (2008: 328-345) proposes the following recommendations to strengthen the role municipalities should play in terms of enhanced service delivery and community consultation and participation:

- **A need exists for further research on developmental local government.**

The new developmental mandate assigned to local government by, *inter alia*, the 1996 Constitution has not yet been fully grasped by local government implying that practitioners do not fully understand the mandate.

- **Monitoring and evaluating of service delivery and development performance should be given greater priority.**

The Constitutional objectives of local government require a functional system to monitor and evaluate the performance of municipalities in meeting these objectives as well as the impact of municipal actions, whether intended or unintended. Furthermore, since numerous municipalities are struggling financially in terms of capacity, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and SALGA should jointly develop a monitoring and evaluation national framework and system, which is universally applicable throughout the entire country.

- **Municipal capacity building programmes should be prioritised.**

The public sector is aggressively competing with the private sector for staff who possess scarce skills, especially in the technical fields. Accordingly, a programme and strategy for the acquisition and retainment of such scarce skills by municipalities should be a priority which would enhance local service delivery.

- **There is a need to improve local participatory governance.**

Municipalities should secure greater participation by residents in matters of governance. Besides the fact that this is a constitutional and legislative requirement, it is also one of the important principles of good corporate governance. Communication between government and citizens should be seen as an integral part of service delivery. A culture of open and ongoing communication should prevail, not limited only to crisis communication, marketing and media statements. It is further recommended that the ward committee system should not be a voluntary option for municipalities as is currently the case, but compulsory. Public participation initiatives should primarily target the poor, illiterate and other marginalised sectors of society.

- **Municipalities should embrace and institutionalise the Batho Pele Principles of service delivery.**

Municipal officials should attend service excellence training courses in an effort to enhance customer service as envisaged in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (Batho Pele Principles), 1997.



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- **Focus on local government should move from planning to the implementation of programmes and projects.**

Research has indicated that considerable progress has been made in putting in place constitutional policy and institutional frameworks in terms of local government transformation and the new mandate. However, attention should now focus on implementation. In order to enhance service delivery and development performance, it is essential that councillors and officials are properly empowered and capacitated. They must fully understand what is expected of them in terms of their developmental and service delivery mandates. In this regard, regular refresher courses and structured capacity building programmes are recommended.

To meet the legislative prescriptions pertaining to public consultation and participation, it is proposed that consideration should be given to the above recommendations by municipalities to strengthen their ability to enhance service delivery. However, the scenario exists where increased public participation and consultation could take place along continued lack of service delivery. This could lead to further violent lack of services protests throughout the country. This remains a huge challenge for municipalities throughout South Africa where service delivery expectations from communities are generally high because of, *inter alia*, the expectations created by the Zuma-led administration.

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Assessing the financial viability of metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng

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ABSTRACT

Metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng have been plagued by poor service delivery in recent years. This has been the root of violent protests in most of the communities in this province. This article intends to explore the reasons for this by specifically focussing on assessing the financial viability of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng, namely Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg and City of Tshwane, by means of ratio analysis. It is vital to have an understanding of the financial viability of municipalities as it can identify and address the problems related to poor service delivery. The following six ratios were used to determine the financial viability of the metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng: cash quick ratio, debt to asset ratio, ability to provide basic services ratio, percentage change in total assets, proportion of income from Government grant/subsidy, and consumer debt to total revenue ratio. The results of the group revealed improvements in certain areas and areas that need improvement. The group results were used as a benchmark for the three individual municipalities to assess whether they are performing above or below the group average. The results of individual metropolitan municipalities also revealed valuable information that these municipalities can use to formulate their intervention strategies.



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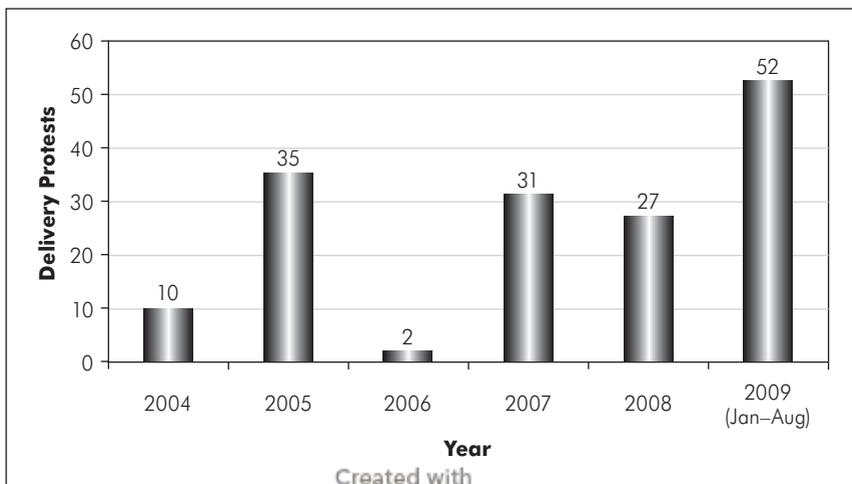
INTRODUCTION

Poor service delivery by municipalities in South Africa has been seen as the root cause of violent protest in most communities in Gauteng (Mahlangu, 2009:4). Van Dijk and Croucamp (2007:665) revealed that more than 50 service delivery protests occurred between 1994 and 2005. Since then, the number of service delivery protests have escalated and reached a peak in 2009. Figure 1 provides a summary of major service delivery protests that took place in South Africa between 2004 and 2009.

From Figure 1, it can be seen that service delivery protests have been escalating since 2004, recording the highest figure of 52 between January and August 2009. Figure 2 indicates the breakdown of major service delivery protests per province between January and July 2009.

Figure 2 highlights that most major service delivery protests (30%) occurred between January and July 2009 in Gauteng (COGTA 2009a:11). These service delivery protests prompted the Minister of the National Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) to launch an intervention project called “Operation Clean Audit 2014” (COGTA 2009b), as well as the Local Government Turnaround Strategy that was approved by Cabinet on 2 December 2009 (COGTA 2009c). The Turnaround Strategy focuses on five strategic objectives aimed at improving service delivery, and

Figure 1: Major service delivery protests in South Africa between 2004 and 2009



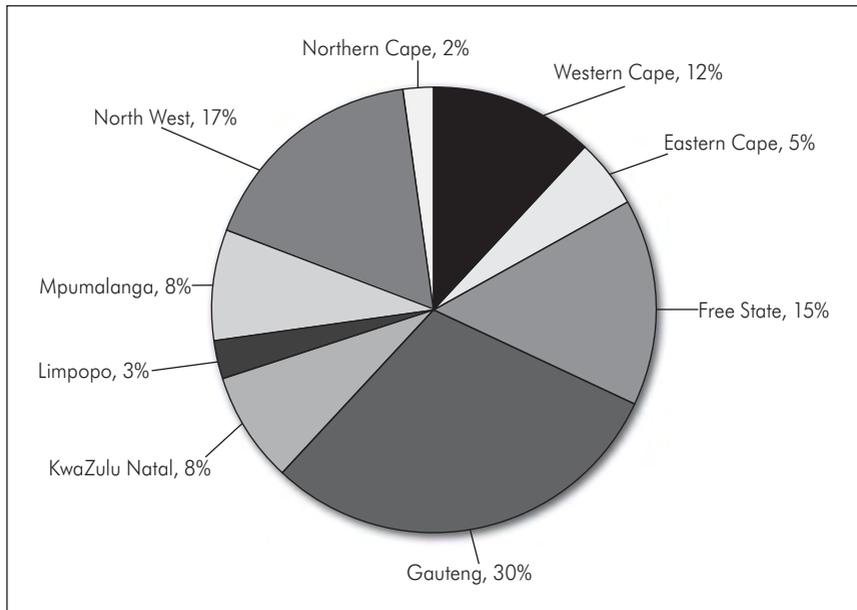
Source: Adapted from *State of Local Government in South Africa* (COGTA 2009a:12).



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Figure 2: Major service delivery protests per province between January and July 2009



Source: Adapted from *State of Local Government in South Africa* (COGTA 2009a:11)

identifies one of the immediate implementation priorities for addressing the financial and administrative problems in municipalities.

In order for effective service delivery to take place, there is a need for accountability and good financial management. Financial management in municipalities is governed by the *Public Finance Management Act, 1999* (Act 1 of 1999 as amended by Act 29 of 1999) (PFMA) and the *Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003* (Act 56 of 2003) (MFMA). Regulation No. R. 796, published in *Government Gazette* No. 22605 on 24 August 2001, deals with municipal planning and performance management regulations. In terms of Regulation (2) (1) (e), municipalities should set key performance indicators in their Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Chapter 3 of the regulation deals with performance management. Regulation 10(g) of Chapter 3 introduces three ratios (debt coverage, outstanding service debtor to revenue and cost average) that must be calculated from annual financial statements in order to measure the financial viability of a municipality.

Swanevelder (2005:68) proposed several ratios relating to the analysis of the income statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement that are considered necessary to evaluate the financial performance of municipalities. Chaney



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(2005:183) also suggested various ratios that measure the financial position, financial performance, liquidity and the solvency of a government. Kamnikar, Kamnikar & Deal (2006:32) and Visser & Erasmus (2002:345), used ratios suggested by Chaney (2005:181) and identified three ratios they considered essential to evaluate the financial condition of a government, namely liquidity, leverage and ability to provide basic services. The question arises: Which ratios are essential to assess the financial viability of the Gauteng Metropolitan Municipalities?

The purpose of this article is to revisit the ratios proposed by Regulation 10(g), Swanevelder (2005:68), Chaney (2005:183), Kamnikar *et al.* (2006:32), and Visser & Erasmus (2002:345) and use them to identify essential ratios that can be used to measure a municipality's financial viability. The article is structured as follows: Firstly, a literature study is conducted to explore ratios used to measure the financial condition of governments and municipalities that are not mentioned in Regulation 10(g). Secondly, ratios used to measure the financial viability of municipalities were taken into consideration, and a list of proposed ratios was compiled and used to assess the financial viability of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng. Finally, the results, summary and conclusion are discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Nsingo (2007:40), Public Financial Management (PFM) involves decision making on where financial resources are needed to implement Government programmes and projects; where to obtain these resources; how to collect and utilise the resources; and how to control all financial processes within given time frames. Therefore, PFM not only deals with the effective allocation and distribution of financial resources, but also the effective recording and reporting of these financial resources.

To this end, the PFMA emphasises the importance of financial reporting as an integral component to sound PFM. Financial reporting entails daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly reports, as well as comprehensive financial reports, such as annual financial statements. For example, income statements, balance sheets and cash flow statements.

The financial statements of metropolitan municipalities are prepared in accordance with the Generally Accepted Municipal Accounting Practice (GAMAP) and Generally Recognised Accounting Practices (GRAP), as provided for in S216 of the *Constitution* and Section 91 (1)(j) (b)) of the PFMA (National Treasury, 2004). Fourie, Opperman & Scott (2007:421) state that the major objectives of GRAP are to:

- Ensure consistency in the accounting treatment of transactions and classification of account balances in municipalities.
- Enhance comparability between similar sized municipal bodies on a national basis.
- Enable users of financial statements to make more accurate assessments of risks and returns.

The information contained in the financial statements is of major significance to various stakeholders who regularly need to have relative measures of the institutions' performance. In metropolitan municipalities, stakeholders include council members, chief financial officers (CFOs), management, Provincial Government, National Government, auditors and households. In order for information contained in the financial statement to be useful, the financial statements need to be analysed by calculating certain ratios. One of the most important and frequently used methods is ratio analysis. Gitman (2009:54) states that ratio analysis involves methods of calculating and interpreting financial ratios to analyse and monitor the firm's performance.

Faul, Pistorius, Van Vuuren & De Beer (1994:526) describe ratio analysis as identifying, measuring and evaluating financial relationships or ratios of the financial position and results of a municipality. Therefore, ratio analysis specifically focuses on calculating these ratios and measuring their performance in financial statements. Visser & Erasmus (2002:345) identify four main categories of financial ratios used to analyse financial statements, namely rate of return, liquidity, efficiency or activity, as well as investment ratios.

- Besides the abovementioned ratios, Swanevelder (2005:68) suggested seven additional ratios that provide a broader view of the financial position of a municipality. These ratios measure the following areas: Analysis of the income statement of the rate of general service.
- the income statement of the electricity service.
- the statistical information related to the electrical service.
- the income statement of the water service.
- the statistical information related to the water service.
- percentage net surplus (or deficit) for all services.
- the appropriation section of the income statement.
- the balance sheet.
- the cash flow statement.

Chaney (2005:183) also suggested various ratios that measure the financial position, financial performance, liquidity and the solvency of a government. Using ratios suggested by Chaney (2005:183), Kamnikar *et al.* (2006:32) identified three ratios they considered essential to evaluate the financial



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condition of a government. The three ratios measure liquidity, leverage and the ability to provide basic services. In this study, the ratios mentioned in Regulation 10(g) of *Regulation Gazette* No. 7146, the ratios proposed by Swanevelder (2005:68), Chaney (2005:183) Kamnikar *et al.* (2006:32) and Visser & Erasmus (2002:345) were considered. Furthermore, six ratios were selected for analysing the financial statements of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng. The six ratios used in the research are discussed below.

Liquidity

According to Gitman (2009:58), the liquidity of an institution is measured by its ability to satisfy its short-term obligations as they come due. Liquidity answers the question: Is the institution likely to meet its financial obligation on a timely basis? Municipalities must also maintain a certain level of liquidity to continue providing uninterrupted services to the community. Visser and Erasmus (2002:345) define liquidity ratios as a measure of the institution's ability to pay its debts when due. The two liquidity ratios defined in literature are the current ratio (current assets/current liabilities) and the quick (acid test) ratio (current assets – inventory/current liabilities). The quick ratio is more preferable than the current ratio because it excludes inventory, which is generally the least liquid current asset. In municipalities, inventories are excluded because they are not for sale, but are mostly used in normal operating activities of the municipality (Swanevelder 2005:74). Kamnikar *et al.* (2005:33) adjusted this ratio and called it the cash-quick ratio. It includes only cash, cash equivalents and investments that have been identified by the respective government as current (short-term marketable securities) as part of current assets. A quick ratio of 1, 0 or greater is occasionally recommended (Gitman 2006:59). However, according to Chaney (2005:185), it is not unusual for a government to have quick ratios that are in excess of 2,0 because of the cash management policies that the public sector uses.

Leverage

In finance, leverage (also known as gearing or levering) refers to the use of debt to supplement investment. It refers to the degree to which an investor or institution is utilising borrowed money. Chaney (2005:33) explains that government institutions' debt can become a burden for taxpayers. The higher the debt, the more the budget must be devoted to interest and debt principal payments. The two ratios suggested by Chaney (2005:33) to measure solvency in government is the debt to asset ratio (long-term debt divided by total assets) and interest coverage ratio (change in net assets plus interest expense divided



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by interest expense). Swanevelder (2005:75) used the debt to cash ratio, which is calculated as long-term debt as per balance sheet divided by cash generated from activities. For the purpose of this article, only the debt to asset ratio will be considered.

Ability to provide basic services

According to Chaney (2005:184), the financial position of a government is measured as unrestricted net assets divided by expenses. This ratio measures how much money of unrestricted net resources is available to finance costs. It focuses on the municipality's ability to continue providing services. Kamnikar *et al.* (2006:33) mention the same ratio but prefer the name "continuing service ratio", to better describe the focus of the measure. The higher the ratio, the greater the unrestricted net resources that have been accumulated, and the low ratio suggests that few resources are available to weather the budget crisis (Chaney 2005:184). Chaney (2005:184) also indicates that an extremely high ratio might suggest that too many resources have been obtained from taxpayers or too few services have been provided. This state of affairs is not strange to South Africa, where municipalities and Government departments under spend their budgets and thus fail to render the necessary services citizens require.

Financial performance

Chaney (2005:184) mentions two ratios for measuring financial performance, namely the percentage change in total net assets (change in net assets/total net assets) and the general support rate (general revenue + transfers/expenses). For the purpose of this research, only the percentage change in total net assets was considered. This ratio indicates how much the current year surplus (deficit) contributes to accumulating net assets. According to Chaney (2005:184), an extremely low or even negative ratio is not necessarily bad if the government has accumulated significant net assets; neither is an extremely high ratio necessarily good for the same reason.

Extent of dependence on income from National Government

In order for municipalities to be able to fulfil their constitutional duties of rendering essential services to citizens, the National Treasury provides a subsidy in the form of a grant during the annual financial budget. However, the bulk of the finances are derived from the payments users (consumers) make for services such as electricity and water. For a municipality to be able to provide uninterrupted services, it is essential that it does not depend on Government



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subsidy, although the economic status of municipalities in urban areas and rural areas might differ. Municipalities calculate the ratio proportion of income from Government grants to their total income to measure the extent of dependence on income from National Government (City of Johannesburg 2008:20).

How much revenue is tied up in consumer debt?

One of the ways for municipalities to ensure that they maintain a healthy cash inflow and outflow is to ensure that consumers pay for the services they receive. A municipality usually provides services to consumers (users) in credit and then send a statement of account at the end of the month, hoping that consumers will fulfil their obligation of paying for services from which they have benefited. To measure how much revenue is tied up in consumers, municipalities calculate

Table 1: Summary of financial ratios used to assess the financial viability of municipalities in Gauteng

Measurement	Ratio	Formula
Liquidity	Quick ratio (Cash quick ratio)	$\frac{\text{Current assets} - \text{inventory}}{\text{Current liabilities}}$
Leverage	Debt to asset ratio	$\frac{\text{Total liabilities}}{\text{Total assets}}$
Financial position	Continuing service ratio (Ability to provide basic services)	$\frac{\text{Unrestricted net assets}}{\text{Expenses}}$
Financial performance	% change in total assets	$\frac{\% \text{ change in net assets}}{\text{Total assets}}$
Extent of dependence on income from government	Proportion of income from government	$\frac{\text{Government grants}}{\text{Tax revenue}}$
Revenue tied up in debtors	Consumer debt to total revenue	$\frac{\text{Consumer debtors}}{\text{Total revenue}}$

the ratio consumer debt to total income (City of Johannesburg 2008:21). Table 1 provides a summary of financial ratios used to assess the financial viability of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng.

The six ratios listed in Table 1 were used to analyse the financial statements of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng. The next section outlines the research methodology used to achieve the objective of the research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative research methodology. The population of the study consisted of financial data of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng namely Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg and City of Tshwane. The financial data was obtained by downloading audited electronic annual reports published on the websites of the three metropolitan municipalities. The financial statements used covered the financial years 2004 to 2009. The six identified ratios (liquidity, leverage, financial position, financial performance, extent of dependence on income from Government, and revenue tied up in debtors) were calculated by means of an Excel spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics were calculated by making use of the SPSS statistical package and included the mean, the median, the range, the standard deviation and skewness to gain a better understanding of the values presented. Firstly, the group average means of the three metropolitan municipalities were calculated and analysed to assess the financial viability of the group. Secondly, the mean averages of the three individual municipalities were calculated and compared with the group average means as a benchmark to determine how the individual municipalities were performing, as compared to the group.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The transition from the Institute of Municipal Finance Officers (IMFO) standards to Generally Accepted Municipal Accounting Practice (GAMAP) and Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP), which originated from Section 216 (1) (a) of the *Constitution of South Africa* (Act No. 108 of 1996) and section 91 (1) (b) of PFMA, Act No. 1 of 1999 (as amended), has resulted in changes in some financial policies and applications. Subsequently, this affected reporting in financial statements during the period under review (2004–2009), because GAMAP/GRAP was scheduled to be fully implemented in the financial year ending June 2009. This has resulted in inconsistency in the manner of reporting of the three metropolitan municipalities.



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Table 2: Results of the group quick (cash quick) ratio

Statistics	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Mean	0,8157	1,1129	1,3051	1,6579	1,3565	1,1684
Median	0,9071	1,0454	1,1513	1,1252	1,2219	1,2823
Range	0,38	1,15	1,64	2,06	1,23	0,51
Minimum	0,58	0,57	0,56	0,89	0,81	0,86
Maximum	0,96	1,72	2,20	2,96	2,04	1,36
Standard deviation	0,20392	0,57615	0,82844	1,13075	0,62620	0,27114
Skewness	-1,612	0,520	0,807	1,650	0,923	-1,557

Table 3: Results of the group debt asset ratio

Statistics	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Mean	0,4063	0,4380	0,4447	0,4304	0,4747	0,5507
Median	0,5301	0,4224	0,4355	0,4007	0,4131	0,4072
Range	0,44	0,29	0,25	0,22	0,20	0,48
Minimum	0,13	0,30	0,32	0,33	0,40	0,38
Maximum	0,56	0,59	0,57	0,56	0,61	0,86
Standard deviation	0,24407	0,14370	0,12514	0,11457	0,11548	0,26985
Skewness	-1,695	0,483	0,327	1,089	1,717	1,716

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To measure the liquidity of the municipalities, the quick (cash quick) ratio of the group was calculated. Table 2 depicts the group descriptive statistics results.

The mean for 2009 was the lowest at 0,8157, indicating that there were fewer current assets available as compared to current liabilities. The quick (cash quick) ratio for 2006 was 1,6579, indicating more current assets than current liabilities. The median appears to be a better representation for the three municipalities and indicates that the municipalities had fewer current assets than current liabilities in 2009. In fact, the median dropped from 1,2823 from 2004 to 0,9071 in 2009, which is a decline of 38%. The range also declined from 1,64 in 2007 to 0, and 38 in 2009, indicating that some municipalities did not have sufficient current assets to meet their obligations in 2009. This does not necessary mean that the municipalities would be unable to honour their debt obligations on time because current liabilities are due within a period of a year. Table 3 depicts the results of the group measurement of leverage.

The mean in 2009 was 0,4043, indicating that the municipalities funded 40,63% of their assets with borrowed funds. This is lower when compared to 2004, where 55,07% of assets were funded from borrowing funds. The median debt to asset ratio was the lowest in 2006 (0,4007), as well as in 2004 (0,4072) when it was close to 40%, compared to 2009, which was the highest at 53%. The mean indicates that the municipalities used less debt to finance assets in 2009 (40, 63%), while the median indicates the opposite (53,01%). Table 4 depicts the results of the ability of the group of municipalities to be able to continue providing basic services.

The mean (1,6114), the median (1,3437) and the range (1,96) in 2009 indicate an increase in unrestricted net assets, as compared to 2008 (mean 0,9209, median 0,8533 and range 0,30). This does not necessarily mean that the municipalities' ability to continue providing the same level of service to consumers has increased. It appears that the municipalities provided their best service in 2009 (mean 1,614 and median 1,3437). However, Chaney (2005:184) argues that the high ratio might indicate that either too many resources have been obtained from taxpayers or too few service have been provided. This could explain high service delivery protests in 2009. Municipalities might have received more resources from consumers and Government subsidy, but they underspent in their budgets and failed to render the necessary services citizens require. The results provided in Table 5 depict the group extent of dependence on a Government grant/subsidy.

The mean for the municipalities in 2009 was 0,2786 and for 2004 was 0,0863. This means that 27,86% of the total income of the municipalities was derived from Government subsidy/grant in 2009, as compared to 8,63% in



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Table 4: Results of the group continuing service ratio

Statistics	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Mean	1,6114	0,9209	0,9910	0,9790	0,8404	0,5479
Median	1,3437	0,8533	0,8845	0,8852	0,8773	0,6519
Range	1,96	0,30	0,39	0,36	0,42	0,53
Minimum	0,77	0,81	0,85	0,84	0,61	0,23
Maximum	2,73	1,10	1,24	1,21	1,03	0,76
Standard deviation	1,00688	0,16050	0,21478	0,19969	0,21158	0,27878
Skewness	1,112	1,559	1,683	1,647	-0,760	-1,445

Table 5: Results of the group proportion of income from Government grant/subsidy

Statistics	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Mean	0,2786	0,2651	0,2441	0,1169	0,1024	0,0863
Median	0,2150	0,1970	0,1940	0,1131	0,0973	0,0787
Range	0,23	0,22	0,17	0,05	0,02	0,02
Minimum	0,20	0,19	0,18	0,10	0,09	0,08
Maximum	0,43	0,41	0,36	0,14	0,12	0,10
Standard deviation	0,12738	0,12455	0,09735	0,02332	0,01253	0,01335
Skewness	1,687	1,725	1,703	0,713	1,532	1,732

2004. The median in 2009 (0,2150) also indicated an increase, as compared to 2004 (0,0787). Table 6 indicates the group amount of cash tied up in consumer debtors.

The mean (0,1235) and the median (0,1009) in 2009 were the lowest, as compared to 2008 where the mean was (0,1382) and the median was (0,1266). This indicates that less cash was trapped in consumer debtors, as compared to the total revenue of the municipalities in 2009. Table 7 depicts the group results of the financial performance by measuring the percentage change in total assets.

The mean was the highest in 2005 (0,1357), as compared to 2009 (0,0481). This means that there was less change in net assets to total net assets in 2009, as compared to 2005. The median supports the same notion as it was at its highest in 2005 (0,1503), as compared to 2009 (0,0485). Table 8 compares the results of individual municipalities and the group municipality mean average for the financial year-end June 2009.

With respect to the quick ratio, both Tshwane (0,9580) and Ekurhuleni (0,9071) Municipalities performed above the group average (0,8157). This indicates that Tshwane Municipality had more current assets than current liabilities, followed by Ekurhuleni Municipality, with Johannesburg Municipality having the least current assets, as compared to current liabilities. In other words, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni Municipalities were more liquid (ability to honour its short-term obligations) than Johannesburg Municipality in 2009.

Johannesburg (0,5636) and Tshwane (0,5301) Municipalities recorded debt ratios above group municipality average (0,4063), while Ekurhuleni Municipality (0,1251) recorded a debt ratio below group average. This indicates that Johannesburg Municipality funded 56,36% of their assets with borrowed funds, followed by Tshwane Municipality (53,01%), while Ekurhuleni Municipality measured the lowest at 12,51%, as compared to the group average of 40, and 63%

Regarding continuing service ratio, Ekurhuleni Municipality (2,7251) exceeded the group average score of (1,6114), as compared to Johannesburg (1,34370 and Tshwane (0,7654) Municipalities. This might be interpreted as indicating that Ekurhuleni Municipality provided the best service in 2009, followed by Johannesburg Municipality, with Tshwane Municipality providing the worst service. However, one needs to consider Chaney's argument (2005:184) that the high ratio might indicate that either too many resources have been obtained from tax payers or too few services have been provided. Furthermore, Ekurhuleni Municipalities might have under spent in their budgets and failed to render the necessary services citizens require.

Johannesburg Municipality recorded the highest mean of 0,4252 which is above the group average of (0,2786), as compared to Ekurhuleni and Tshwane Municipalities which recorded means below the group average (0,2150

Table 6: Results of the group consumer debt to total revenue ratio

Statistics	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Mean	0,1235	0,1382	0,1660	0,1602	0,1522	0,1370
Median	0,1009	0,1266	0,1636	0,1418	0,1251	0,1189
Range	0,19	0,19	0,22	0,15	0,18	0,14
Minimum	0,04	0,05	0,06	0,10	0,07	0,07
Maximum	0,23	0,24	0,28	0,24	0,26	0,22
Standard deviation	0,09638	0,09305	0,11199	0,7436	0,9413	0,07283
Skewness	0,997	0,551	0,098	1,046	1,190	1,051

Table 7: Results of the group percentage change in total assets

Statistics	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Mean	0,0481	0,0283	0,0833	0,0530	0,1357	0,1098
Median	0,0485	0,0212	0,0687	0,0545	0,1503	0,0791
Range	0,01	0,04	0,16	0,02	0,12	0,20
Minimum	0,04	0,01	0,01	0,04	0,07	0,02
Maximum	0,06	0,05	0,17	0,06	0,19	0,23
Standard deviation	0,00745	0,01911	0,08085	0,01090	0,06134	0,10547
Skewness	-0,240	1,448	0,787	-0,632	-1,010	1,200

Table 8: Results of individual and group municipalities mean average for 2009

Ratios (2009)	Ekurhuleni	Johannesburg	Tshwane	Group Municipalities
Quick ratio	0,9071	0,5821	0,9580	0,8157
Debt ratio	0,1251	0,5636	0,5301	0,4063
Continuing service ratio	2,7251	1,3437	0,7654	1,6114
Government grant/subsidy	0,2150	0,4252	0,1955	0,2786
Debt to total revenue	0,1009	0,0404	0,2292	0,1235
% Change in total assets	0,0485	0,0554	0,0405	0,0481

and 0,1955 respectively). This means that 42,52% of the total revenue of the Johannesburg Municipality was from Government subsidies/grants, as compared to 21,50% for Ekurhuleni Municipality and 19,55% for Tshwane Municipality.

With regard to debt to total revenue, the mean for Johannesburg Municipality (0,0404) was below the group average (0,1235), followed by Ekurhuleni Municipality (0,1009), and lastly Tshwane Municipality (0,2292). This means that less cash was trapped in consumer debtors in Johannesburg Municipality, as compared to Ekurhuleni and Tshwane Municipalities.

Regarding percentage change in total assets, Tshwane Municipality indicated a mean of 0,0405 which is below the group average of 0,0481, indicating less change in total net assets, as compared to Ekurhuleni (0,0485) and Johannesburg (0,0554) Municipalities.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the group ratio analysis of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng revealed the following trends: The quick (cash quick) ratio for the municipalities needs to be monitored, as it has indicated a decline of 38% in 2009 compared to 2004. This means that the liquidity of the group municipalities in 2009 has declined. The quick (cash quick) ratio indicates the extent to which the claim of short-term creditors is covered by assets that can be translated into cash. Although municipalities use different cash management policies, there



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might be a need to adjust certain policies in order to ensure sustainability in terms of service delivery. If the municipalities do not have sufficient current assets to meet their obligations with regard to current liabilities, this might result in disruption of certain services. For example, if the municipalities are not able to pay for electricity received on credit from Eskom, this could cause a disruption in the provision of electricity services.

The state of the group debt for municipalities is of concern, as it indicates that municipalities have funded 40,637% of their assets with borrowed funds. Although most municipalities like the City of Johannesburg has a benchmark of 50% as far as debt is concerned, one must bear in mind that the higher the debt, the more the budget must be devoted to interest and debt principal payment. Therefore, less money will be available from the budget to be utilised in service provision. Municipalities are encouraged to stay within the set benchmarking perimeters to ensure a healthy state of solvency. If debt funding is used to fund capital assets (excluding investment in infrastructure) investment appraisal methods should be applied appropriately and only investments in capital assets that will add value and yield good return in cash inflow should be undertaken.

The group continuing service ratio indicated an increase in unrestricted net assets in 2009. This does not necessarily imply that the municipality's ability to continue providing the same level of services to consumers has increased. Individual municipalities need to conduct further analysis to ensure that this is not the result of underspending and providing consumers with fewer services, as argued by Chaney (2009:184). Municipalities must be in a position to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities, as good service delivery is key to customer satisfaction.

A dependence on income from Government grants has increased from the financial years 2004 to 2009. The increase might be the result of National Treasury increasing their funding to municipalities. However, in order for municipalities to excel in service delivery, it is desirable to generate more income from payment of services and from investment to reduce the dependency on Government subsidy.

The amount of revenue tied up in consumer debt as measured to total revenue indicated a decline in 2009. This should be sustained because the more consumers pay for the services they receive, the more available resources needed become to sustain the level of service delivery.

There was a decrease in percentage change in net assets to total net assets in 2009. This ratio trend should be monitored over a period of time, for example five years. According to Chaney (2005:184), an extremely low or even negative ratio is not necessarily bad if the municipality has accumulated significant net assets, and an extremely high ratio is not necessarily good for the same



reason. The ratio should be sustained in order to improve the municipality's financial viability.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to report on research to assess the financial viability of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng. Six ratios, namely current ratio, debt to asset ratio, continuing service ratio, proportion of income from Government grants, consumer debt to total revenue, as well as percentage change in total assets were calculated and analysed to obtain the group mean averages for the financial period 2004 to 2009. The results of the group analysis indicated some areas of concern that need improvement. The means of the three individual municipalities for the financial year 2009 were also calculated and compared with the group average means, which were used as a benchmark to establish whether the three individual municipalities are performing below or above the group averages. The results of the comparison indicated that Tshwane and Ekurhuleni Municipalities have performed above the group benchmark in cash quick ratio, which means that their solvency is healthier when compared to the group. Johannesburg and Tshwane scored above the group benchmark in debt ratio, which indicates that the two municipalities funded most of their assets with borrowed funds. This is not good news as the two municipalities will have to spend more resources from their budgets in paying the debt principal and interest, thus depriving the citizens of resources that were intended for providing quality services.

Ekurhuleni Municipality exceeded the group average score in continuing service ratio, suggesting that they provided the best service in 2009, as compared to the other two municipalities. Johannesburg Municipality recorded the highest mean above the group average in Government subsidy, indicating that the major portion of their revenue for 2009 was obtained from Government subsidy. All three municipalities recorded a mean below the group average in cash trapped in consumed debtors, indicating that all three municipalities need to improve the percentage of debt recovered from consumers. Johannesburg recorded a mean above the group average in percentage change in total assets that need to be attended to as it is above the group benchmark.

In general, the results indicate that knowledge of the financial viability of individual municipalities will enhance the formulation of a turnaround strategy for individual municipalities and thus improve service delivery. However, it is important to note that ratio and statistical analyses have limitations when applied to highly complex municipalities because they are subject to different interpretation. Therefore, when comparing the financial viability



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of municipalities, it is important to consider certain factors, such as the economic environment that the municipality is operating in, the population and unemployment level to avoid comparing incomparable aspects. This article revealed how ratio and statistical analysis can be used to assess a municipality's financial viability. An understanding of a municipality's financial viability can help enable management to take appropriate actions where necessary to ensure that quality services are delivered to the community.

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Disaster preparedness by local government

A case study of Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements in the eThekweni municipality

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ABSTRACT

Disaster preparedness is one of the phases within the disaster management cycle which covers implementation or operation, early warning systems and capacity building so that the population can react appropriately when an early warning is issued. Disasters have inflicted a heavy cost on human, material and physical resources. A comprehensive review of the literature has revealed that the development of disaster management strategies, such as preparedness, must be undertaken before the event strikes.

The purpose of the article is to contribute to the development of a robust disaster management policy and the centre within the eThekweni municipality. Furthermore, this article intends to enable the disaster management department within the municipality to function effectively and efficiently by applying new strategies for disaster preparedness and to add value to the body of knowledge in South Africa as there are a limited number of researchers who have contributed to the study of disaster management.

The research was undertaken at the Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements located in Clare Estate, under Ward 25, in Durban. Questionnaires were self-administered to a population size of 220 respondents from which a sample size of 140 respondents completed the



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questionnaires, thereby generating a response rate of 63.6%. Interviews were also conducted with municipality officials involved in disaster management. There are two categories of data collected that include biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, education, occupation, income, number of children, race and tenure) and disaster preparedness. Data was analysed in the form of frequency distribution and cross-tabulation tables.

INTRODUCTION

Developing countries, such as South Africa, have often failed to implement disaster management strategies such as preparedness. Political neglect, social marginalisation and limited access to resources compel helpless people to live and work in hazard-prone areas. Drawing on cases from the developing world, scholars such as O'Keefe, Westgate & Wisner (1976:45), Hewitt (1983:45) and Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon & Davis (2004:65) argue that people's behaviour in the face of natural hazards is constrained by social, economic and political forces rather than individual risk perception. Government is accountable to citizens for quality service delivery such as housing provision. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (chapter 7:152), requires local government as a sphere of government to provide democratic and accountable government to local communities, ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner, promote social and economic development, promote a safe and healthy environment; and encourage communities and community organisations in matters of local government (Armstrong 2005:2). Government accountability to all citizens translates to improving the lives of the poor and the vulnerable. Local governments require the assistance of structures involving all disaster practitioners and specialists dedicated to monitoring and improving disaster preparedness approaches.

The Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements are prone to emergencies and disasters such as floods, fires and storm surges which negatively impact on people living in these vulnerable areas. International experiences of disasters depict that different countries are struck by floods, earthquakes and volcanoes. International declarations and proposals by the United Nations Development Programme and other organisations dealing with disaster risk reduction plays a tremendous role in disaster preparedness. Furthermore, the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the International Red Cross and the role played by the United States of America



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(USA) in disaster preparedness, assist countries struck by catastrophies with preparedness strategies.

If disaster frequency is to be reduced, then safety must also be sought as a major goal in comprehensive strategic planning to reduce disasters. Disaster identification and reduction at an international level and national level must be supplemented by local activities. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (2006:1) states that, disaster preparedness often fails because it is rarely evidence based. It suggested that more scientific studies are needed to improve the effectiveness of disaster preparedness and prevention. Some disasters can be avoided and minimized through enhancing the national disaster management capacities to address the various aspects of prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, rehabilitation and recovery. Holloway (2003:34) argues that disaster risk reduction is the systematic development and application of policies, strategies and practices to minimise vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout society to avoid (prevent) or limit (mitigate and be prepared for) the adverse impact of hazards, within the broad context of sustainable development. Haddow & Bullock (2006:167) emphasise that there are three sets of actions that can reduce losses. These actions are hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness and recovery preparedness practices.

This article seeks to investigate disaster preparedness within eThekweni Municipality. The fragmented management of disaster actions such as preparedness has contributed to unnecessary morbidity, mortality, and a waste of resources. However, some disasters can be avoided and minimised by enhancing the national disaster management capacities to address the various aspects of preparedness. Informal settlement growth in metropolitan areas of South Africa has increased in the past decade as a result of the abolishing of legislation implemented by the apartheid government that prevented urbanisation (Ferreira, de Meyer, Loots & Keyise 2002:23). The article will explore whether disaster preparedness strategies are adequately implemented in informal settlements with the aim to avoid, prevent and mitigate the impacts of disasters.

Previously, preparedness strategies were ignored because disaster management was responding to and recovering from the disaster impact as disasters were governed by reacting Civil Protection Act 67 of 1977 and the *Fundraising Act 107* of 1978. Thus, with the enactment of the *Disaster Management Act 57* of 2002, disaster preparedness ensures that appropriate systems, procedures and resources are in place to provide effective assistance to disaster victims, thus facilitating relief measures and rehabilitation services. The focus of disaster management is to reduce the risk posed by actual and potential hazards. Hazards can be broadly grouped into three areas such as natural, technological and complex emergencies (Alexander 2002b).



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Global approach to disaster management

Disaster management strategies are traced back to antiquity when early hieroglyphics depict cavemen trying to deal with disasters. The Holy Bible speaks of the many disasters that hindered civilisations. Haddow and Bullock (2006:1) mention the account of Moses parting the Red Sea which can be interpreted as the first attempt at flood control. Genesis 6 verse 14 (Zodhiates, Baker and Kemp 1996:10) speaks about Noah and the Ark, when he built an ark from cypress wood, coated it with pitch inside and out, as a mitigation strategy for the forthcoming predicted floodwaters. Moreover, the holy Bible speaks of many disasters that hindered civilisations.

Early disaster management strategies include inter alia, the promulgation of the United States of America (USA) Congressional Act of 1803 which was passed to provide financial assistance to a New Hampshire town that had been devastated by fires (Haddow *et al.* 2006:2). Another notable example is that of the cold war era where the nuclear war was seen as a potential disaster threat. Disaster preparedness attempt to forecast extreme events, attempt to mitigate the impact of disasters, respond to disasters and cope with consequences of disasters. Strategies for disaster preparedness include awareness of event that is most likely to happen at a particular time and at a specific geographical location, risk and vulnerability assessment, response mechanisms, coordination, information management, and the implementation of early-warning systems International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 2000:34).

Allen (2006), *cited in* Yohe, Lasco, Arnell, Cohen, Hope, Janetos & Perez (2007:820) indicates that the bottom-up approach to disaster risk reduction is based on enhancing the capacity of local communities to adapt to and prepare for disasters. Actions in this approach include dissemination of technical knowledge and training, awareness raising, accessing local knowledge and resources, and mobilizing local communities. Blanco (2006), *cited in* Yohe *et al.* (2007:820), attests that climate change can be incorporated in this approach through awareness and the transmission of technical knowledge to local communities. Bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and local application is a key challenge.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (2000:6) indicate that vulnerability analysis is useful because information is needed in the pre-disaster phase including collecting and analysing information necessary for preparedness planning. The International Federal of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2000:6) indicate that disaster program planners increasingly use vulnerability information to refine their preparedness plans. Furthermore, vulnerability analysis ideally provides indications of where the effects of



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disasters are likely to be the most pronounced (for example, by region and population). It is important for development planners to make some effort to quantify the tangible aspects of vulnerability and loss to assist preparedness planning. Local experience is a good guide to what is vulnerable in a society, and the list of potentially vulnerable elements should be supplemented by a study of written reports and the knowledge of those who lived through previous disasters (Coburn, Pomonis, Sakai & Spence 1991:32). This indicates that tacit (indigenous) knowledge received on previous disasters in a particular area needs to be recorded and converted to explicit knowledge for future use.

In this regard, Coburn *et al.* (1991:33) point out that assessment includes the following two general categories of information:

- Static infrastructure information that provides the basis for determining the extent of development, types of physical advantages and disadvantages faced by communities residing in an area, and a “map” of available structures (such as roads and hospitals) that might be useful in times of emergencies; and
- Relatively dynamic socioeconomic data indicating causes and levels of vulnerability, demographic shifts and types of economic activity.

International agreements, such as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction 1990-1999 (IDNDR), Yokohama Strategy (1994), International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), Hygo Framework for Action (2005-2015), and Disaster Reduction and Recovery Programme (DRRP), emphasise the importance of disaster preparedness. The United Nations (UN) promotes preparedness, prevention and mitigation activities through its regular development projects. The UN is encouraging the building of early warning systems and conducting monitoring and forecasting routines which are working to increase local capacity to adequately boost local and regional preparedness (Haddow *et al.* 2006:222).

In developed countries, the social implications of disasters are not severe because disaster management and disaster risk-reduction strategies are in place. For instance, the Tulsa Safe Room programme provided mitigation and preparedness in the United State of America (USA). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and private organisations funded the building of safe rooms to provide shelters during tornadoes as a preparedness and mitigation strategy. Another case is the implementation of disaster risk reduction which is risk assessment. In the case of the relocation of the Castaic Union school district in the USA, which was previously located at the earthquake belts zone and also built below the dam and the reservoir, it was later relocated to the less vulnerable area (Haddow *et al.* 2006:223). In developed countries, there are also good public-private partnerships which help for disaster preparedness and mitigation programmes.



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Disaster preparedness and informal settlements

Informal settlements are deemed by the United Nations as areas where groups of housing have been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim. These areas are characterised by rapid, unstructured and unplanned developments. They are common features of developing countries and are typically the product of an urgent need for shelter by urban poor (Huchzermer, 2001; Mason & Baltsavias 1997 & United Nations 2004). According to information from the South African 1996 census, 11, 6% of households lived in freestanding informal settlements, and a further 4.5% lived in shacks in the backyards of formal houses in townships. Over 16% of households were living in urban informal housing, and a further 18% lived in traditionally constructed houses which would be located mostly in rural areas. Napier & Rubin (2002:4) argue that these figures are only broadly indicative of exposure to risk, because the location of the settlements and the quality of the construction materials are not all evident. Informal settlement growth in metropolitan areas of South Africa has increased in the past decade as a result of the abolishing of legislation implemented by the apartheid government that prevented urbanisation (Ferreira *et al.* 2002:23). As a result of the sudden post-apartheid increase in urbanisation, metropolitan areas in South Africa were very dynamic, resulting in the rapid change of the spatial patterns and land use associated with such areas.

The 11.6% households living in freestanding informal housing are most often located on the far distant peripheries of cities (SA Census, 1996). Vulnerability to disaster is increased as a result of certain qualities of the location, such as settlements on steep slopes (Inanda, Durban), within flood plains (Alexandra, Johannesburg), close to mine dumps (East Rand, near Johannesburg), close to heavy industrial areas (Wentworth, Durban), or even on landfill sites (Foreman and Kennedy Road, Durban). Other hazards arise from the nature of the settlement itself, such as risks of rapidly spreading fire, or health risks from rising dampness, poor indoor air quality and collapsing structures.

According to the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) (2006/2007:12-13), natural disasters such as devastating floods, violent hailstorms, heavy snowfalls and gale-force winds are regular occurrences in South Africa. The South African Weather Service maintains a record of significant weather events of the past and captures information such as the actual date of occurrence, the extent of the damage and areas affected, as well as the frequency of a particular type of disaster occurring in a specific region. Such records are essential to government departments dealing with the implementation of disaster management strategies (such as prevention and preparedness) in vulnerable areas.



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There are four parts to a preparedness programme which encapsulates planning, training and education, resource management and exercising, which refers to the physical training of the personnel such as fire marshals. Bullock & Perry (2000:34), cited in Haddow & Bullock (2007:168), found that another way to reduce a disaster's physical impact is to adopt emergency preparedness practices, which can be defined as pre-impact actions that provide the human and material resources needed to support active responses at the time of the hazard's impact. According to Wu & Lindell (2003:2), community protection works include dams, levees, and drainage systems that protect an entire area from the hazard's impact. Community protection works are most commonly used to divert floodwater past communities that are located in floodplains. They also can be used to provide protection from other types of water flows such as tsunami and hurricane storm surges (Haddow & Bullock 2007:196). eThekweni municipality is dominated by a very high density of drainage system whereas its geographical location is in a valley flow and large numbers of houses are built on the floodplains without any community protection works, especially in poor informal settlements. Haddow & Bullock (2007:196) argue that community protection works can protect against two types of geophysical hazards: landslides and volcanic lava flows, and some industrial hazards. They further list four types of flood control works which are stream channelisation, dams, levees and floodwalls (Haddow & Bullock 2007:196-197).

Disaster preparedness within the context of disaster management

According to Col (2007:115), preparedness is the state of readiness to respond to an emergency based on planning, training, and exercise. The concept of disaster preparedness encompasses measures aimed at enhancing life safety when a disaster occurs, such as protective actions during an earthquake, hazardous materials' spill, or a terrorist attack. It also includes actions designed to enhance the ability to undertake emergency actions to protect property and contain disaster damage and disruption, as well as the ability to engage in post-disaster restoration and early recovery activities (Tierney & Sutton 2006:3). With regard to management response, the Manitoba Health Department (2002:29) mentions the following two aspects of preparedness:

- emergency response plan which deals with meeting the special demands created by an impact on the community; and
- business continuity planning to ensure services are maintained when the organisation is negatively affected by disasters, even if the effects are limited to internal disruptions.



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Emergency response planning deals with how the municipality will help its clients cope with the extraordinary demands that a disaster creates. In contrast, business continuity planning deals with how the municipality copes with the impact of the disaster with its own systems and resources (Manitoba Health Department 2002:30).

Another component of response preparedness is to bring the skills, knowledge, functions and systems together and apply them against event scenarios (Manitoba Health Department 2002:31). This means that all government departments and different stakeholders should meet and integrate their knowledge and expertise in preparation for any catastrophe. Furthermore, private and public organisations should prepare their internal disaster management pro-active plans with the aim of avoiding or mitigating any risk or disaster. The recent earthquake that devastated Haiti resulted in an estimated 230 000 deaths with many more people left injured and displaced. The tragic situation in Haiti has raised key issues on the preparedness of South Africa's disaster management departments in dealing with these catastrophes, particularly at the municipality level.

In the South African context, the term 'disaster risk management' refers to the integrated, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary administrative, organisational, and operational planning processes as well as capacities aimed at lessening the impact of natural hazards and related environmental, technological and biological disasters. According to the *South African Disaster Management Act 2002* (57 of 2002), disaster management means a continuous and integrated multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary process of planning and implementation of measures aimed at preventing or reducing the risk of disasters, mitigating the severity or consequences of disasters, emergency preparedness, a rapid and effective response to disasters and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation. However, the terms disaster risk management and disaster management are used interchangeably in this article (NDMC 2006/2007:12).

The *Disaster Management Act 2002* (Act 57 of 2002) gives priority to the application of the principle of cooperative governance for the purpose of disaster risk management and emphasizes the involvement of all stakeholders in strengthening the capabilities of national, provincial and municipal organs of state to reduce the likelihood and severity of disasters. The Department of Agriculture has rolled out an awareness programme to raise awareness and educate farming communities about disaster risk-reduction principles. Furthermore, the department issues early warning information (National Airways Corporation monthly advisories) and daily extreme weather warnings, including precautionary measures for different hazards which are loaded on the National Development Agency (NDA) and Agricultural Geo-referenced Information System (AGIS) (NDMC, 2006/2007:82). The National Department



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of Health has a Disaster Management Sub-Committee which focuses on pre-hospital, forensic pathology and in-hospital disaster preparedness sign-offs, policies and procedures as well as training with an emphasis on institutional capacity and institutional disaster management or preparedness planning (NDMC 2006/2007:83). Furthermore, training workshops and capacity building programmes are conducted by government officials, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academic institutions which deal with disaster contingency planning and its linkages between disaster and development.

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) is the highest administrative and executive authority for disaster management in South Africa. The objective of the NDMC is to promote an integrated and coordinated system of disaster management, with special emphasis on prevention and mitigation by national, provincial and municipal organs of state, statutory functionaries and other role-players involved in disaster management and communities (NDMC, 2006/2007:12). The Emergency Operations Committee (EOC) was established in 2004 to co-ordinate international response to disasters as and when required. Furthermore, the use of technology is used as an early warning system and its translation into understandable language to the communities at risk. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) plays a critical role in the development of the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), which also enhanced Disaster Management Information Systems (DMIS). The system can be seen as an all encompassing Information Technology (IT) solution that relates to various aspects of hazard analysis, vulnerability assessment, risk reduction, contingency planning, incident reporting systems as well as early warning systems (NDMC 2006/2007:26-27).

Disaster management and public management: service delivery

The *Constitution of South Africa of 1996* places a legal obligation on the government of South Africa to ensure the health of people, environmental protection and safety of its citizens. Section 24 of the Constitution (1996) refers to the protection of the environment which if not done can and will cause disasters.

Moreover, section 41 (1) (b) of the Constitution (1996) states that all spheres of government are required to “*secure the well being of the people of South Africa*”. It further provides, in section 152(e), that “*the objects of local government are to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government*”. Municipalities have an obligation to capacitate civil society through training and skills related to different hazards such as first aid, fire-fighting and communication.



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The changes in South Africa's disaster management policy and legislation unfolded during a period of massive legislative reform in post-apartheid South Africa. Disaster management legislative reforms in South Africa took 11 years, from June 1994 to April 2005. There were a number of distinct phases in this development, namely, the Green Paper on Disaster Management (February 1998); White Paper on Disaster Management (January 1999); Disaster Management Bill (58-2001 in September 2001); Disaster Management Bill (B21-2002 in May 2002); Disaster Management Act (No. 57 of 2002 promulgated in January 2003) and the National Disaster Management Framework (April 2005).

The major accomplishment of the legislative reform process in South Africa was the transformation of the policy of disaster-risk management (NDMC, 2006/2007:25). Influenced by New Public Management (NPM), the South African government embarked on legislative transformation with the promulgation of the *Disaster Management Act* 57 of 2002. NPM has selected applications which include decentralising disaster management from national government down to local government. Decentralising management, disaggregating and downsizing of public services are strands of NPM derived from "managerialisms" (Mellon 1993, Hood 1991 and Ferlie *et al.* 1969:34). The public sector in general and public officials were also expected and encouraged to be results-oriented. Governmental managers have to increasingly evaluate and make necessary adjustments to all developmental projects so that they are able to involve risks, vulnerabilities and capacities (Dwivedi 1994:4). Government managers will have to consider all other aspects of disaster management which included relief operations, rehabilitation, reconstruction, mitigation, development and preparedness planning, should their developmental projects be affected by any disaster. They further have to participate in joint consultation and co-operation with other departmental heads, NGOs and other stakeholders to ensure that every disaster management issue was addressed. The argument made by Thornhill (n.d.), in his discussion on the prerequisites for improved service delivery, is that officials in managerial positions should be able to operate within a sound administrative system, supported by equally sound managerial practices. Furthermore, managers should be capacitated to perform their managerial functions efficiently, for instance, they should be enabled to take decisions, to exercise discipline and to demand accountability from all their staff.

The *Disaster Management Act* of 2002 (Act 57 of 2002) provides disaster management officials with a new focus on disaster management. The Act presents new challenges in not only negotiating and writing up disaster management plans, but also in developing disaster management plans for general public scrutiny. Public scrutiny and acceptance of disaster management plans, prior to implementation, has become a legislative requirement (*Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000). In section 25 of the *Municipal Systems Act* 32 of



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2000, it is indicated that each municipality should adopt a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of a municipality. The plan referred to is the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Chapter 26(a) of the Municipal Systems Act stipulates that an IDP must reflect the municipal council's vision for long-term development of the municipality with special emphasis on the municipality's most critical development and internal transformational needs. The same Act, in section 26(g), dictates that 'applicable disaster management plans' are a core component of the IDP of a municipality. The problem with the *Disaster Management Act* of 2002 is that it does not provide detailed guidance for the preparation of disaster management plans, which can be included in an IDP. The lack of guidance, for the preparation of disaster management plans, leaves municipal disaster management departments in a quandary. Some of the information in a disaster management plan concerns operational procedures, which are not for general stakeholder consumption (Kent 1992:5).

The challenge exists in deciding which of the disaster management components should be included in the IDP. The provision of section 26(g) of the *Municipal Systems Act* 32 of 2000 is clear: applicable disaster management plans are required in an IDP document as it is legislated as a core component of an integrated development plan.

Disaster preparedness by the eThekweni Municipality

The eThekweni Municipality is a Category A municipality enshrined in section 155 (1) of the 1996 Constitution of South Africa which has exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its area. Therefore, the eThekweni Municipality is the local government body responsible for governing and managing Durban (city).

Section 23 of the Local Government: *Municipal Systems Act*, 2000 (Act No 32 of 2000) prescribes that a municipality must undertake developmentally-oriented planning to ensure that it strives to achieve the objectives of local government set out in section 152 of the Constitution (2006). The eThekweni Municipality has an eight-point plan of sustaining the natural and built environment, economic development, job creation, quality living environments, safety, healthy and secure environment, empowering citizens, celebrating our cultural diversity, good governance and financial viability and sustainability (eThekweni Municipality IDP, 2008/2009:40).

Disaster management is encapsulated under plan four (Safety, Healthy and Secure Environment) and its main goal is to promote and create a safe, healthy and secure environment. Moreover, disaster management and fire departments are under the Safety and Security cluster managed by the deputy city manager reporting to the city manager.



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The eThekweni Municipality has developed 15 programmes to address the causes and effects of the threats to a safe environment for its citizens. Programme 3 (safe from fire and emergencies) has two strategies covering two broad areas: community fire safety education including fire prevention, and management and extending of emergency services (eThekweni Municipality IDP review 2008/2009:42).

According to the eThekweni Municipality's IDP review (2008/2009:48), uncontrolled fires have a serious impact to the lives of all communities. Citizens, businesses and public infrastructure are all affected by incidents of fire. Loss of life and the destruction of property and possessions is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify. People living in densely populated informal settlements, without personal insurance, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of uncontrolled fires. Between 2008 and 2009, 12 natural disasters such as thunderstorms and 11 fires (man-made disasters), damaged informal settlements including Foreman and Kennedy Road (n.d.). Through effective fire and emergency services, the department aims to ensure that all communities have a level of confidence that the department recognises their duty of care, and are able to provide an acceptable level of safety (eThekweni Municipality IDP review 2008/2009:49).

The main plan of the fire department is to prevent fires by promoting community education and awareness, promoting fire safety in buildings, developing appropriate regulations and ongoing research. The plan of the fire department includes community training and training and equipping of municipal staff to respond quickly and effectively. The department works collaboratively with other agencies whose work helps to prevent fires and improve response times, for example, rapid road access, road naming, house numbering, providing fire-fighting water hydrants, street lighting, and telecommunications (eThekweni Municipality's IDP review, 2008/2009:48).

In addition, Section 43 of the *Municipal Systems Act*, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) prescribed key performance indicators which are included on the municipality's performance scorecards. Based on the legislation on Performance Management from the Department of Provincial and Local Government (*Municipal Systems Act*, 2000), the municipality's scorecard has been re-defined. The project matrix under the rubric of plan four (Safe, Healthy and Secure Environment) within the strategic focus area of "promoting the safety of citizens" programme (safe from fire and emergencies) reveals the following projects to be implemented between 2010 and beyond the financial year (eThekweni Municipality's IDP review 2008/2009:48-49):

- Extend fire and rescue service to under serviced areas;
- Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) for community-based emergency response services;



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- Community safety havens Develop a disaster risk-reduction plan for the jurisdictional areas of community safety havens; and
- Maintain acceptable levels of service delivery.

Programme 4 focuses on establishing disaster management within the municipality concerned. The municipality is concerned about the human suffering and economic loss that results from disasters. The department's response is guided by a three-phase approach which includes (eThekweni Municipality's IDP review 2008/2009:49):

- Preventing disasters where possible;
- Responding to disasters when they do occur; and
- Assisting communities to recover from the effects of a disaster.

The eThekweni Municipality aims to prevent disasters by developing risk and vulnerability profiles. Once they have identified vulnerable areas, they will develop prevention plans and strategies. Furthermore, training communities to understand risks and how to respond to disasters serves as a preparedness and response function. Training municipal officials in effective disaster response is critical for ensuring that they are able to respond quickly and effectively to disasters (eThekweni Municipality's IDP review 2008/2009:49).

Meanwhile, the project matrix for plan four (safe, healthy and secure environment) under the strategic focus of promoting the safety of citizens, programme (safe from disasters) have the following projects that are to be implemented in 2010 and beyond the financial year:

- Develop a disaster-risk reduction plan for the jurisdictional areas;
- EPWP: community-based emergency response services;
- Community safety-havens. SDB emergency and disaster management response centre planning; and
- Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK) disaster-management and prevention programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study begins with the research design which dwells on the plan used to conduct the research.

Research approach

This study used the qualitative approach as a means of data analysis in order to study municipal officials who are working directly and indirectly on disaster



management as well as on communities who are susceptible to fast-onset disasters in their natural setting. This study used semi-structured interviews directed at municipal officials with their participative observation experience to disaster or emergency occurrence. This study also used the quantitative method as questionnaires were distributed to the Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements.

Probability and non-probability sampling is discussed in this study as the researcher used both survey and case study strategies. Structured questionnaire were used in this study.

Research participants

The total sample population within the Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements was 220. The total number of questionnaires collected was 140 and there were no errors. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten municipal disaster management officials. This study used ten questionnaires as a pilot and its main intention was to obtain some assessment of the questions validity and the likely reliability of the data that was considered. This study used nominal, ordinal and Likert or interval scale to distinguish the variables of the study. This study focussed on the stratified random sampling. The purposive sampling technique was used. This technique enabled the researcher to use judgement to select suitable cases to answer the research questions and to meet the researcher's objectives. A very satisfactory response rate of 63.6% was achieved.

Measuring instruments

Research procedure

In the case of this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews with the eThekweni Municipality officials and questions varied because of the task and roles that they were performing were not the same (for example, the case of the councillor and disaster management manager). The questionnaire was self-administered in the Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements. The data was collected over a four-week period between June and July 2009.

Statistical analysis

The questionnaire was analysed statistically using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). In this study, descriptive and inferential statistics were used as a measure for the chosen sample of respondents. The nature of the study required the researcher to use software such as Microsoft Excel and



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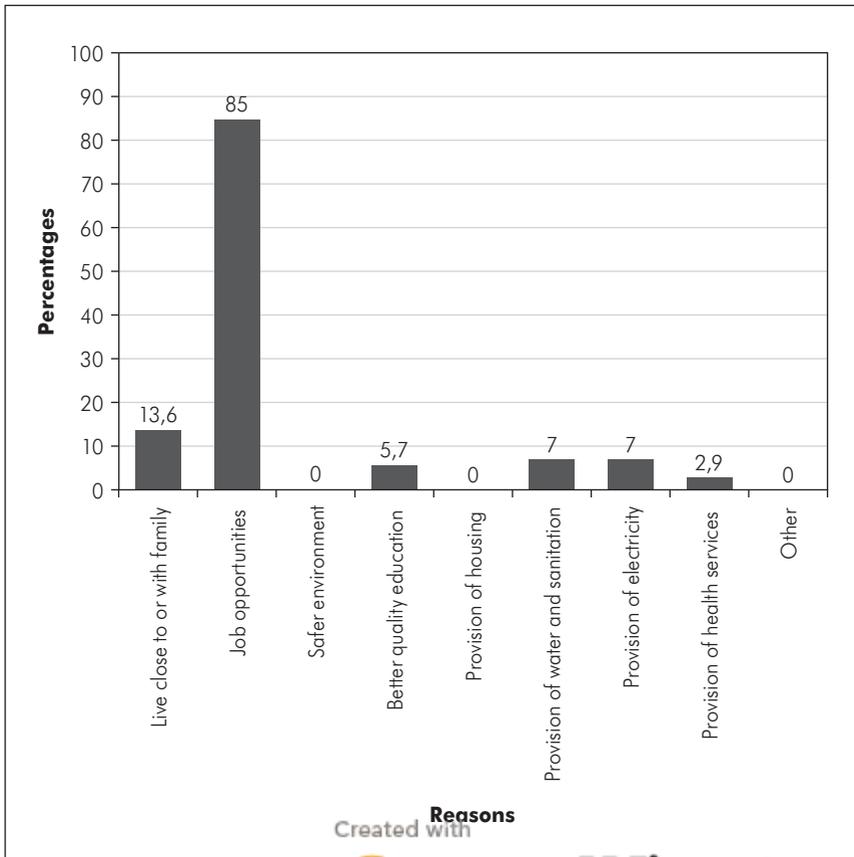
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SPSS for data capturing, analysis and interpretation. Chi-square tests were also conducted in this study.

RESULTS

This study shows the research findings on disaster preparedness by using frequency tables, graphs and cross-tabulations. The columns labelled either 'Frequency' or 'Count' indicate the number of respondents that selected the particular option for the question. Figure 1 shows that 13.6% of respondents chose to stay in Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements because relatives lives in the area, 85% because of job opportunities, 5.7% because of

Figure 1: Reasons to come to Durban



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Figure 2: Occupation types

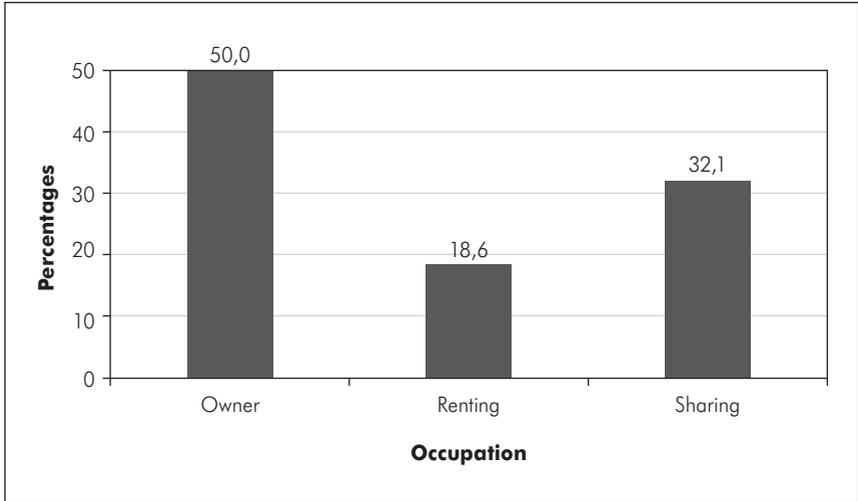
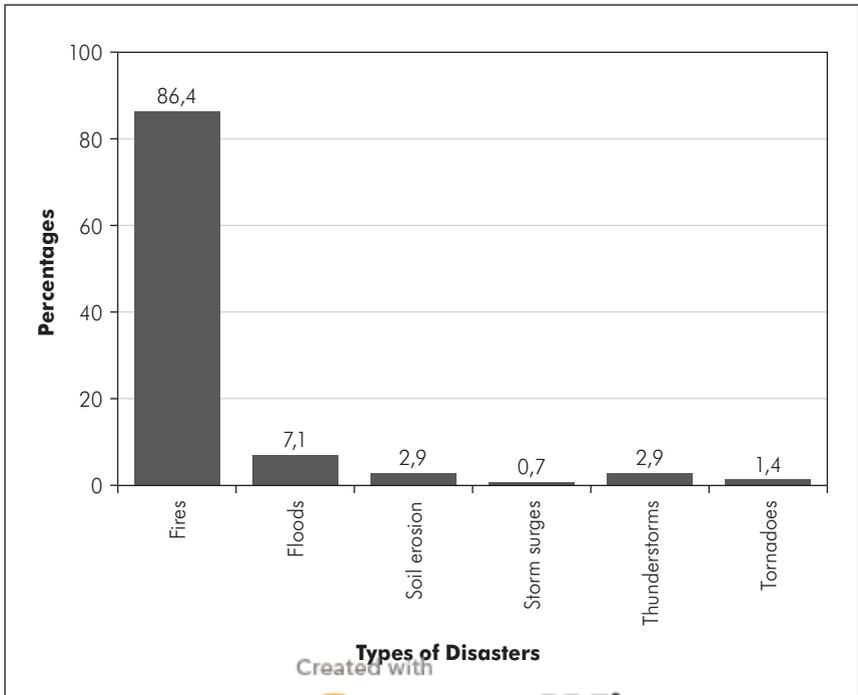


Figure 3: Kinds of disaster experienced in the past five years



better quality education, 7% due to provision of housing and water respectively and 2.9 % were impressed with the provision of health services.

Figure 2 indicates that 50% of the respondents are owners, 18.6% are renting and 32.1% are sharing accommodation.

Figure 3 indicates that 86.4% of disasters are caused by fires, 7.1% floods, 2.9% soil erosion, 0.7% by storm surges, 2.9% by thunderstorm and 1.4% by tornadoes.

Table 1 indicates that 72.9% of the respondents were not protected from fires. The research findings show that 97.1% of respondents stated that, in the Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements, there are no preventative measures to alleviate fires. The research findings found that 86.4% of respondents were very unsafe from the outbreak of fires in these informal settlements.

Table 2 indicates that there is no significant relationship between kind of disasters and preparedness measures in place at the 95% level ($p > 0.05$). There appears to be no preparedness and preventive measures in place to stop or prevent fires or other disasters within Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements.

Figure 4 indicates that 93.6% of the respondents felt they were very unsafe from floods, 2.1% unsafe, 1.4% very safe and 1.4% felt safe.

The cross-tabulation in Table 3 indicates that there is a significant relationship between timber as a building material used and protection from floods at the 95% level ($p < 0.05$). A total percentage of 57.1% of respondents feel very unsafe to build a house using timber.

Figure 4: Protection from floods

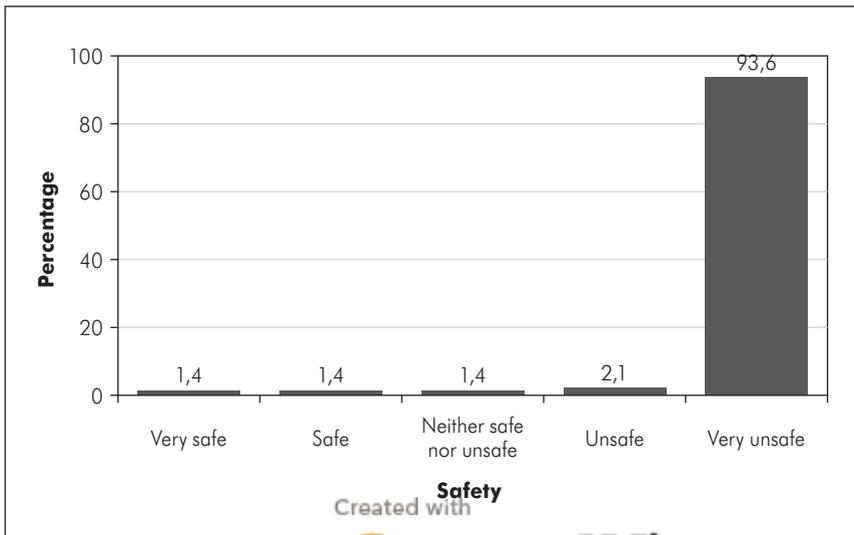


Table 1: Relationship between kinds of disasters (emergencies) experienced in the past few years and the adequate protection from floods

Kinds of disasters	Adequate protection from fires												Chi-square	df	P	
	Very safe		Safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Unsafe		Very unsafe		Total					
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%				
Fires	Yes	4	2,9%	5	3,6%	2	1,4%	8	5,7%	102	72,9%	121	86,4%	3,452	4	0,485
	No	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	19	13,6%	19	13,6%			
Floods	Yes	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	9	6,4%	10	7,1%	1,208	4	0,877
	No	4	2,9%	5	3,6%	2	1,4%	7	5,0%	112	80,0%	130	92,9%			
Soil erosion	Yes	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	4	2,9%	4	2,9%	0,647	4	0,958
	No	4	2,9%	5	3,6%	2	1,4%	8	5,7%	117	83,6%	136	97,1%			
Storm surges	Yes	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	0,158	4	0,997
	No	4	2,9%	5	3,6%	2	1,4%	8	5,7%	120	85,7%	139	99,3%			
Thunderstorms	Yes	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	4	2,9%	4	2,9%	0,647	4	0,958
	No	4	2,9%	5	3,6%	2	1,4%	8	5,7%	117	83,6%	136	97,1%			
Tornadoes	Yes	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	0,319	4	0,989
	No	4	2,9%	5	3,6%	2	1,4%	8	5,7%	119	85,0%	138	98,6%			



Table 2: Relationship between kinds of disasters and preventative measures in place

Kinds of disasters	Preventative measures in place								Chi-square	Df	P
	Yes		No		Total		N	%			
	N	%	N	%	N	%					
Fires	Yes	4	2,9%	117	83,6%	121	86,4%	1	0,647	0,421	
	No	0	0,0%	19	13,6%	19	13,6%				
Floods	Yes	0	0,0%	10	7,1%	10	7,1%	1	0,317	0,574	
	No	4	2,9%	126	90,0%	130	92,9%				
Soil erosion	Yes	0	0,0%	4	2,9%	4	2,9%	1	0,121	0,728	
	No	4	2,9%	132	94,3%	136	97,1%				
Storm surges	Yes	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	1	0,030	0,863	
	No	4	2,9%	135	96,4%	139	99,3%				
Thunderstorms	Yes	0	0,0%	4	2,9%	4	2,9%	1	0,121	0,728	
	No	4	2,9%	132	94,3%	136	97,1%				
Tornados	Yes	0	0,0%	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	1	0,060	0,807	
	No	4	2,9%	134	95,7%	138	98,6%				



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Table 3: Relationship between protection from floods and types of materials used for building the shack

Type of building materials	Adequate protection from floods												Chi-square	Df	P	
	Very safe		Safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Unsafe		Very unsafe		Total					
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%				
Cardboard	Yes	1	0,7%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	52	37,1%	53	37,9%	4,578	4	0,333
	No	1	0,7%	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	3	2,1%	79	56,4%	87	62,1%			
Timber	Yes	1	0,7%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	80	57,1%	81	57,9%	10,215	4	0,037*
	No	1	0,7%	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	3	2,1%	51	36,4%	59	42,1%			
Zink	Yes	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	85	60,7%	89	63,6%	1,759	4	0,780
	No	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	2	1,4%	46	32,9%	51	36,4%			
Wood	Yes	2	1,4%	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	3	2,1%	97	69,3%	104	74,3%	2,970	4	0,563
	No	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	0	0,0%	34	24,3%	36	25,7%			
Concrete blocks	Yes	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	14	10,0%	14	10,0%	1,069	4	0,899
	No	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	3	2,1%	117	83,6%	126	90,0%			

* p<0.05



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Table 4: Relationship between types of materials used for building a shack/house and the protection from fires

	Adequate protection from fires												Chi-square	df	P	
	Very safe		Safe		Neither safe nor unsafe		Unsafe		Very unsafe		Total					
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%				
Cardboard	Yes	3	2,1%	3	2,1%	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	46	32,9%	53	37,9%	6,794	4	0,147
	No	1	0,7%	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	7	5,0%	75	53,6%	87	62,1%			
Timber	Yes	3	2,1%	3	2,1%	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	74	52,9%	81	57,9%	10,528	4	0,032*
	No	1	0,7%	2	1,4%	2	1,4%	7	5,0%	47	33,6%	59	42,1%			
Zink	Yes	3	2,1%	4	2,9%	0	0,0%	3	2,1%	79	56,4%	89	63,6%	6,801	4	0,147
	No	1	0,7%	1	0,7%	2	1,4%	5	3,6%	42	30,0%	51	36,4%			
Wood	Yes	3	2,1%	2	1,4%	1	0,7%	3	2,1%	95	67,9%	104	74,3%	10,494	4	0,033*
	No	1	0,7%	3	2,1%	1	0,7%	5	3,6%	26	18,6%	36	25,7%			
Concrete blocks	Yes	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	0	0,0%	1	0,7%	12	8,6%	14	10,0%	1,279	4	0,865
	No	4	2,9%	4	2,9%	2	1,4%	7	5,0%	109	77,9%	126	90,0%			

* p<0.05



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The cross-tabulation in Table 4 shows that there is no significant relationship between using concrete blocks and protection from fires because only 10% of respondents used blocks to build their houses in both Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements. The association between the variables is not significant at the 95% level ($p>0.05$). The cross-tabulation in Table 4 indicates that there is a significant relationship between timber (building material) and protection from fires at the 95% level ($p<0.05$). The cross-tabulation further indicates that there is a correlation between wood as a building material used and very unsafe protection from fires at the 95% level ($p<0.05$). The research finding indicates that 96.4% of the respondents never used South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) approved building materials in building their informal settlements.

Table 5 indicates that 55.7% of the Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements' respondents agree that they can play a very important role in disaster or emergency management before and after the disaster. A total of 16.4% stated that they could play a somewhat important role while 27.9% felt that they could not play an important role.

Case of Foreman and Kennedy Road Informal settlements

According to ward 25 councillor (personal communication 2009), the main causes of fires in the shack settlements include the following:

- Alcohol;
- Deliberately caused by domestic violence or conflict between partners forgetting that they are endangering others;
- Wind that comes from the cracks or crevice and fans the flames of the candle; and
- Arson (whereby different tribal groups attack each other for instance in the case of Xhosa and Zulu people).

Table 5: The role of communities in disaster or emergency management before and after the disaster

	Frequency	Percent
Very important	78	55,7
Somewhat important	23	16,4
Not at all important	39	27,9
Total	140	100,0



The ward 25 councillor for Foreman and Kennedy Road informal settlements confirmed that the municipality has installed equipment such as fire hoses on some areas to extinguish fires during a disaster. The councillor stressed that the equipment does not work because marshals are not trained and there are delays in halting fires because of inefficiency and ineffectiveness from the municipal officials.

The ward councillor mentioned that the sprawling and congested nature of the informal settlements made it difficult and impractical to connect a water pipe to extinguish fires. The municipality embarked on a plan to provide residents with metal to build shelters in order to prevent fires in places such as Jadhvi and Foreman Road and have constructed 150 such units. The councillor alluded that a link has been established with the committee members who telephones the fire department directly. Such a link ensures that there is a quick response from the fire department to extinguish fires in the informal settlements. The councillor stated that, during windy days, fires are uncontrollable and there are no measures in place to control them. Formal houses cannot be built in these shack settlements, as the municipality is bound by housing regulations which stipulate that a larger space is needed for one house. Moreover, some of the land occupied by the shacks (Foreman Road) is privately owned.

The ward councillor stated that, in protecting informal settlements from flooding, the council has relocated people who were living along the catchments of the river. There is little evidence that a disaster management framework, disaster management centre and a plan exist in the municipality to deal with emergencies such as fires. The municipality concerned has been prone to emergencies and disasters in the past 10 years. Unfortunately, the work of the municipality is hampered by the absence of a well established disaster management framework, policy and the plan, despite, section 42(1) of the *Disaster Management Act* 57 of 2002 which stipulates that each metropolitan and each district municipality must establish and implement a framework for disaster management in the municipality to ensure an integrated and uniform approach to disaster management in its area.

The present deputy city manager (B. Mkhize, personal communication 2009) confirmed that the disaster management department, in its present form, is inappropriate as its sole function is to supply blankets and food parcels after an emergency or a disaster. According to the deputy city manager the following developments relating to disaster management are in progress:

- Relocation of the disaster management centre from the Central Business District (CBD) of Durban as it is located on the floodplain to high-lying area; and



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- Designing an organogram of the department was still in progress and the appointment of different specialists such a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) specialist was being considered.

The disaster management manager (B. Keeves, personal communication, 2009) stated that the municipality concerned has a fragmented disaster management centre. The department failed to sustain the disaster management centre in the past years and it was dismantled. Key services of the centre, including training and media facilities, boardrooms, offices and training facilities are no longer existent.

According to the disaster management manager, the municipality is reestablishing the disaster management centre. He further, argued that an already drafted disaster management framework must be adopted. Moreover, a consultant should be appointed to undertake a risk assessment throughout the municipality concerned and formulate a disaster management policy document. This document can drive the formation of a disaster management plan.

The disaster management manager is of the view that service level agreements between the Disaster Management Department and other municipal units should be signed in order to ensure the supply of specialist skills during an emergency or a disaster. Whilst the manager indicated the compliance of the municipality to the Disaster Management Act, the high staff turn-over is a challenge and is aggravated by the fragmented organogram which does not respond to the needs of the department. The manager argued that the Disaster Management Department should be consulted in the planning and implementation of the various programmes and projects. The manager indicated that there was a top down approach by the deputy city manager (Safety and Security Cluster) who is designing an organisational strategy and new organogram without consulting the staff.

The manager: Storm Water Department (M. Ngcobo 2009) stressed that the municipality is installing storm water pipes for upgraded informal settlements to low-cost housing developments to prevent flooding of the houses during disasters. The manager further argued that the municipality cannot install such pipes to certain areas as they are privately owned. Basic services to informal settlements are to be delivered, until budgets and plans are secured for final formalisation. Partnership with the Homeless People's Federation helps with data-gathering (enumeration) in the settlements and management of communal facilities. Partnership with Sao Paulo Municipality (Brazil), assists in informal settlement upgrading based on the Brazilian experience of upgrading informal settlements (Dwivedi 1994:9).



DISCUSSION

Based on the results of this study, several conclusions can be drawn. The study shows a major difference between job opportunities and other reasons which led the respondents to migrate to Durban. There is an urgent need for the decentralisation of industries and basic services to rural areas. The overcrowding of people in the informal settlements makes it difficult for the municipalities, with budgeted resources, to prepare and prevent disasters. Fires in the informal settlements are perpetuated by the fact that there are no preventative measures in place. Consequently, there are no fire extinguishers and water hydrants and preparedness strategies in the form of awareness and education. Elo, Palm & Vrolijk (1995:11) argue that strategies for disaster reduction in urban areas include having a community that is alert and prepared to cope with disasters through their realistic assessment of the risks and the knowledge, ability and resources to take adequate protective measures. The planning policies and practices within the eThekweni Municipality fail to help informal settlements that are susceptible to fires through early warning systems. Napier (2000:16) indicates that, as a result of improvements in early warning systems and disaster preparedness, the number of people killed by natural disasters each year has decreased over course of the last century.

The researchers found that the population densities might be the cause of uncertainties because the informal settlements are close to each other. A possible contributing factor that causes people to feel unsafe from the impact of fires is the absence of a 24 hour community warning devices and procedures. People use building materials which perpetuate fires because they are not allowed to formalise their informal settlements. For example, if a respondent replaces plastic or zinc shack with brick, the Land Invasions Unit destroys the shack. Informal settlements are constructed typically from materials such as timber, corrugated iron, plastic sheeting and other temporal materials that exacerbate fires which are mainly caused by the use of paraffin and candles.

On the basis of these findings, it is suggested that the eThekweni Municipality should comply with the *Disaster Management Act* 57 of 2002 which requires the establishment of a disaster management centre, disaster management framework, disaster management policy and a disaster management plan to be attached to the IDP. Furthermore, the council should implement best practice which includes indigenous knowledge application, disaster management plans and development initiatives. Moreover, examples of best practice must encapsulate early warning messages through community radio stations, television and pamphlets.

The Fire and Emergency Services should design a course in Fire Fighting and Prevention specifically to be implemented in the informal settlements. The



trainees can thereafter be expected to take back the skills and knowledge gained and educate residents in the informal settlements. The trainees can also assist the fire brigade, as they would have a good understanding of the procedures and protocols for fire fighting.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from this research that the informal settler's decision to occupy disaster-prone settlements is influenced by a lack of alternative opportunities, scarce resources, the need to gain access to employment, and short-term horizons. However, the majority proceed to stay in very unsafe conditions without the municipality's disaster preparedness strategies. There is poor attention paid to shack dwellers given to the benefits of keeping them in the same location after a disaster, by providing the appropriate infrastructure to reduce vulnerability in future. The planning policies and practices fail to solve informal settlements that are susceptible to fires without any warning systems in place. Appropriate formal houses with sturdy building materials should be built with the aim of eliminating the mushrooming of informal settlements to open spaces. Therefore, future research could profitably overcome the aforementioned challenges by looking at other factors such as public involvement in preparedness planning, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) applications, legal liability and intergovernmental tensions to disaster management. GIS should be used mainly for hazard identification and mapping and houses built should comply with urban planning by-laws. The municipalities should promote integrated and coordinated disaster management through partnerships between different stakeholders and through cooperative relations between all spheres of government.

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BOOK REVIEW

The great turning

From Empire to Earth Community.

Korten, D. 2006.

Bloomfield. Kumarian Press.

ISBN: 978-1-887208-08-6 (paperback)

Korten is the co-founder of the Positive Futures Network. From his well-known people-centred development stable comes eminent works including *Getting to the 21 century. Voluntary action and the global agenda* (1990), *When corporations rule the world* (1995), *The post-corporate world* (1999) and *Globalising civil society* (1998).

In this 22 chapter, 402-page publication, Korten continues previously introduced debates (see references above) on how people-centred (in this case the so-called “Earth Community”) development intervention strategies can transform public bureaucracies into responsive support systems, which strengthen local participation, community control and management. For Korten, following Joanna Macy, the term “the Great Turning” captures the sense of the time we live in and the realisation that the transition between eras follows a more profound historical route than what was previously thought. The publication thus tries to “... provide a historically grounded frame for understanding the possibilities of the unique time in which we live and thereby enable us to envision the path to a new area” (p. 19).

In this regard, for Korten (see title) the construction “Empire” relates to the historical international hierarchy of power, one that is dominated by powerful politicians and international corporations, while “Earth Community” represents the polar opposite – local democratic regimes and human relationships built around partnerships. In working with this rather problematic polar-opposite, Korten argues that there is an opportunity for change. According to the author, these changes can be brought about through paradigm shifts, new metaphors and “new” principles, such as cooperative-organisation, the principle of place, permeable boundaries, abundance and diversity. However, I find it unclear how, “... a framework to help us see more clearly how our seemingly small and fragmented individual efforts can add up to a powerful social force to change the course of history” (p. 313), will transpire in practice.



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To enable the above turning(s), a rather bold Korten is of the opinion that the world now has the ability to change the hierarchies of domination and restructure a radically democratic partnership model of organising human relationships. This should be done via a three-levelled approach, i.e. *cultural* value and spiritual fulfilment towards partnerships; *economic* policies that empower those at the bottom; and *political* turning towards a democracy of people. In her book review of Korten's publication, McGregor (*International Journal of Consumer Studies* 31, pp. 664-665, 2007) presents Korten's turning(s) model as follows:

The publication presents a framework of analysis, mostly with an American focus, in which the author weaves together issues of choice (from a dominator towards a partnership model); human consciousness; decision-makers who are out of touch with local realities; the empowering ripple-effect that the citizens of the Earth Community can create through acting as a "community of congruence"; the many and ever-continuing shortcomings of the Empire throughout the history of humankind; the recurring struggle for global justice; the accumulating challenge to the Empire and the Great Turning that should (then) follow when the Earth Community balances power. In presenting this

Table 1: Nuances of the Great Turning envisioned by David Korten

Cultural turning	Economic turning	Political turning
<p>Current</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • values of money and material excess • relationships of domination • belief in our limitations (as self-centred narcissists) • fear our differences 	<p>Current</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measuring well-being by number of material possessions and monetary wealth • economic policies that raise those at the top, higher • competition for individual advantage • hoarding • rights of ownership 	<p>Current</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • democracy of money • passive citizenship • economic plutocracy (government controlled by wealthy) • redistributive justice • social order by coercion
<p>New direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value of life and spiritual fulfilment • relationships of partnerships • belief in our possibilities • rejoice in our diversity 	<p>New direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measure well-being by health of self, families, communities and the natural environment • economic policies that raise those at the bottom • economic democracy • sharing • responsibilities of stewardship 	<p>New direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • democracy of people • active citizenship • cooperation for mutual advantage • restorative justice • social order by mutual responsibility and accountability

maze of ideas with an extremely broad brush, in the process probably losing many well-informed readers along a 5,000-year world history journey, Korten uses every possible buzzword in the already confusing development industry. In this regard, with the level of knowledge and research the author has compiled, a more precise, less bold focus could have resulted in a more specific application. The latter would have read easier and somehow could have acted as a “toolbox” for ordinary members of the Earth Community to act out all the well-intended ideals of the author.

For the author to have planned, researched and written this publication must have been a momentous task. The reference list is comprehensive; the text and footnote linkages are expertly done and the quotes with which each chapter starts are quite relevant. The publication is not only aimed at rather sophisticated readers such as academics and development change agents, but politicians, the corporate world and lay people interested in the international development debate. The publication is recommended for Korten followers and those concerned with the international development debate.

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