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Service delivery protests in Mpopana municipality, KwaZulu-Natal

by

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

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Signed

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ABSTRACT

South Africa has been experiencing a rising tide of protests since 2000. While some argue that the reasons for the protests is the lack of service delivery, others argue that, in fact, it is the quality of service that is the problem. To this end, the notion of service delivery protests has perhaps become a common place in South Africa. Some argue that the use of the term service delivery is often too broad and varies. There are two divergent views on the reasons behind the protests.

The first view largely driven by the governing party in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) and the government it leads suggests that South Africa has achieved a lot already since 1994. The protests are a sign that those who are still waiting in line to get their turn for services are impatient because they see a great number of their neighbours receiving the services they also desperately need. Another opinion largely supported by empirical evidence suggests that the poor majority are unhappy with the fruits of democracy. This view largely suggests that protest is a 'rebellion of the poor'. The aim of this study is to investigate the reasons behind protests in South Africa. This will be achieved through the lens of Mpofana local municipality.

The study used two theoretical approaches to explore the subject, namely, principal agency theory, on one hand, and invited and invented spaces, on the other. The idea was to understand the nature of the relationship that exists between people of Mpofana. Using the agency theory it was easy to explain some of the notions and motivations people of Mpofana put behind their involvement in protests. They view protests both as a method of effective communication and self-activity which allows them to create their own spaces (i.e. invented spaces) of participation when the official platforms are no longer trusted to work in their favour. It is also their way of reclaiming the authority they delegated to the local council (principal agency or PA relationship) through elections. In the end, their reclaiming of authority prevents them from incurring further agency losses by limiting goal conflict on the part of the agent (local council).

These two theories were selected because they made it possible to understand more closely the reactions and responses that people of Mpofana attach to their protest action. In this way, it was also possible to explain or contribute to the current protest debates

in South Africa by using Mpofana as a point of reference. It is clear that there is growing social distance between the citizens and their representatives. It is also very clear from the research that the existing public participation mechanisms are not working and that protests are a reaction to this frustration. In other words, out of frustration with goal conflict and its attendant agency costs, the restrictive and/or ineffectiveness of formal spaces of participation become less favoured by grassroots. Therefore they invent their own spaces of participation with a view to defy the status quo and influence the policy and decisions in their favour.

The study adopted a qualitative approach which administered open-ended questions to a convenient sample of three focus groups of participants selected from a sample frame of three wards, namely, ward one, three and five within the Mpofana municipality. The study also used structured interviews to determine the nature of responses (or lack, thereof) from the municipality, in terms of its mandate, in relation to the service delivery needs of the local citizens.

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DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Protest – Any form of action (s) aimed at raising a concern, frustration towards a certain conduct, habit or conduct of one or more parties against another. It can take many forms, including (but it is not limited to) petitions, remonstrating, demonstrating, picketing or disrupting normal activities.

Service delivery protest – any action such action aimed at raising a concern, frustration towards a certain conduct deemed to be undeserving of a legitimate citizen, including but not limited to, being deprived (including inadvertently) of legitimate access to basic services living standards involving such things as food, shelter, water, sanitation/refuse, health, education, safety and security, self-actualisation, self-esteem etc.). It may also include receiving (not receiving) expected or desired quality of the latter. It may also include, a grievance pertaining to there being no improvement in these even after they have been brought to the attention of decision-makers.

Gathering – In terms of the Gathering Act of South Africa a gathering is defined as any group of people. It is important to note that there is a public gathering and private gathering; however, both are expected to be pre-approved by the relevant authorities before they take place and a certain number of marshals is required for each number of people so gathered. The Act states that it is the responsibility of the organisers of any gathering to ensure that all the marshals are trained in crowd control so as to avoid any unintended consequences from occurring as they do happen from time to time.

Picketing – any form of action, usually by not more than fifteen (15) persons, aimed at drawing attention to the demands or grievance of a specific group or section or sector of society. The picket is a peaceful as it does not have any disruptive aspects and it is carried out under conformist/compliant settings which is regulated by the Gatherings Act of South Africa.

Grievance – any complaint in respect of the things mentioned above. These include lack of quality service and the lack sympathy/empathy from those who are supposed to ensure redress (rapid response and corrective action) to the mistake or anything deemed to have not met the expectations of the customer/public service beneficiary.

ABBREVIATIONS

| ACROYNM | FULL NAME |
|----------------|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| AsgiSA, | Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa |
| B2B | Back to Basics |
| COGTA | Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs |
| GCIS | Government Communication and Information Systems |
| GEAR | Growth, Employment And Redistribution |
| IDP | Integrated Development Plan |
| IRIS | Incident Registration Information Systems |
| KZN | KwaZulu-Natal |
| NDP | National Development Plan |
| RDP | Reconstruction and Development |
| SALGA | South African Local Government Association |
| | |
| SAPS | South African Police Service |
| SDBIP | Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan |
| WCAEC | Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign |
| WPLG | White Paper on Local Government |

KEY WORDS

Agency
Accountability;
Batho Pele;
Back to Basics
Citizenship
Civil society;
Consultation;
Community;
Democracy;
Employment;
Poverty;
Inequality;
Unemployment;
Statistics South Africa;
World Bank;
National Development Plan;
South African Local Government Association;
Integrated Development Plan;
Violence;
People;
Participation;
Representation;
Local Governance;
Ward committees;
Mpofana;
Insurgent;
Planning;
Invented spaces;
Invited spaces;
Principal;
Service delivery;
Protests;
Social protests;
State of the Nation Address

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the topic for this dissertation and to clarify how the fulfilment of the research's aims and objectives will make a contribution to the improvement of service delivery in Mpofana municipality and South Africa at large. To do so, the discussion starts off with the background and purpose of the study or research and then it explains the research objectives. After the research objectives have been clearly set-out, it lays out the research questions that will help to achieve the research objectives.

1.2 BACKGROUND / CONTEXT TO THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine how people in Mpofana local municipality respond to government with reference to their service delivery and development needs. It will also consider how government reacts towards the needs of the community in this area. Nationally, there are high levels of social protest. Between 1997 and 2013 the South African Police Service's (SAPS) Incident Registration Information System (IRIS) recorded 156,230 'crowd incidents'; 90.0% of these were classified as 'crowd (peaceful)' and 10.0% as 'crowd (unrest)'. The number of crowd incidents spiked in 1998, 2005/2006 and 2012/2013 (Alexander et.al., 2015:5).

There were more unrest incidents in 2012 (1,811) than any other year, and the highest number of peaceful incidents (11,010) was in 2013. Geographically, for the 17-year period, the proportion of crowd incidents recorded as unrest varies between 6.3% in KwaZulu-Natal and 16.5% in Western Cape. The number of crowd incidents per capita was substantially higher in North West than in any other province. IRIS has 78 different options for assigning 'motive' to an incident. Aggregating these into ten groups reveals that, overall, 'motives' that are labour-related are the most numerous (24% of the total). With unrest incidents, community-related motives as the most common (27% of the total). Since 2011/12 there has been a steady increase in the total number of 'crowd-related incidents', but the rise is far more marked with 'unrest-related' than 'peaceful' incidents. Comparing 2011/12 and 2014/15, we find a 6.6% increase in the number of

‘peaceful incidents’ and a 135.7% increase in the number of ‘unrest-related incidents’ (Runciman et.al., 2016: 39).

Mpofana is an interesting case study of social protest because in 2013, the provincial Cabinet invoked section 139(1) (c) of the Constitution, effectively putting it under administration. The KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) provincial executive (or provincial cabinet), at the time, cited protests and councillors’ bickering as reasons for the decision, adding that the Mpofana municipal council (the Council) could not even take executive decisions. Despite this intervention, community protests have continued unabated in Mpofana. In March 2017 alone, about five community protests were reported rendering the municipality partially dysfunctional for the whole month of March 2017. Simultaneously, about more than ten protests were reported in various parts of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN COGTA Protest Audit Report, March 2017).

This study therefore hopes to contribute to current debates on the reasons for protest, including their nature and frequency in Mpofana local municipality. It will also examine and/or consider the service delivery terrain in relation to Batho Pele, the public participation mechanisms and their shortcomings and its resultant impact of protests on service delivery and development in local Mpofana. The main aim is to investigate the extent to which levels of service delivery impacts on the quality of life of people in Mpofana local municipality. This will shed more light on why poor communities are under-serviced and more prone to protest action than their affluent counterparts and what responses/recommendations can be made to effectively deal with the situation.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:

- To assess the service delivery backlog in Mpofana;
- To understand local grievances relating to service delivery and development in the area;
- To analyse citizen / local government mechanisms of engagement and consultation;
- To examine the nature of participation and protest in communities; and,
- To examine the response of local government to communities.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objectives of the study were met through asking the following main questions:

- To what extent is the Mpofana municipality meeting its performance targets?
- What are the key issues affecting the delivery of services within the municipality?
- What are the mechanisms employed by the local council to communicate its decisions, challenges and progress to communities?
- To what extent do communities participate in platforms created for them to convey their views?
- What are the processes and methods employed by communities when undertaking protest?
- What strategies does the municipality have to galvanise the resources required to improve the lives of the people of Mpofana?

1.5 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The study consists of six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction:

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the topic and to provide a motivation for the study. It also provides background / context to the study by laying out the research objectives and the research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to provide a review of literature relevant to the study and locate/situate the study within this literature. The intention is to point out any gaps that the study might fill or any hypotheses that it might prove or disprove. It also sets up the themes along which findings will be discussed.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses the theories that will be applied in analysing the findings of the study. These are principal agency theory, on one hand, and the theory of invited and invented spaces, on the other.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the research approach. Besides answering the question about what type of approach will be adopted for the study, this chapter also gives information about where the study was conducted (or study area), population studied and the sampling methods applied. This includes a discussion of the study data collection methods (e.g. interviews, participant observation, focus groups, etc.) and data analysis techniques used in the study. Important ethical considerations such as detailing the ethical approval received and the consent form used, including confidentiality or protection of anonymity are also outlined in this chapter. Lastly, the challenges encountered or experienced in the field are explained. This includes how they were addressed and how they may have (or have not) affected the study.

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter lays the foundation for the discussions as it presents findings of the study.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study with reference to the themes set up in the literature review chapter. Simultaneously, it applies the theoretical framework adopted in Chapter 3 to analyse the findings. At the end, it provides the conclusion that sums up the main findings whilst also noting the study's contribution.

1.6. CONCLUSION

Having outlined the chapters above, the next chapter presents literature reviewed. In this regard, it presents extensive arguments for and against the existing protest debates and service delivery in South Africa. In doing so, it also explores various sources of works produced in respect of the topic at hand. In particular, it focus on such themes as the rising protest in South Africa, its relations to the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty. The chapter proceeds to discuss challenges of participation and participation mechanisms associated with it. In order to give proper context within which to frame these debates, the chapter also gives an overview of the service delivery terrain in South Africa, Batho Pele principles and the introduction of the Back to Basics strategy by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). From this point, the chapter turns its focus to the concept of development and its local implications. It proceeds by juxtaposing the latter with communication implications for local development. Once this is done, the chapter narrows down its focus to give a brief overview of Mpofana municipality – a subject of this study. After analysing the institutional capacity of Mpofana municipality, the chapter ends by directing its focal lens at the history of protests in Mpofana since 2009 with a view to highlight its proclivity to protests. In order to try and give a general view or meaning of the specific discussions canvassed in the body of the literature, the chapter ends by pulling and/or weaving all the issues together into a logical conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses various topics related to service delivery. It presents some of the existing debates around service and briefly shows how different stakeholders, scholars view protests, in general, and service delivery, in particular. Using relevant literature generated by various scholars who have studied social movements and service delivery protests over time, the chapter explores various topics ranging from protests debates in South Africa, the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality (PUI) to challenges of public participation. It further explores the service delivery terrain within the South African context (i.e. Batho Pele) before exploring the Back-to-Basics strategy of enhancing service delivery adopted by government's Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) department as a strategy aimed at supporting Batho Pele. The chapter also looks at how corruption negatively impacts on the potential for local government to succeed. From this point, it explores the concept of development and how it is understood in South Africa especially as it relates to service delivery. Thereafter, the chapter links development back to communication by showing that there is a strong symbiotic relationship between development and communication. The chapter ends by giving a brief overview of Mpofana municipality, its institutional capacity and a brief history of service delivery in Mpofana.

2.2 SOUTH AFRICA: RISING PROTEST

Globally, the term service delivery is a popular phrase that is used to denote the distribution of basic communal needs and services, notably housing, water and sanitation, land, electricity and infrastructure, which local communities have taken for granted and become dependent on for their daily existence (Reddy, 2016:1). However, within the same context, it is common course that the delivery and maintenance of these basic services on a consistent basis have proved to be unreliable at times, greatly inconveniencing and endangering local communities. The resultant response, particularly in the past decade, has been increasing 'service delivery protests' or protests demanding 'better service delivery' (Reddy, 2016:1). Many scholars (Alexander, 2010; Alexander & Runciman, 2014; Langa & von Holdt, 2010) have noted

that there has been a considerable rise in the number protests in South Africa since 2000. In 2010, Alexander described these protests as a ‘rebellion of the poor’, a term taken up by other writers. He argued that ‘if it was right to draw attention to the scale of the revolt then, it is even more appropriate today’ (Alexander, 2010). It is for this reason that the concept of service delivery has always featured prominently whenever protest debates arise in South Africa.

2.3 PROTEST DEBATES

The notion of service delivery protests has perhaps become a cliché in South Africa (Nleya, 2011:3). Sometimes, the use of the term ‘service delivery’ is often too broad and varies from area to area. Le Chen et.al. (2014:10) reveal that through their ‘anecdotal experience’ in South Africa, they learned that ‘service delivery’ is not universally defined and that ‘the talk of service delivery is pervasive in the political discussions of South Africa—the term may be over used or over reported’ (Le Chen et.al,2014:10). Given the potential over use or over reporting of the concept and its inherent importance, Le Chen et.al. argue that ‘it is unavoidable to start from a commonly understood context of the concept’. To this end, Le Chen understands ‘service delivery’ as a common phrase in South Africa used to describe the distribution of basic resources citizens depend on like water, electricity, sanitation infrastructure, land, and housing. Le Chen also makes an observation that ‘the government’s delivery and upkeep of these resources is unreliable—greatly inconveniencing or endangering the whole communities’. Thus, in response, the number of service delivery protests, or protests demanding better service delivery, has increased in recent years. So much so, in fact, that the term “service delivery protest” has become a catch-all term in the media to define various types of protests (Le Chen et.al.,2014:10). Many reasons have been put forward to explain the causes of the rising trend in public protests in South Africa for which the main debate centres on two divergent extremes of the divide.

The first view, largely held by the ANC-led government and the ANC itself, suggests that South Africa has achieved a lot already since 1994. This fact, unfortunately, gets lost in the hurly-burly of competitive politics (Remarks, President Jacob Zuma, SALGA Summit, September 2012). Additionally, to support this view, the ANC declared that “over the last 18 years, significant progress has been made in meeting the

basic needs of our people, including through the growth of the social wage and the provision of social infrastructure” (53rd National Conference Resolutions, ANC 53rd National Conference, Mangaung, December 2012). Subsequently, this assertion is repeated in other official government documents notably South Africa 20 Year Review and State of the Nation Address (SoNA, 2014). To be precise, the foreword of the Twenty Year Review (1994 – 2014) states that:

“One of the most active arenas of change has been to shift the programmes of the state towards the reconstruction and development of our country, with a particular focus on the poor and marginalised – to eliminate poverty and provide access to housing, water, electricity, sanitation, education, health, social protection support to the millions deprived of these basic rights under apartheid” (Foreword, Twenty Year Review Report, 1994 – 2014)

Accordingly, the above view holds that ‘the ANC and the government it leads deserves considerably more credit for improving the living standards of poor and black South Africans than it has received’ (Remarks, SALGA Summit, September 2012). Moreover, the proponents of this view argue that while the ‘dominant narrative’ in the case of the protests in South Africa has been to attribute them to alleged failures of government’ the truth is that ‘protests are also ‘a result of success in delivering basic services’. Within this context, the proponents elaborate that ‘while the work of government continues, many others wait to be taken out of their different situations’. To this end, they argue that ‘when 95% of households have access to water and the 5% who still need to be provided for feel they cannot wait a moment longer, success becomes the breeding ground of rising expectations’ (President Jacob Zuma, State of the Nation Address (SoNA), 2014). Within this context, the argument is that South Africa that has a good story to tell and that those who complain about service delivery are not necessarily saying that there is no service delivery but that they have been waiting far too long for their turn. They are essentially comparing themselves to their neighbours who have already received or are receiving the desired services from government. In addition to the latter view, some protests are viewed as either the work of “third hand” or “disgruntled” former leaders or “over-ambitious” leaders who incite communities to rebel against elected councillors by distorting real issues that are being addressed to

secure positions for themselves by projecting sitting councillors as incompetent (von Holdt and Langa, 2010:1, Alexander, 2010:10).

The research conducted by Langa and von Holdt (2010) to examine the community protest in Kungcatsha, a small town in the Eastern Cape, produced a report that partly supported this view. The town was rocked by two weeks of violent community protests in the second half of 2009. The protests started when a mass meeting of residents in the local stadium decided to call for a stay-away in protest against the town council's failure to explain to the community what had happened to a missing sum of R30 million. Violence flared up when the police were called in and attempted to disperse protesters with teargas and rubber bullets. Barricades of burning tyres were set up. During the protest, a councillor's house, a community hall, and a library were torched, and the council offices and a new community centre were partially destroyed (Langa and von Holdt, 2010; Alexander, 2010; Botes et.al. 2007).

This example (Langa and von Holdt, 2010) revealed that during the incidents, the speaker of the municipality, who is the third in charge after the mayor and the deputy mayor in terms of their organisational hierarchy, was behind the protests. Furthermore an unnamed man who, in the 1980s, had headed a local vigilante group sponsored by the apartheid security forces to disrupt and target the popular anti-apartheid movement, was involved in organising protests. According to the report, the man was a powerful and influential figure in the community (Langa and von Holdt, 2010:4).

Langa and von Holdt (2010:4) also note that during their research, the respondents argued that the speaker wanted to oust the mayor so that 'once the mayor was out, the speaker would be in as a mayor'. In essence, the protest was a proxy war between the mayor and the speaker of the municipality. This can be interpreted as a clear case of internal politics playing itself out in a public domain as social or public protest. However, a closer look into its root causes reveals a man who worked for apartheid who now works within the ANC to cause instability, something which, to a certain extent, may give credence to suspicions of a 'third force'.

Alexander (2010:30) made similar findings in his study of the Phomolong protests in Free State as reported in Botes et. al. (2007: 17). The protest began between the months

of February and mid-April 2005 where ‘protesters started brandishing toilet buckets and banners, and armed with pipes and sticks, sang protest songs and blocked streets’. The action only abated after the removal of a particularly unpopular councillor, which had been a prominent community demand (though possibly one inspired by rivals within the [ANC]). In this sense protests are generated as an opportunity to oust political opponents and so reconfigure ANC power relations. Sometimes protests are associated with opportunities to access lucrative council business, as a protester interviewed claimed (von Holdt et al., 2011). Therefore, it is safe to say that claims of an internal agitation or an insurrection mainly driven by ‘an invisible hand’ or ‘political ambition’ and access to resources within and outside the ANC are not farfetched.

The second view, largely driven by scholars (see Sinwell, 2009; Alexander, 2010; Booysen, 2012; Alexander & Runciman, 2014; Chiwarawara, 2014) who have conducted research on this subject, suggests that the cause of protests is linked to the failures of the democracy to meet the expectations of the poor. In this context, protests are viewed as means of publicly voicing grievances and concerns. Alexander (2010) reveals that South Africa has experienced an ever increasing level of often violent protests since 2004. Chiwarawara (2014:iii) also notes that many analysts regarded 2004 as the beginning of post-apartheid service delivery protests. Hence there are many studies that have been conducted to examine the nature of protests in South Africa. Alexander (2010) argues that because ‘some people have gained’ while the ‘majority are still poor’, protests ‘reflect disappointment with fruits of democracy’. Despite the ushering in of the democratic dispensation, South Africa’s poverty levels continue to rise. The South African government in many of its official policy documents (RDP, GEAR, AsgiSA, National Development Plan) admits that high levels of inequality and poverty can be ameliorated by reducing the high unemployment rate.

2.3.1 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) uses two definitions for the unemployed, namely, the official and the expanded one. According to Stats SA, the expanded definition for the unemployed refers to the people who are out of the labour market or who are not economically active, particularly those in the age category 15 to 65 years who are not available for work. This category includes full-time scholars and students, full-time

homemakers, those who are retired, and those who are unable or unwilling to work. In 1998, Stats SA revealed that the expanded unemployment rate was 31,5% in 1994, decreasing to 29,2% in 1995 and then rising to 35,6% in 1996 and to 37,6% in 1997 (Stats SA, 1998:14). For the past two decades, the average unemployment rate in South Africa has remained above 25%, with highest peaks at 26,7% in 2000; 27.2% in 2002 and 27.3% in 2003. The official unemployment rate in South Africa fell from 20% in 1994 to 16,9% in 1995, rising to 21,0% in 1996 and to 22,9% in 1997 (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 1998:4). Stats SA defines official unemployment as consisting ‘those who did not work during the seven days prior to the interview, but were looking for, or willing to accept, work’. As such, the unemployment rate is calculated as the percentage of the economically active population which is unemployed. In 2012 and 2014, the official unemployment rate was 25% and 25.1% with South Africa ranking seventh and ninth on global rankings, respectively (Stats SA Living Conditions Survey, 2015).

While the unemployment rate increased by 0.3 percent between the first and second quarters of 2014 reaching 25.5 percent in 2016, there was a corresponding growth in equality (Stats SA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2016). Subsequent to the latter statistics, the World Bank recently released data showing a growing inequality gap in South Africa (South Africa Poverty and Inequality Assessment Report 2018: xiv).

2.3.2 INEQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The struggle for against apartheid was also a struggle against unjust society, including inequality. Given the fact that income inequality remains vast in South Africa, it is easy to understand why those who are at lower end of the income ladder feel excluded from the democracy they helped to achieve. The argument that service delivery protests occur in areas where marginalised sections of society reside (Alexander, 2010) is a clear sign that inequality is a breeding ground for social discontent which ultimately leads many communities to protest. South Africa has been consistently rated as the most unequal country out of 149 in the world by the World Bank due to the “enduring legacy of apartheid (GINI index, World Bank estimate, 2018). South Africa and other international institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) use the Gini coefficient to measure income inequality. The Gini coefficient uses values ranging from zero (0) to one (1) where zero is a perfectly equal society and a value of one represents

a perfectly unequal society. Income inequality is important because it is predominantly used to measure income distribution among individuals in society which is key factor of socio-economic progress and quality of life. In this context, a country in which every resident has the same income would have an income Gini coefficient of zero (0). A country in which one resident earned all the income, while everyone else earned nothing, would have an income Gini coefficient of one (1).

The *Poverty and Trends Report released by Statistics South Africa in 2015*, in South Africa (Stats SA, 2015) revealed that white-headed households had an income roughly 4,5 times larger than black African-headed households and 3 times larger than the average national income (R100 246 per annum). On the other hand, Coloured-headed households had an income almost twice of that of black African-headed households and 20% more than the national household income average. Black African-headed households earned on average a third of what Indian/Asian-headed households earned in 2015. In addition, the *Living Conditions Survey* (Stats SA, 2017) also showed that while the proportion of the population living in poverty declined from 66,6% (31,6 million persons) in 2006 to 53,2% (27,3 million) in 2011, it increased to 55,5% (30,4 million) in 2015. The number of persons living in extreme poverty (i.e. persons living below the 2015 Food Poverty Line of R441 per person per month) in South Africa increased by 2,8 million, from 11 million in 2011 to 13,8 million in 2015. However, this is lower than in 2009 when persons living in extreme poverty were 16,7 million. The report added that the most vulnerable to poverty in society are children (aged 17 or younger), females, Black Africans, people living in rural areas, those residing in Eastern Cape and Limpopo, and persons with little or no education (Stats SA, 2017).

In South Africa, the challenge of inequality has been noted with regards to the skewed and rigid structure of its economy. According the South Africa Inequality Assessment Report issued by the World Bank, a large debate has centred around the fact ‘the labour market is effectively split into two extreme job types’ (World Bank, 2018). At one extreme is a small number of people with highly paid jobs in largely formal sectors and larger enterprises, at the other extreme is most of the population, who work in jobs that are often informal and pay less well (World Bank, 2018). Given this context, more action (and less debate) is required to address this challenge. This is even more important and urgent because there is irrefutable evidence that an increase in the

inequality gap, exacerbated by runaway unemployment rate has cumulative impact on the rising levels of poverty.

2.3.3 POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Poverty as a concept is closely related to inequality (Sen, 1973:1457). The interconnectedness of poverty, inequality and unemployment (PIU) is obvious in societies to even the casual observer (Chibba and Luiz, 2011:307). Besides, there is also considerable empirical evidence to support such an observation (Sen, 1973; Grusky and Kanbur, 2006). For instance, poverty has been identified not merely with inequality but also with unemployment (Sen, 1973:1457). Given the average income level, a higher level of inequality (reflected by the usual measures) will tend to be associated with a higher level of poverty (Sen, 1973:1457).

Furthermore, the so-called "poverty line" may sometimes be drawn in the light of the socially accepted "minimal" standard of living, and the latter can be influenced by the average income level, so that poverty measures, thus defined, may catch an aspect of relative inequality as well. Many scholars (see Sen, 1973; Grusky and Kanbur, 2006; Chibba and Luiz, 2011) agree that inequality is one of the biggest challenges facing many societies, however, it is in the absence of action that a major concern is raised in this regard. The absence of action is largely due to the fact that there is no 'acceptable and successful theory' to guide this 'action' (Chibba and Luiz, 2011:307).

Miraftab (2009:35) argues that 'when conditions of marginalisation and exclusion persist and become institutionalised, 'insurgent' planning is fomented. In the same token, Alexander and Runciman (2014) remark that the drastic change in the life of the elected official is inextricably linked to the drastic change in the quality of life of the people who put him or her in that position. Therefore, if elected officials earn high incomes for driving programmes aimed at improving lives of poor communities, citizens inevitably expect that such progress will have a corresponding positive impact in their lives. This means that, whatever the situation, any observable progress in the life of an elected or appointed official is often contrasted with the situation of the people she or he represents. No matter what, 'people can vote' but if 'real improvements are few' there is a possibility that the government and the governed 'are growing apart,

then there is a reason for the electorate to feel abandoned or disillusioned' (Alexander, 2010:3). As such, a sentiment that 'all too often, 'elected representatives are self-seeking' is inevitably created (Alexander (2010:3). It is within the above situations that citizens invent their own spaces of engagement.

Sinwell (2009:5) observes that in post-apartheid South Africa, social movements have emerged as a key 'way through which groups of people express their dissatisfaction with dominant forces, current structures of society or the status quo in order to create a 'new way of living' or 'of ordering society'. To this extent, participatory spaces become both "political and social" spaces which are determined, and altered, by power relations (Sinwell, 2009:5). Therefore, Sinwell (2009:5) adds, the key component within "invited" and "invented" spaces of participation is that citizens, through social movements, seek to challenge authority within and outside the institutional channels provided by government.

Alluding to the "invented spaces" or "insurgent" citizen's use of formal spaces when they are advantageous, and defy them when they prove unjust and limiting, Miraftab (2009:36) elaborates that, 'in the case of Western Cape Anti Eviction Campaign (WCAEC), when formal channels fail, citizens innovate alternative channels to assert their citizenship rights and achieve a just city'. The practices range from community organizations, crisis committees, and resident groups, and strategies which combine the use of formal, legal strategies with informal survival livelihood practices and with oppositional practice.

Miraftab (2009:37) stresses that perforce insurgent citizenship practices are fluid, moving across 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of participation, meaning 'their activities engage both the formal and informal arenas of politics, and aim to combine the struggles for redistribution and for recognition'. In that regard, both invited and invented spaces can be simultaneously or individually used to air views that are opposed to the status quo with a view to transform it. Therefore, the relationship between the invited and invented spaces should be understood not as a 'binary one' rather as 'a mutually constituted, interacting relationship' (Miraftab, 2009:37). In a nutshell, there is a mutually re-inforcing or mutually inclusive relationship between the two spaces of communication.

Another important point to be emphasized regarding Miraftab's (2009:39) view on the relationship between the above-mentioned spaces of participation is that, because they are 'not necessarily affiliated with a fixed set of individuals or groups or with a particular kind of civil society', they have the ability to survive or resist any form of constraints that encounter as they move across these spaces.

Miraftab (2004) explains that very often actions taken by the poor within the invited spaces of citizenship, however innovative they may be, have to cope with existing systems of hardship inherent in prescriptions imposed by donors and government interventions. To a large degree, the above strategy by the social movements, is in a way, interpreted as survival technique aimed at giving them more opportunity to carefully and more closely analyse the changing attitudes of stakeholders within the invited spaces as they interact with them. In the end, the analysis of attitudes will assist grassroots to re-orientate their approaches to suit whatever desired outcome they seek to achieve.

Mottiar and Bond (2012) note that very high levels of popular demonstrations in South African communities—often termed 'service delivery' protests—suggest a significant amount of social discontent, even if this does not yet mean the rise of a protest movement with similar norms, values, strategies and tactics, nor a transformational political agenda arising from the discontent. Allan and Heese (2014:1) suggest that 'the sense of relative deprivation, and inequality within an urban context, is key to understanding why protests take place'. Nevertheless, a general consensus exists (see Alexander, 2010: Allan and Heese 2014, Bond, 2000); that "marginalisation and exclusion" felt by communities in disadvantaged communities together with a lack of information from the local authorities becomes a breeding ground for frustration. Therefore, on that score, a fast spreading rumour of mismanagement or corruption or nepotism is all the spark needed to set off a violence fuelled protest (Allan and Heese, 2014:1).

Chiwarawara (2014:15) suggests that not all protests are service delivery protests. Within the context of this view, Chiwarawara (2014:15) argues that it is necessary to consider the repertoires and reasons of protests. Miraftab (2009:36) asserts that when

marginalized people feel that they are not being heard, they create what are known as ‘invented spaces’ of participation, where they set the rules of the game of how, where and on what terms participation will occur. Alexander (2010) reasons that people are not only concerned about the levels of service delivery they receive, but also about ‘the quality of democracy’ they experience. The Twenty Year Review (RSA, The Presidency, 2014:27) openly acknowledges that ‘service delivery protests’ provide visible evidence that the state is struggling to ensure that poor communities feel that they are being heard, therefore, protests are typically prompted by a range of concerns including access to services, the quality of services and the perceived non-responsiveness of local government. This includes staging protests in the streets of their neighbourhoods where they bring the state into their spaces, rather than moving to the formal spaces of government offices or meetings (Miraftab, 2009:36). Therefore, what type or form and how effective the formal channel of participation is in the minds of the marginalized people determines whether or not a protest is likely to occur.

2.4 PROTEST AND THE CHALLENGES OF PARTICIPATION

The challenges of participation at local levels have been noted with regards to how they lack adequacy, effectiveness and meaningful planning and feedback mechanisms (see Buccus and Hicks, 2008; Ballard et.al. 2006; Pithouse, 2007). Many studies conducted around participation mechanisms such as Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), Ward Committees (WCs) and councillor systems have found these participation mechanisms to be ineffective and as such they do not achieve their intended purpose. Ward committees, for example, have been criticized for failing to remain non-partisan and independent of political parties (Oldfield, 2008) while ward councillors have been dismissed as subordinating constituent accountability to party accountability (Pithouse, 2007). By contrast the impact of ‘self-activity’ (Ballard et al, 2006: 413), for example in the form of social movements, has been described as a way that the interests of the poor and marginalized have claimed a degree of power and influence over the state (Mottiar and Bond, 2012). This is partly because ‘public servants are often unenthusiastic about the formalities of participation while communities are unsure about its substance’ (Buccus and Hicks, 2008:526).

Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act obliges a municipality to create the systems, mechanisms and enabling conditions for meaningful participation of the community in the affairs of the municipality beyond the IDP process, including in monitoring and reviewing municipal performance. The Act requires councillors and officials to play a key role in fostering community participation. However, while structures such as WCs have been created to enable councillors and officials to engage with communities, these have not worked in the manner intended (RSA, The Presidency, 2014:27). Interactions are often formulaic and symbolic rather than meaningful and have generally not helped to strengthen links between communities and councillors.

Ward committees (WCs) just like Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) have been associated with many problems ranging from politics of representation at WC level, structural limits to WC powers and WCs being involved in party politics (Buccus and Hicks, 2008:526) and Oldfield (2008:490). These shortcomings of WCs defeat their good intentions in the sense that, if the public feel that they are ineffective and take political sides, they lose hope and resort to other means of making their voices heard such as engaging in protests (Mchunu, 2010:38). Authentic and empowering participation entails the creation of participatory spaces (see Cornwall & Coelho:2007:2-25), in which the participating public, as beneficiaries of a particular programme, project or process, can (i) influence (ii) direct (iii) control and (iv) own the process (Cloete, 2013:54). Cloete (2013:54) holds a view that numerous scholars believe that the local governance mechanisms for participation such as ward committees and IDP forums are malfunctioning in this regard.

Likewise, Naidoo (2010:137), while investigating the effectiveness of a participatory development communication approach employed by the Thusong Centres in Tshwane, discovered, through interviews he conducted, that, 'in essence, the ward councillor, a political appointee, is the person who makes the decisions on matters that affect the community, because he/she has been appointed by that particular community and it is they that the Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS) meets with and who informs it of the communities' needs'. He also discovered that ward councillors have a link with the mayor's office as well as with committees (Ward Committees) that provide services via local government and municipalities, which strengthens their level of power in the decision-making process (Naidoo, 2010:137). The study also found that

the inclusion of the community, as a stakeholder in the development communication process, was generally superficial with community members just consulted instead of being fully involved. For example, Naidoo's (2010) study revealed that 'whenever there was an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process then most of the people come to these meetings a members of the political party where the councillor comes from' (Naidoo, 2010:137). This has been cited by many scholars as key challenge facing local participation mechanisms as envisaged in the Municipal Structures Act.

2.4.1 CHALLENGES OF LOCAL PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS

Section 17 of Chapter 4 in the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, LG: Municipal Structures Act, 1998) proposes various mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation. These mechanisms include ward committees, councillors, petitions, complaints, public meetings, consultative sessions and advisory committees (RSA. LG: Municipal Systems Act, 2000). One of the anomalies have been noted with regards to the powers and duties of WCs (Cloete, 2013:57). Firstly, it is worth mentioning that wording in the proposed in the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) remained unchanged after the promulgation of the Municipal Structures Act. This poses two challenges. The first challenge is that the wording in the Municipal Structures Act indicates that WCs lack 'original power' and 'they are assigned an advisory role in council and to facilitate local community participation' (Municipal Structures Act, 1998). Taken in this context, it means WCs cannot take decisions because they lack 'original power' regardless of the fact that they are elected by communities based on their understanding of the issues affecting communities.

Moreover, the wording suggests that the role of WCs is limited to legitimising decisions of local councils, even if these decisions are not compatible with community interests, because their role is only advisory. Lastly, because WCs have no original power and they are chaired by the local councillor means they cannot freely, without any political constraints, criticise or call the councillor to account because they cannot hold meetings in the absence of the councillor who is supposed to chair the meetings of WCs. This led to the Twenty Year Review (RSA, The Presidency, 2014:27) suggestion that, 'in a situation where many councillors have become estranged from communities and their critical concerns and for participation to be meaningful, the link between councillors

and citizens through the ward committee system needs to be improved'. It is therefore argued that for as long as the role of the WCs remains advisory and councillors remain in charge of them, citizens' participation in them will continue to be viewed as a legitimisation of the status quo instead of being treated as a platform to orchestrate positive socio-economic change.

Against this backdrop, it can also be argued that the dysfunctionality evident in the functioning of institutional participation mechanisms such as WCs and IDP forums as noted by many scholars is indicative of growing disaffection with "invited" spaces of participation. For example, Sinwell's (2009) study of development in Alexandra township in South Africa showed that organisations such as Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the South African Community Party (SACP), the Umpakathi Development Forum (UDF) and the Alexandra Land and Property Owners Association (ALPOA) were not able to alter development within the "invited" participatory spaces provided by the government, including the ADF, because 'it was permeated with power relations in the form of discourse which socially excluded dissent from the local government's trajectory as a result'. However, Sinwell (2009) also show that, given the aforesaid limitations of the invited spaces, the above organisations had thus, in some cases, influenced development practice and 'reshaped what was acceptable in "invited" participatory spaces by exerting their own power through popular protest and the opening of court cases'.

Similarly, Buccus, et. al., (2008) argue that just 'like IDPs, WCs are fraught with problems ranging from politics of representation at WC level, structural limits to WC powers and WCs being involved in party politics'. They have argued that there is a wide acknowledgement from a wide range of public institutions insufficient consideration has been paid to existing policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms and programme interventions are failing to comply with government's constitutional and statutory obligations in this regard'

Altogether, the vague or constricted lines of accountability between WC systems and councillors, particularly in relation to how they account to citizens that elect them intrinsically imposes limitations on their functionality due to the legal constraints inherent in the law that gives rise to them. To this extent, it can be said that the legal

constraints imposed by the Municipal Systems Act of 1998 on the functioning of WCs are indicative of systemic weaknesses inherent in these participation mechanisms.

Therefore, notwithstanding the good effort that post-apartheid South Africa has created in the form of 'inviting' the public to participate in the making of decisions that affect them, it is an important caveat that there are policy and legislative ambiguities that make it impossible to them into effective use. For the citizenry to have confidence in the democratic state, they must feel that they have effective and efficient systems and mechanisms of representation and accountability that they can use to hold their representative to account. Therefore, the end result is that once citizens' confidence in the participation mechanisms created for them by the state improves, they can also begin to own decisions taken by a democratic state. Consequently, meaningful participation by citizens will help to allay peoples' fears that participation leads to incorporation without redress, as some argue' (Buccus et. al., 2014:16). In this way, what type of transition people are subjected to will also be thoroughly addressed.

Borrowing from Giugni, (1998), Oliver et.al. (2013) identifies incorporation, transformation and democratization as three different types of transitions. Oliver et.al. (2013) explains that incorporation occurs when movements or part of them are absorbed into the polity or into the existing institutional arrangements and procedures of society without altering the basic rules of the game. This path may lead to institutionalization, when movements become part of routine politics, or pre-emption when movement demands are integrated into governmental policy or legislation without opening the polity. On the other hand, transformation requires fundamental changes in the social and political structures and institutions of society due to transfers of power that alter extant power relations within society. Revolutions are the most radical form of transformation, but movements often produce institutional change that alters power relations in a non-revolutionary way. Seen from this angle, some of these transformations relate to transitions from authoritarian rule (Oliver et.al., 2013) like in South Africa. Oliver et.al. (2013:16) alludes to the fact that democratization presupposes at least some degree of incorporation and transformation. Democratization develops when a transfer of power modifies the mutual rights and obligations between state and its citizens. In the end, together 'incorporation, transformation and

democratization are not mutually exclusive processes but ideal types' (Oliver et.al., 2013).

Against this background, the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) of 1998 provides a good frame of reference for participation in local governance (Cloete, 2013:55). According to the WPLG, it is the responsibility of municipalities to adopt inclusive approaches to foster community participation. This must include strategies aimed at removing obstacles to, and actively encouraging the participation of marginalised groups in the local municipality. To this end, the WPLG proposes four levels of participation in municipal affairs. The first level of meaningful participation of communities in the decision-making that is proposed by WPLG is as voters. The second level is as participants in the policy process. The third level of participation of citizens is focused at the consumer and end-user level and the fourth level is as partners in resource mobilisation (WPLG, 1998).

Given the four levels of meaningful participation that WPLG proposes above, it does not help when the emphasis of inclusive participation for communities is skewed towards one level only. In South Africa, voting has received more emphasis, often at the expense of other three levels of participation. For example, the third level of participation as proposed by the WPLG is focused at the consumer and end-user level. This essentially means that as consumers, the main contact of citizens with local government is through the consumption of municipal services (Cloete, 2013:58). So, it is here that municipalities need to begin to build relationships with citizens and communities. For this reason, it is therefore important for municipalities to consistently follow policy guidelines set out by the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) of 1997.

2.5 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SERVICE DELIVERY TERRAIN

South Africa has a history characterised by a narrative of censorship, exclusion of majority of people from the decision-making process and their own development (Msibi and Penzon, 2010:1). This exclusion of ordinary people from their own development resulted in the deliberate misrepresentation of the socio-political realities of the apartheid era. The 1997 *White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery*

(Batho Pele White Paper, 1997) focused on ensuring that government is responsive to the needs of its citizens. In this regard, supporting legislations such as the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act of 2000 are designed to enable citizens to access state information and to have access to a just administrative action. The supportive laws mentioned above were based on the belief that a ‘change of tide was needed to enable previously marginalised communities a space to participate in governance and advisory structures, consultative forums and to have easy access to grievance mechanisms that will inform governance processes’ (RSA, The Presidency, 2014, 35-36). In this regard, Batho Pele is a direct response to the government’s intent of providing services in a democratic context (Batho Pele White Paper (DPLG, 2005: 15). It is the national government’s key policy response to the need for transforming public service delivery and is also applicable to the municipal public servants. It is with this in mind that Crous (2002:64) suggests that ‘public officials will have to adjust to accommodate the requirements of the *Batho Pele White Paper*, that members of the public should be accepted as customers and that a position in the public service implies that the occupant is a public servant, rather than a public official’ (Crous, 2002:64).

The *Batho Pele White Paper* (Section 5.1) states that the South African public service must ensure that a conducive environment for the delivery of services is created to enhance employees' capacity to deliver services efficiently and effectively. That said, the document further states that it is essential that the commitment, energy and skills of public servants be harnessed to tackle inefficient, outdated and bureaucratic practices, to simplify procedures and to identify new and more efficient and effective ways of delivering services. To achieve that, *Batho Pele* – meaning “People First” – identifies eight principles that are supposed to guide government’s approach to public service delivery, encourage participation and promote responsive governance. Altogether, Batho Pele’s eight principles - namely, consultation, setting service standards, increasing access, courtesy, providing information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money - allow the different parts to be identified and individually assessed in terms of their effectiveness (HSRC, SASA, 2007). These are discussed in detail below.

2.5.1 CONSULTATION (PREFERENCES/AFFORDABILITY)

The principle of consultation means that municipalities should consult with communities in which they are situated about their needs, preferences, affordability, level and quality of municipal services that are rendered (Mofolo, 2009:430). Similarly, Crous (2002:64) sees the principle of consultation (*Batho Pele White Paper: Section 4.1*) as a requirement that citizens be consulted about the level and quality of the service they receive and should, where possible, be given a choice about the services that are offered. Using Hilliard's & Msaseni's (2000: 68) words, Crous (2002:64) explains that citizens should thus simply be asked what they need. He further adds that this principle also calls for the consultation of the public on how products and services can be improved. Improvement of products and services can only take place if service standards are set to measure performance against. To this end, Mofolo and Smith (2009:430) suggests that research should be conducted about various ways of consulting with members of communities. The findings then could provide municipalities with information that would be appropriate to act upon to enable effective service delivery. Such research could be done through customer surveys, interviews with individual users, meetings with ward committees, meetings with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as well as meetings with Community Based Organisations (CBOs). Additionally, it is essential that municipalities should have detailed databases of various stakeholders that could be consulted for assessment of service delivery standards.

2.5.2 SERVICE STANDARDS (LEVEL OF QUALITY)

The principle of service standards (*Batho Pele White Paper: Section 4.2*) calls for citizens to be told what level and quality of services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. Standards relate to the degree of service excellence provided to customers at any given point in time (Crous, 2002:64). To make aware community members about municipal services, they should be informed about the level and quality of municipal services through making use of local newspapers and copies of the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) should be left in the local libraries (Mofolo and Smith, 2009:30). While the local newspapers and IDPs are important communication channels, it must be emphasised that this is not an exhaustive list communication

mechanisms available to municipalities. For instance, Mofolo and Smith (2009:30) have suggested municipal workshops for ward committees and other organisations to inform them about their (ward committees and organisations) roles.

There are four elements of service standards: quality/description, delivery targets/quality, cost, and complaint and redress mechanisms (Service Delivery Review, 2008:13). This as a way of monitoring adherence to predetermined service delivery standards. The proposed workshop approach can also be applied when new services are introduced, municipalities should also follow the same procedure as indicated to inform their communities to ensure access to services. However, for Crous (2002:64) the important aspect about the setting of service standards is that it that it also allows for measurement of the extent of access to services, or if it needs to be increased.

2.5.3 ACCESS TO SERVICES (EQUALITY)

The biggest question here is whether people can access our services easily (Mabuza, 2008:14). This entails ensuring that the spread of public offices, especially in remote areas, is easily accessible. One critical area here is that sometimes you can drive around the whole country looking for government offices but finding one is a problem just because of poor signage (Mabuza, 2008:14). As shown above, municipalities should ensure that all members of communities have access to their services (Mofolo and Smith, 2009:30). Through IDPs and Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plans (SDBIPs), municipalities should ensure that community members; particularly those who are in greater need, have access to services (Mofolo and Smith, 2009:30). Access could mean a lot of things. For example, it could mean that the ‘establishment of units in residential areas (shopping complex) to provide identical services, such as, payment of rates and services, buying of electricity coupons, and customer care’ (Mofolo and Smith, 2009:30). In this way, municipalities can achieve decentralisation of service delivery points so that the people who need services the most are timeously and conveniently served. However, in its broader sense, Crous (2002:66) suggests that ‘access can range from physical access, such as ramps for wheelchairs, to understanding of customers' language and the positive attitude or approachability of employees’. Increased access to services will imply that institutions have to deal with larger numbers of customers, heightening the importance of ensuring courtesy.

2.5.4 COURTESY IN TREATMENT (POLITENESS TO COMMUNITIES)

In addition to the physical rendering of services, Batho Pele principles also require that members of communities should be treated with politeness and consideration when services are provided ‘across the counter’. In this way, municipalities should create or develop codes of conduct which they must make available to their employees and to the public. This will allow the public to also know such principles so that they can be able to hold municipal employees accountable on the spot when they deviate from these principles. These codes of conduct should also specify that municipal employees should treat community members as customers who are entitled to receive the highest standards of service.

As a result, municipalities should internally specify and make available to employees, the standards that indicate the manner in which customers should be treated. Among other standards, these could be included:

- greetings and addressing customers, as well as identifying names when dealing with customers, whether in person, on the telephone or in writing;
- using appropriate language when using written communications, and when verbally communicating to customers, to use a friendly tone of voice;
- indicate to the community member the maximum length of time that would be required to obtain a response to his/her enquiry, and in the event of a complaint, indicate how it should be dealt with and whom it should be referred to; and
- be sympathetic when dealing with people who have special needs, such as the elderly or people with physical impairments.

In order to achieve above standards, municipalities should develop a programme to train all employees who deal directly with the public, whether face-to-face, in writing or on the telephone, so that they could be able to meet and perform adequately according to those standards (Mofolo and Smith, 2009:30). Apart from being courteous, giving as much attention to sharing information with the public is equally essential.

2.5.5 CUSTOMER INFORMATION (ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE)

The distance between the knowledge (or the information) that a public servant (or public institution) holds and what the member of the public understands is usually a source of frustration and tension between members of the public and government. It follows, therefore, that withholding information from the public is not in the best of either government or the public. Hence the idea behind Batho Pele's information sharing is to either get rid of, or where it is impossible to do so, reduce the information or knowledge between the state and its customers (the public) as much as possible. According to Largeway (1990:2), the very essence of communication is to share information with a view to ensure 'people's involvement and participation'. To achieve this, people are not only in need to be informed about the issue and educated on how it works but they also have to be motivated to do it (Lagerway, 1990: 2). In this way, municipalities should ensure that all community members receive detailed information about the extent of municipal services. For example, municipalities could inform communities about capital projects in their areas/wards in the current and the next financial year (Mofolo and Smith, 2009:30). When doing this, municipalities should provide full, accurate and up-to-date information about the services they provide clearly stating who is entitled to those services. This exercise should be carried out properly in order to ensure that all those who need information, have access to such information in order to act as expected. In a democratic context, where values of an open society are espoused, sharing of reliable information with members of the public is an important step towards inculcating a culture of openness and transparency.

2.5.6 OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY (FULL DISCLOSURE)

As part of access to municipal services, members of communities should be informed in what way municipalities operate, and the price of various services, such as the tariffs for basic services (sanitation, electricity, and refuse removal) as well as rates in the proposed budget. Again, full disclosure should be provided about all workings of government. At a municipal level, salaries of councillors and managers in municipalities should public knowledge. In such a way, openness and transparency could be the cornerstone of good governance and management. The requirement that 'municipal councillors should hold regular meetings with residents in wards to convey this information as indicated (Municipal Systems Act, 2000) must not only be complied with but it must also be used as a lifestyle. This also means that municipalities should

effectively use established mechanisms like WCs or find additional ways to inform, educate and publish annual reports to the members of their communities, indicating in simple language and user-friendly format:

- achievements of municipal departments and how the previous year's budget (operational and capital budgets) was spent;
- municipal departmental priority projects as reflected in the IDP for the following year; and
- a name of a contact person in municipality and contact number from whom they could obtain further information.

The reports issued to community members should be treated as mechanisms through which municipal departments could account to the public, and as such, identical information should also appear in municipal annual reports to the provincial and national government departments (Mofolo and Smith, 2009:30).

2.5.7 REDRESS (COMMUNICATION AND CORRECTIONAL MEASURES)

The principle of remedying mistakes and failures is also known as redress (Batho Pele White Paper: Section 4.7). Remedying mistakes and failures calls for public service institutions to enable people to indicate when they are not entirely satisfied with a product or service and for the public institution to apologise, provide a full explanation and act swiftly to rectify mistakes. Redress further implies that citizens should, apart from a remedy, receive a sympathetic, positive response (Crous, 2002:69).

To this end, municipal councillors and employees should make sure that, in an instance where the promised standard of service is not adhered to, community members should be called to attend meetings where it should be explained what caused non-compliance. A full explanation should be provided and subsequently, speedy and effective correctional measures should be effected. The capacity and willingness to take action if things are not the way they were promised, is very crucial in order to avoid violent protests.

Municipalities should have in place complaints systems and procedures that would enable staff to identify problems. The channels of complaints should take the form of

face-to-face meetings, complaint boxes placed in strategic places in municipal buildings, as well as making use of the telephone and computer networks to voice and collect complaints that could identify shortcomings in service delivery.

The availability of channels or complaints systems should be well published to the community members and should be easy to use in order to achieve its effectiveness. Municipalities should inform the public and provide the details concerning complaints boxes, telephone numbers, and web site addresses for the use of computer networks. In an instance where a delay is unavoidable in responding to complaints, the complainant/s should be timeously informed about its progress and at what time the response could be expected. Complaints should be thoroughly investigated and the councillors and employees should maintain impartiality. In the case of an individual complainant, ethical confidentiality with regard to the particulars of him/her should be protected in order to encourage complainants to voice their discontentment in the future.

When responding to complainant/s it should be ensured to address an individual's enquiries and feelings. In the event of a face-to-face meeting with a complainant, municipal managers should also train staff members to be able to take action themselves to 'put things right'. It is also crucial that complaints systems in municipalities should be structured to enable the recording of suggestions made by members of the communities in order to improve service delivery in future.

In order for staff members to take action when a complaint is received, handling procedures linked to complaints should be well-known by employees in municipalities, subsequently, training should be provided to all staff members who are offering 'across the counter' service and who are directly involved with members of communities.

2.5.8 VALUE FOR MONEY (COST-EFFECTIVE)

Services should be provided as efficiently and effectively as possible to give the public the best possible value for money. This issue requires that service delivery should be improved, and also that the public should have access to municipal services, but it should be ensured that absolute cost-effective procedures are created.

Therefore, it comes to the fore that Batho Pele principles should be used as guidelines in encounters with individuals in ‘across the counter’ service and as a communication tool with individual groups (ward committees, NGOs, and CBOs), and community members at the residential areas/wards. In this way, municipalities should be flexible, proactive and more resident-oriented. In his ‘statement of the nation’ address in 2002, the former President, Thabo Mbeki, cited in Crous (2005:8) called on all people of South Africa to arise and act – Vuk’ uzenzele! and went on to pledge that government will strive to give real meaning to the strategic challenge facing the Public service – Batho Pele.

Crous (2005:9) makes a note that Vuk’ uzenzele does not mean, ‘arise and talk’ or ‘arise and think’ or rather ‘arise and plan’, but in actual fact ‘arise and act’ is a better explanation. Therefore, if councillors and employees act as expected in municipalities, residents should be able to act in positive ways. In this way, the positive impact of Batho Pele as an overarching service delivery guideline can soon be realised.

2.6 THE IMPACT OF BATHO PELE ON SERVICE DELIVERY

Having said the above, it must be remembered that Batho Pele was adopted as a policy in 1998. Therefore, after a relatively long period of its implementation, it makes sense to assess or find ways of evaluating its impact on the quality of service delivery. To this end, the impact of Batho Pele has been assessed on a regular basis to determine if it is working effectively to improve service delivery. One such assessment was conducted by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in 2007. The assessment took the form of social attitudes survey for which the aim was to determine whether Batho Pele principles were effective in practice in municipalities as they were good in theory.

The said survey revealed that ‘citizen’s attitudes towards government vary in relation to each principle but, taken as a whole, there is a gap between principle and practice’(HSRC, SASA, 2007). For example, when the issue of satisfaction with services was contrasted with the principle of Redress. That is to say whether or not they were hopeful that their services will improve (or there will be Redress). Those who were not satisfied with the service also felt that the principle of Redress was not adhered to. In relation to water and sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and affordable

housing, for instance, between 75% and 83% felt that this principle of Redress was not being adhered to and those who needed redress were not expecting improved service delivery.

The other message from respondents was that ‘government is improving delivery but not managing to communicate and respond to people’s priorities’ (HSRC, SASA, 2007). In particular, the areas of greatest need for improved services were levels of consultation, redress, openness, relevant information, and courtesy. It is quite significant that all those in the better served areas and most of those in the non-metropolitan areas had a positive assessment of the implementation of Batho Pele than those in the rural communal and formal (farm dwellers) and informal locations. The latter had the highest level of disagreement with how Batho Pele principles were being implemented and scored higher levels of disagreement than the average (i.e.50%). In these locations the disagreement on Consultation ranges from 70% (rural formal) to 79% (urban informal non-metro) which are very high indicators of discontent. Equally high levels are visible in Redress (provide rapid response) where responses range from 79% in rural formal to 70% in urban informal non-metro expressing disagreement.

To accelerate development, South Africa needs the active support of all citizens, leadership in all sectors that puts the country's collective interests ahead of narrow, short-term goals, and radically improved government performance. The above-mentioned research has shown that Batho Pele (or People First) is an important pillar of high quality public service by government to the people, yet it is, quite often, inconsistently implemented, if at all. Therefore, while in some instances policy change may be necessary, but in most areas it is about implementing government programmes, holding people accountable for their actions, finding innovative solutions to complex challenges and getting the basics right (RSA, NPC, 2016:28).

2.7 BACK TO BASICS STRATEGY: A NEW APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY BY COGTA

In 2014, the national Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), having noticed that in most cases municipalities were not implementing government programmes or holding people accountable for their actions, released a document titled Back to Basics (B2B). Among other things the document wanted to

achieve was to ensure that municipalities ‘serve communities better’ by building ‘a responsive, caring and accountable government’ (RSA,COGTA 2014:5). There are six pillars that are proposed as a guideline to achieve the latter. The first of these guidelines re-enforces Batho Pele in that it talks about ‘putting people and their concerns first’. This re-enforces the Batho Pele principles in that it reminds those in power and positions of authority about their primary task and their responsibility to the people. However, what needs to be accentuated within this mindset is that, notwithstanding these good policies and programmes, the anger felt by people in poor communities is bound to continue unabated and it is more than justified if less or no emphasis is placed on their implementation. That means that the B2B document’s impact on improving service delivery will be evaluated on the basis of which municipalities have been confronted by a series of problems.

Chief among the problems that B2B document highlights is the lack of ‘institutional incapacity’ and prevalence of ‘widespread poverty’ which it claims ‘have undermined the sustainability of the local government, leading in some instances to a catastrophic breakdown in services’ (RSA, COGTA, 2014:5). This is exacerbated by ‘slow or inadequate responses to service delivery challenges’ which, in turn, leads to ‘breakdown of trust in the institutions and councillors by communities’. The breakdown in trust between councillors and communities creates a big ‘social distance’ between councillors who are public representatives and the citizens who are their constituency. Ultimately, all the systems and institutions associated with government are viewed as unreliable, ineffective, unresponsive and inadequate. The so-called service delivery protests are a reflection of community frustration with these failures, and have generated a negative narrative and perceptions for municipalities (RSA, COGTA, 2014:5).

To compound the above problem is the rampant, blatant and/or “widespread instances of rent seeking and corruption amongst public representatives, reflecting a broader breakdown in the values and principles that should be guiding the people we have elected or appointed to lead the local government system’ (RSA, COGTA, 2014:5). All of this indicate that, whilst government has stepped up efforts to realise a “developmental local government” through the creation of institutional frameworks such as the White Paper on Local Government 1998; supporting legislations such as

Municipal Structures Act (No. 117) of 1998; Municipal Systems Act (No 32.) of 2000, Municipal Finance Management Act (No. 56) of 2003 and Property Rates Act (No 6) of 2004, among others, there is an acknowledgement that the appointment of incompetent officials remains a blight because of both perceptions and evidence of corruption and its permutations.

2.8 CORRUPTION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Beresford (2015:1) remarks that ‘one issue that unites commentators from across the political spectrum is the threat that corruption poses to both the quality of South African democracy and the country’s prospects for socio-economic development’. For obvious reasons, ‘the cadre deployment policy’ of the political party that runs a particular municipality has received much attention in this regard. Some scholars have argued that service delivery protest action observed in most municipalities signify the ‘pathological failures’ (Atkinson, 2007) and ‘dysfunctionality’ of developmental local government state (see also Ballard et al. 2006; Southall 2007; Pithouse 2015; Alexander 2010; Butler 2010; von Holdt et al. 2011; Pieterse and Van Donk 2013; Booysen 2015; Pernegger 2015). More specifically, other scholars (Twala, 2014:160) have pointed out that the dysfunctionality of many municipalities is one of the ANC’s many challenges in its more than 20 years of democratic rule of South Africa.

Twala (2014:160) contends that criticisms levelled against the ANC’s ‘cadre deployment policy’ has, in one way, led to opposition parties labelling it as ‘jobs-for-friends’. This has largely re-enforced the dominant perception that cadre deployment policy does not only hamper development by entrenching a culture of corruption and subverting accountability, but that it also promotes the ‘politicisation’ (Pieters & Pierre 2004:2) of local government whereby party line is conflated with the mandate of the state. In other words, merit-based criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, rewards and disciplining of members of the public service (Pieters & Pierre 2004:2) is replaced with the political-based criteria. The implication is that municipal services are governed largely by political considerations, be it in appointments, dismissals or even the delivery of basic municipal services (Reddy, 2016:4). Consequently, in this context political considerations, to a large extent, will be dictated by the political philosophy of the ruling political party any point in time (Reddy, 2016:4) instead of being guided by

public good such that there is entrenched culture of public accountability on the part of public office bearers.

The ANC makes a similar observation in its 2012 Organisational Renewal discussion document. Among other things, it acknowledges that ‘neo-patrimonialism and corruption’ are spreading within the ANC, and that this is creating ‘anarchy and decay’ within the movement itself; stifling its capacity to promote the socio-economic transformation expected by South African citizens (ANC, Organisational Renewal, Johannesburg, 2012). Lodge (2014:2) makes a similar observation when he states that ‘symptoms’ of neo-patrimonialism within the ANC, including the gradual breakdown of distinctions between public and private concerns, leads to the growth of personality-based factional politics.

Nzo (2014:98) notes that public administration scholars such as De Visser (2010) and Cameron (2010) who paid particular attention to the functionality of municipalities, have directed attention towards the inefficiencies of municipal bureaucracies, arguing that political appointments and ANC interference in the running of municipalities have promoted widespread bureaucratic incompetence and inefficiency. In this regard, she argues that these ‘analysts and academics begin to question not only the capability of the state to deliver on its constitutional developmental mandate (see Butler 2010; Von Holdt 2010; Fine 2010) but also the way in which the ANC has managed to conflate the party with the state’ (Booyesen 2015). Ultimately, the criticism levelled against ‘cadre development’ indicates that it is a bad policy for everybody regardless of who implements it. It is the opposite of what a developmental local government should be about which is creating policies that prioritise merit over ‘cadreship’. Shapiro (2005:279) argues that, in any case, ‘only the rare agent has the luxury of aligning her interests with a single principal’, hence conflict of interest is pervasive in many municipalities.

Conflict of interest is hardly about shirking or opportunism with guile; it is about wrenching choices among the legitimate interests of multiple principals by agents who cannot extricate themselves from acting for so many (Shapiro, 2005:279). The very existence of social contract between the governed or citizenry (or the principal) and government (or the agent) in the midst of “multiple principals” and tangled loyalties

guarantees one thing that for the classic agency theory, namely, that there will always be agency problems (Shapiro, 2005:279). Therefore, while it is important to step up public accountability in order to hold public servants to account, care needs to be taken to ensure that which whatever is done is in the interest of citizen-centred local development.

2.9 DEVELOPMENT AND ITS LOCAL IMPLICATIONS

The concept of development itself is as old as the humankind. It has been used throughout human history to refer to how individuals and societies have attempted to better themselves. Some scholars (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:2) suggest that ‘development means improving the living conditions of society’. Though this understanding is widely accepted, there is a debate on what constitutes improved living conditions and how that would be achieved (Merlkote & Leslie, 2015). In another context, Cowen and Shenton (1996) observe that ‘development seems to defy definition, although not for a want of definitions on offer’. They (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:2) note that a recent development studies text offers ‘seven of the hundreds of definitions of development’. From the theories of modernisation, dependency theories to the neo-liberal paradigm, the concept of development has often featured prominently both as a failure or potential success punctuating each of the epochs. The debates about development as a failure or potential success has made some scholars such as Cowen and Shenton (1996:18) to even surmise that there is a serious ‘development problem’. This development problem, arise from the nineteenth-century resolution ‘to invoke trusteeship in which those who took themselves to be developed could act to determine the process of development for those who were deemed to be less developed’.

Msibi and Penzon (2010:2) explain that ‘the roots of participatory approaches in development can be traced to the early 1970s when people in the development community started questioning the top-down approaches predominantly used in the 1950s and 1960s. They aver that until that period, developed countries were providing economic or other assistance but not without conditions or prescriptions. However, when development projects and policies failed spectacularly under these prescribed conditions, developed countries and donors began to question the prescriptions or conditions imposed on developing nations because it was patently clear that the

development they had prescribed had often not bettered conditions for the people in any meaningful way. This led to the view that grassroots participation reinforces the chances for communities to adopt development activities appropriate for them (Msibi and Penzorn, 2010:2-3).

Accordingly, in the last part of the twentieth century, the logical sleight of hand (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:18) which justified entrusting the means of development to ‘developers’ is no longer convincing to such an extent that, as a doctrine, trusteeship stands condemned as Eurocentrism, an imperial vestige of the post-1945 attempt to improve living standards of poor colonies and poor nations through state administration (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:18). In this way, development, when interpreted through the lens of trusteeship, is taken to have no meaning in the ‘Third World’ countries and continents of mass poverty; it has had its time and has failed as an idea and a practice. Yet it is still contended that ‘development’ is the means whereby the goal of human improvement can be attained (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:18). In attempt to demonstrate how service delivery came to be associated with development in South African context, Cowen and Shenton (1996:2) quotes a South African politician who said:

“...we should...design a civil service which is development-oriented” (Z. Cindi of Azanian Peoples’ Organisation (AZAPO), a South African political movement, 1992).

Even though it is not exactly clear how and when, in South Africa, the concept of development came to be associated with service delivery, however, based on the foregoing, it is clear from the onset that ‘developmental civil service’ and/or ‘developmental local government’ found much more early expression in the South African liberation politics. In this regard, social transformation which is viewed as the ultimate goal behind public service, is, by and large, construed as ‘a process of enlarging people’s choices’; of enhancing ‘participatory democratic processes’ and the ‘ability of people to have a say in the decisions that shape their lives’; of providing ‘human beings with the opportunity to develop their fullest potential’; of enabling the poor, women, and ‘free independent peasants’ to organise for themselves and work together (Cowen and Shenton, 1996:2). Nonetheless, in the same token, however, Cowen and Shenton (1992:2), also argue that ‘development can be viewed as the means

to ‘carry out a nation’s development goals’ and of promoting ‘economic growth’, ‘equity’ and ‘national self-reliance’. This can be also observed from the ANC’s statement where it says:

“As your movement, the ANC shares your experiences of poverty, squalor, disease and underdevelopment. That is why since 1994 we have delivered electricity and clean water to millions, built clinics, classrooms and houses, and improved other government services” (ANC Local Government Elections Manifesto, 2000).

Given this understanding, it stands to reason that many poor and ordinary citizens associate poor service delivery (or lack of it) with development or lack of it. In addition, while the statement by the governing party gives an impression that it is acutely aware that ‘the introduction of free basic services will vastly improve life for poor households’ (ANC Local Government Elections Manifesto, 2000), it also seems obvious that it is equally aware that an effective ‘developmental local government’ cannot be delivered without the participation of citizens. It is in this context that Cowen and Shenton (1996:2) argue that ‘the well-taken distinction between development as the means of transitive action and that of an intransitive end of action is conflated with a distinction between the state policy of development and the attempt to empower people, independently of the state, in the name of development’.

Towards the above end, the ANC Local Government Elections Manifesto (2000) reminds us that that is the reason why the ANC introduced new laws - the Municipal Structures Act and the Municipal Systems Act - to ensure that councillors serve their communities with loyalty and dedication whereby all councillors shall sign a code of conduct requiring them to regularly report back to their constituencies (ANC Local Government Elections Manifesto, 2000). In essence, this means authentic development is the one which results from participation and participation must be true both in form and content. Therefore, participation cannot be done silently. It must be communicated to its beneficiaries.

Owusu (2014), drawing from authors such as Agunga (1997); Anyaegbunam (1998), Mefalopulos (1998), and Moetsabi (1998); Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998); and

Mefalopulos (2003) argue that the history of development has included failures and disappointments, many of which have been ascribed to two major intertwined factors: lack of participation and failure to use effective communication. Owusu (2014) also invokes Servaes's (2003) view that, 'the successes and failures of most development projects are often determined by two crucial factors: communication and people's lack of involvement' further demonstrates that development and community participation are greatly re-inforced through communication.

2.10 COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1993, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released a report in which it acknowledged that 'people's participation' in their own development was not only central but also that such participation cannot take place without 'communication' (UNDP Human Development Report, 1993). This acknowledgement by the UNDP came amidst the realisation that 'communication is central' as a tool to enable planners, when identifying and formulating development programmes, to consult with people in order to take into account their needs, attitudes and traditional knowledge. The report argued that 'only with communication will the project beneficiaries become the principal actors to make development programmes successful' (UNDP, 1993:3). Helping people at all levels to communicate empowers them to recognise important issues and find common grounds for action, and builds a sense of identity and participation in order to implement their decisions (UNDP, 1993:3).

Msibi and Penzon (2010:1) agrees with this notion and they describe it as a 'participatory communication'. It is 'communication which focuses on the active involvement of the people in all stages of development projects' (Msibi and Penzon, 2010:1). The involvement of people is crucial for sustainable development to occur. South Africa, having acknowledged the importance of following a participatory communication approach for development, and policies and strategies both on national as well as local government level (Msibi and Penzorn, 2010:1) support this resolve. Development programmes cannot produce change without an ongoing, culturally and socially relevant communication dialogue among development providers and clientele, and within the recipient group itself (Serveas, 2007:15). Based on this fact, it can therefore be argued that all those involved in the analysis and application of

communication for development, and social change—or what can broadly be termed ‘development communication’ (Servaes, 2007:15) — would probably agree that in essence development communication is the sharing of knowledge aimed at reaching a consensus for action that takes into account the interests, needs and capacities of all concerned.

Elsewhere, Lagerway (1990: 1) asserts that ‘people cannot be manipulated or coerced to develop themselves’. He suggests that ‘if education is the key then communication is the tool’ (Lagerway, 1990: 1). As such, the purpose of communication, as a tool, is getting people’s involvement through education because ‘both formal and non-formal education involves processes of communication’. This systematic process occurs over a certain period of time in which the people are informed, instructed and inspired to participate and be involved (Lagerway, 1990: 2). Likewise, Kumar (2011:2) posits that ‘development communication is communication with a social conscience’. It takes humans into account (Kumar, 2011:2). Kumar (2011:3) identifies two primary roles for development communication. Firstly, it has a transforming role, as it seeks social change in the direction of higher quality of values of society. Secondly, in playing its roles, development communication seeks to create an atmosphere for change, as well as providing innovations through which society may change’ (Kumar, 2011:2). The main objective of communication is people’s involvement and participation. To achieve this, people are not only in need to be informed about the issue and instructed on how it works but they also have to be motivated to do it (Largerway, 1990:1).

Given this context, development communication has to deal with two types of audience, namely i) the communicators comprising development bureaucracy, media practitioners and professionals, and ii) the people i.e. the audience who can be informed or uninformed; educated or semi-literate or literate’ (Kumar, 2011:3). This gives rise to three main ideas that clearly define the philosophy of development communication and make it different from general communication (Kumar, 2011:3). These are development communication i) as a purposive communication ii) that is value-laden and iii) that is pragmatic (Kumar, 2011:3). In essence, this means that, within the domain of development, there is a tacit positive value that is always attached to what one communicates about, which is supposed to motivate the people for social change. If this positive value is conspicuously absent, then people become discouraged to

participate and consequently development suffers. The second aspect of development communication, is that because it is pragmatic, then it is also “goal-oriented”. The ultimate goal of development communication is “a higher quality of life for the people of a society by social and political change” (Kumar, 2011:2).

Bond (2000) relates how the period immediately preceding the first democratic elections in 1994 was driven by the elite without enlisting the views of the toiling masses of the country. Ironically, these masses of poor ordinary people were the ones that were at the coalface of the internecine struggle to force the apartheid regime to accept democratisation. Msibi and Penzon (2010) borrow from Thomas (1994) to argue that ‘participatory communication focuses on people’s involvement in all stages of a development project, and stands in direct contrast with practices where the emphasis is on projects implemented with outside help and in which the beneficiaries are merely passive receivers of the finished product’. Instead, this approach point to a theory of sharing of information and knowledge, trust, and commitment in development projects ‘by focusing on participatory involvement of the people, which opens “another world” (Schoen, 1996: 250) in which communities can ‘determine the course of their own lives, concentrating on their unique needs, developing solutions, and making changes of their own choice’ (Msibi and Penzorn, 2010:3-4). This led to Largerway (1990) to argue that:

“What government wants and what non-government organizations want is for people to be involved. If people get involved, it means they understand. When they do, we reach the goal of our service. Many people want instant involvement which is never possible. That is where the process of communication comes in. Communication is not only advertisements, propaganda, entertainment, public relations and image building. It is an instrument of servicing the needs of the people to attain development” (Largerway, 1990:2).

Largerway (1990:4) illustrates, for instance, that after elections, the people are left ignorant of the developments affecting them. In this way, most of them are not informed of the issues that concern them. The result is severe poverty for most and affluence for the few. Therefore, he reasons that “to counteract the inequality, many resort to force”

(Lagerway, 1990: 2). Such is the cycle of events that never benefit the people. Therefore, development communication is meant to break the wall of ignorance, thus, breaking the bonds of poverty and oppression” (Lagerway, 1990: 2).

According to Government News Agency (GNA), October, 2018) the aggregate municipal consumer debt was R143.6 billion as at 30 September 2017. The largest component relates to households which accounts for 70.8% or R101.6 billion followed by commercial or business for 16.8% or R24.1 billion and another category of debtors for 6.7% or R9.6 billion. Municipalities are also experiencing cash flow problems which have resulted in them defaulting on their bulk electricity account with Eskom. As at the 31st of May 2018, the total overdue debt was over R14 billion. In South Africa, the runaway non-payment for municipal services has been largest contributor to the ever-rising municipal debt plaguing many municipalities. This is due to many municipalities’ inadequate strategies of revenue collection, among other things.

Mpofana municipality is one of the municipalities with deep-seated poverty and rampant unemployment challenges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). As a result, the KZN MEC for Co-operative Governance and Tradition Affairs (KZN COGTA) identified Mpofana as ‘having serious cash flow problems because of its incapacity to collect revenue and failure to tightly enforce cost cutting measures’ (April, 2017). Mpofana had an arrears account amounting to R89 million by mid-October 2018. This amount is up from R30 million by end of 2016. The arrears are mainly caused by the fact that communities are unable to pay for electricity because majority of them cannot afford them.

The situation discussed in the preceding passage is similar to Bond’s (2014:4) view that the ‘market-oriented service delivery policy’ of post-apartheid South Africa only ‘cut the depth of the prior system, while extending its breadth’ by employing a risky commercialized outsourcing of benefit payments (Bond, 2014:4). In essence, the argument is that, without looking closely at the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries, the commercialised approach looks at affordability at the expense of need. If you cannot afford it, you do not need it. Mpofana is clear case in point in that even though authorities were well aware of the deepening crisis of poverty and high unemployment gripping the majority of the people in Mpofana, particularly young

people, authorities continued to instruct ‘all councillors to go out door-to-door, educating the community about the significance of paying for services’(MEC Dube-Ncube, SA News, February, 2017). In particular, perhaps quite understandably, the community need to be made aware of their responsibility to pay for municipal services and the consequences of being switched off for non-payment (MEC Dube-Ncube, SA News, February, 2017). Nonetheless, it is equally important to consider that Mpopfana municipality, unlike its urban counterparts, is one of the many rural municipalities that were incorporated into the new local government system with its weak or extremely disproportionate revenue base against soaring levels of poverty. Therefore, given the endemic poverty which is exacerbated by rampant unemployment, it is impossible for less affording households to pay for services even if they want to but that does not mean that they do not need the services that are being rendered. The indiscriminate rule of thumb that everyone must pay and every municipality must generate its own revenue is misguided hence it misses the point about local development as departs from the developmental local government clamour. At best, it is disenfranchising to the poor municipalities and even more so to the poor citizens. In this regard, it is important to highlight the fact there is an intrinsic systematic problem inherent in the Municipal Structures Act when categorising municipalities.

To a very large extent, the manner in which it categorises the municipalities inevitably induces COGTA to view municipalities such as Mpopfana with a one-size-fits-all lens when it comes to municipalities’ revenue base, budgeting (or equitable share) and their functions, yet the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998 appears to categorise them differently for whatever reason. This appears to be a grey area that has been overlooked hence it needs to be fixed because it creates a situation where some municipalities that are in Mpopfana’s situation were doomed to fail before they could even begin to discharge their functions. Consequently, this scenario led to a situation where simple solutions like the proposed threat of switching off consumers from the electricity grid are applied to complex problems like poverty, unemployment and affordability of services. In view of this thought, and in order to understand the deep-seated systematic problems bedevilling Mpopfana, and many other municipalities that are in a similar situation elsewhere in South Africa, it is important to give its brief overview in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998 so as to give a better understanding of some of the problems bedevilling the municipality.

2.11 THE MPOFANA MUNICIPALITY: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Mpofana municipality was established in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, No.117 of 1998, as a category B municipality. In terms of Section 9 (f) of the Municipal Structures Act of 1998, Mpofana is categorised as plenary executive system with its executive authority limited to the municipal council itself and the mayor is the chairperson. The mayor is also the speaker of the local council. The main competences in terms of business activities within the Mpofana municipality are tourism and agriculture, with dairy farming taking the biggest chunk. Mpofana municipality's executive system is also combination of plenary executive system and a ward participatory system in terms of Section 9(f) of the Municipal Systems Act of 1998.

The municipality consists of three different role-players, namely, council, community and administration (Republic of South Africa, 2000, Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, Section 2). The municipal council is made up of representatives that are elected through local government elections conducted every five years (Republic of South Africa, 1998, Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, Section 12). It is this body of the municipality that carries the responsibility of realising the aspirations of the people. The council is accountable to the community on all promises made while canvassing for votes. It is important to mention that in Mpofana municipality the local mayor is also the speaker of the local council (Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 117 of 1998).

Section 4 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, (1998) empowers the municipal council with both legislative and executive authority. The election process involves all interested political parties canvassing for votes. The Republic of South Africa (Municipal Electoral Act no. 27, 2000) also regulates the manner in which elections for local government are conducted in the Republic of South Africa. The parties develop election manifestos around issues that are considered to be the priority needs of the community. It is at this stage that promises are made and expectations are formulated by members of the community. People have personal needs that shape their

expectations when they choose to vote a particular councillor or political party into power.

The national government develops policies that inform processes in all spheres of government of how services are to be delivered to communities. The Municipal Council takes the cue from national policies and develops implementation strategies that are founded on national government's principles. The Municipal administration is responsible for the implementation of the policies developed by the local, national and provincial spheres of government. Councillors, through community participation processes, consult communities to confirm their expectations on the level of service quality. Communities become part of the service design and provide an opportunity to the Municipality to narrow the gap between what is expected and the actual service experience.

The Municipal Systems Act also stipulates that the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of the provincial government responsible for local government in each province determines the number of seats to be allocated to each Council immediately after the election. Mpozana Municipality has five seats that are reserved for councillors that are directly elected by citizens and the other seats are party based. This means that they are allocated proportionally based on the number of votes the party receives at the ballot box. After the local government election held on 3 August 2016, African National Congress (ANC) won seven seats. Of these seven seats, two are party based. Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and Democratic Alliance (DA) occupy one each through proportional representation.

2.12 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF MPOZANA MUNICIPALITY

COGTA (2014:3) acknowledges that the core services that local government provides - clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, shelter, waste removal and roads - are basic human rights, essential components of the right to dignity enshrined in our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It further confirms that the 'vision of developmental local government was that it would be the building block on which the reconstruction and development of the country and society would be built, a place in which the citizens

of the country could engage in a meaningful and direct way with the institutions of the state’.

Mpofana municipality, as a public institution, is responsible for provision of basic services to an estimated total population of 37,103 as at the end of 2017 (Community Survey 2016). These services include refuse removal, electricity, human settlements, building schools, cutting of verges, library services, primary health care and many more to an estimated total number of 9 597 households, as prescribed and allocated in terms of relevant legislation. Community Survey (2016) data from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) show that above-mentioned households are spread across 1,819.8 square metres of the municipality with a population density of 22,58 inhabitants per square metre.

However, given the rural nature of the municipality, its revenue base is relatively small compared to the population it is supposed to serve. There are very few companies located or active in this area. This makes it impossible for Mpofana to keep skilled human resources as skilled people emigrate to nearest towns such as Howick in Umngeni municipality and Pietermaritzburg under Umsunduzi municipality. In addition, besides farming, there are no businesses, except for one rubber factory, to serve as strong revenue base for the municipality and source of employment for local communities. As a result, Mpofana has one of the highest employment rates at 27% which is about 2% above the national average (Community Survey, 2016).

Given the situation described above, it is clear that even in the best possible circumstances, Mpofana municipality would not have succeeded in fulfilling its mandate based on its status as well as its capacity as rural municipality. As a rural municipality, Mpofana has large contingent of commercial farms. However, while the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 released by The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa in 2012 (National Planning Commission (NPC) (NPC, 2012:217) proposes ‘agricultural development based on successful land reform, employment creation and strong environmental safeguards’, nothing of this nature has transpired in Mpofana. Despite the NDP promises that emphasis must be put on smallholder farmers where possible in order to expand ‘irrigated agriculture and dry-land production’, the previously marginalised citizens of Mpofana have remained

worse off. Notwithstanding, the farming prowess of Mpofana and the commitment in the NDP (NPC, 2012:19) that ‘established agricultural industries must be enabling partners’, there is no single agri-processing plant or agricultural industrial plant in Mpofana. This puts a lot of strain on the self-sufficiency of Mpofana municipality which is expected to collect revenues from the services it renders without fail in line with relevant legislations. It is within this circumstances that the systematic problems associated with the way government is configured become visible. For example, the Municipal Structures and to a very large extent the Constitution of the Republic does not give much latitude to municipalities such Mpofana to handle land reform issues on its own. Therefore, the transfer of land to local people should for a centralised process even though people on the ground are too desperate to wait.

Noting the importance of agriculture in rural areas like Mpofana, the NPC (2012: 219). acknowledges that ‘traditionally, agriculture was a livelihood asset for the rural poor when other sources of income fell away’. It acknowledges that this role was always underdeveloped because of apartheid and that it is diminishing further due to increases in social grants and employment opportunities elsewhere. Agriculture, however, has the potential to expand if the necessary environment is created. This is the necessary environment that has not been created in Mpofana. As a result, service delivery protests have become a usual occurrence for a period of time.

2.13 SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS IN MPOFANA

Since 2012, Mpofana municipality has been experiencing recurring incidents of service delivery protests with the effect that, at times, different councils were rendered dysfunctional. These have caused the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) to intervene by asking the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) to put it under administration. Among other reasons, relentless or persistent protests, councillors’ bickering and general failures associated with the council not being able to take resolutions on matters pertaining to the running of the municipality have been cited as the motive behind the dissolution. Madlala (2007:66) notes that persistent service delivery protests in Mpofana municipality have become a usual occurrence since 2009 in spite of the statistics showing that there have been major housing projects in this area and that a

high percentage (67.8%) of the households reside in "stand alone" brick structures. For example, while Madlala (2007:66) found that 'there are very low numbers of households which are regarded as residing in shacks or squatter settlements' in Mpofana, there is evidence that Mpofana is a protest prone municipality. This led Nleya (2010:3) to argue that 'the prominence of the service delivery hypothesis as an explanatory variable for protest has, however, not been explored empirically'

On many occasions, Mpofana community members have organised themselves into above-mentioned action groups to protest against what they perceive to be lack of service delivery. Media reports (The Witness, 21 August 2009) of protests organised by local groups such as Mpofana Community Mass Action Group (CMCMAG) and the Phumlaas Development Committee (PDC) are well documented. These organisations or action groups have often prepared memorandums of complaints against the Mpofana municipality in which they alleged maladministration, corruption and poor service delivery, among other things. In that process, the marchers have demanded the MEC for COGTA to investigate their grievances (The Witness, 21 August 2009). The effect of protests continuing unabated in Mpofana resulted in the dissolution of its local council by the KZN provincial government in September 2014. In 2014, when it was announced that Mpofana municipality has been dissolved (SA Government News Service, 3 September 2014) and its seven councillors were also relieved of their duties. The dissolution of the municipality centred on the fact that 'the municipality scored 47.54% for its Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) in the financial year 2013/14', which was 'below the provincial average'. Furthermore, 'it's IDP was not credible in that it omitted critical aspects such as a Human Resource strategy, workplace skills plan, human settlements, associated levels of services and backlogs, consumer debt, borrowing and a spatial development framework'(SA News, SA Government News Service, 3 September 2014).

2.12 CONCLUSION

Almost all protests occur in impoverished areas which often lie in the periphery of many, if not all, inner towns and cities. Majority of the people in these communities

experience high unemployment, inequality and abject poverty. Therefore, the conditions under which these poor communities live inevitably make them feel neglected, marginalised and left out from the mainstream of democracy they fought so hard to attain. Their efforts to communicate their plight through the use of normal communication and/or participation mechanisms created by government (or invited spaces of participation) in their localities are either ineffective or defective as their pleas are met with non-responsiveness. In reaction to non-responsiveness and in order to reclaim their power and authority to be heard or listened to, these grassroots invent their own spaces of participation. Protests are but one of the many ways in which they do this. The idea or reasons behind the invented spaces is for grassroots to exert their power and to alter existing power relations in their favour. They view their situation as an agency cost they have incurred as a result of goal conflict which has arisen between them as principals (or citizens) and the agent (or government) they elected to serve them. This goal conflict manifests itself through the pervasive culture of corruption among officials attached to local government and other state institutions intended to serve them. In this scenario appointed and elected officials elevate their own interests above those of the citizens and/or communities who elected them. Acts of cronyism, patronage, gate-keeping and nepotism are often accompanied by lack of consultation, information and redress. In this way, the intents of all important service delivery frameworks such as Batho Pele and Back to Basics, all of which are aimed at improving and enhancing the service delivery terrain are circumvented or subverted. This subversion or diversion of democracy by corrupt officials has result in adverse implications for local economic development in poor communities. Conditions of resentment, discontent and mistrust are then created between government and the governed. Together, these factors unite or combine to breed anger among many poor communities. It is this anger by the poor and marginalised communities that is transformed into protests which often turn violent. It can also be said that many rural municipalities such as Mpofana were actually doomed to fail before they could even begin to carry out their functions due to their inherent lack of institutional capacity inherited from the apartheid system. It is equally important to note that both the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 and the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 actually address this intrinsic challenge. For this reason, municipalities such as Mpofana are left to their own devices in terms of living up to the expectations of the local citizenry. This partly explains the reason why Mpofana has become known for its resilient protest

culture which has given it a status of being one of the protest hotspots in KwaZulu-Natal. Notwithstanding the above, it is strongly believed that will contribute immensely to the current protest debates. The following chapter aims to clearly outline two theoretical approaches adopted in conducting this study, namely, the principal agency theory and the invited and invented spaces of participation.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Theory is very important in laying a foundation for research in social sciences (Chiwawara, 2014:41). Priede (2014: 1), in his essay titled *Theory and Practice*, seems to bolster this position when he says that “the relationship between practice and theory is reciprocal”. He points out that ‘practice cannot position itself without the

theoretical questions guiding the research’. This is so because, without theory, data may be collected but without any sure way of explaining the different observed phenomena. Furthermore, their relationship is symbiotic, in that an advance in one automatically requires modification of the other. This is to say that, if there is advancement in theory, then certainly there will be advancement in practice and vice versa (Priede, 2014:1).

3.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS APPROACH

This approach was anchored around two theories of participation. Firstly, drawing extensively from Cornwall’s (2002) and Gaventa’s (1980) theories of participation and Miraftab’s (2009) ‘insurgent planning’, the study explored the concepts of ‘invited’ and ‘invented’ spaces of participation. In particular, the study looked into how communities worked between these, especially when formal platforms of participation no longer existed or did not yield desired outcomes. In essence, the research unpacked how citizens, especially at a grassroots level, moved between ‘invited’ and ‘invented’ spaces of participation in order to effectively address their issues. Secondly, using the agency (principal – agent) theory, the study considered the behavioural patterns of those who are in positions of authority when ordinary citizens raise their concerns.

3.2.1 PRINCIPAL AGENCY THEORY

Agency theory is used extensively in the fields of political sciences and economics to explain a situation where one entity (the principal) delegates or hands over power, or authority, or responsibility to another person or entity (the agent) to act in their interest. Agency theory could refer to ‘lawyer-client, doctor-patient, broker-investor, politician-citizen...employee-employer’ relationships’ (Moe, 1984:756). In the context of this research, it was applied or used to explain the relationship between citizens and their elected officials, namely, the local council and the provincial cabinet.

The principal–agent problem (also known as agency dilemma or the agency problem) in political science and economics, occurs when one person or entity (the ‘agent’) is able to make decisions on behalf of, or that impact, another person or entity: the

‘principal’ (Ross, 1973:134). Whereas Ross (1973:134) maintains that ‘the relationship of agency is one of the oldest and commonest codified modes of social interaction’, he also concurs that ‘an agency relationship has arisen between two (or more) parties when one, designated as the agent, acts for, on behalf of, or as representative for the other, designated the principal, in a particular domain of decision problems. Given the fact that elections are a social compact or contract between the government and the governed, it can be adduced that the agency relationship exists between the two parties. To this end, Ross (1973:134) avers that ‘examples of agency are universal’, adding that:

“Essentially all contractual arrangements, as between employer and employee or the state and the governed, for example, contain important elements of agency” (1973:134).

Similarly, Susan Shapiro (2005:263) concurs that in an agency relationship, one party acts on behalf of another and extends the point by pointing out that within this type of relationship, intrinsically, there is always an act of delegation by the principal to the agent for, or with the hope that, the agent will act in the interest of the principal. Elucidating further on the same point, she states:

“In exploring the delegation of power and authority in political and government institutions and international organizations, political scientists take agency theory outside of the economic marketplace and the constricting web of assumptions that shroud the economic theory of agency. The political system can, of course, be understood as a complex network of principal-agent relationships composed of citizens, nation states, elected officials, lawmakers, members of the executive branch, administrative agencies, courts, international organizations, ambassadors, bureaucrats, soldiers, police officers, supervisory officials, civil servants, patronage appointees, and even those who monitor other agency relationships inside political institutions and in the market. These actors concurrently play principal and agent roles within and across political organizations” (Shapiro 2005:263).

Taking it a step further are Byman and Kreps (2010:3) who posit that ‘without the practice of delegation, no principal-agent relationship would exist’. They describe delegation as the process by which the principal offers a ‘conditional grant of authority’ to an agent to act on their behalf. They further allude to the fact that ‘what all forms of delegation have in common is the granting of authority by the principal to an agent who acts on behalf of the former’ (Byman and Kreps, 2010:2). Having explained the agency problem, it can be posited that an agency relationship exists between Mpofana citizens and the Mpofana municipality given the fact that the Mpofana local municipal council has the authority to make decisions on behalf of, or that impact on the lives of ordinary people, in particular, the poor, of Mpofana,.

Similarly, it has been established that a principal-agent relationship exists between government and the electorate, or the citizens, or the local communities. That is to say that, through elections, citizens or ordinary people - in various communities - consent to the delegation of their power or authority to those they elect. In South Africa, there is a political party system of voting where the electorate votes for the party instead of individuals. Once voted in, the party that wins the elections will then constitute government. Of course, this is done under the pretext that those who are so elected will act in the interest of those who elect them – the citizens. In other words, there is a social contract between the electorate and the elected. Therefore, by way of voting, citizens are making a choice about how (and by whom) their current and future interests will be served or not served.

South Africa is a unitary state consisting of national, provincial and local spheres which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated (Constitution of South Africa, 1996:1267). Having the South African electoral system as party based, means that when citizens elect a government, they choose a party that will best represent their interests at both national and provincial levels. At local level, citizens elect both a Proportional Representative ward councillor and a local ward councillor. Just as there is an agency relationship between citizens and the local government, the same agency also exists between citizens and all spheres of government. This study is interested in the agency that exists between citizens and local government as well as that which exists between provincial and local spheres of government.

So, the question as to what happens – or what do citizens do, or what should they do when their interests are not served or their expectations are not met? This study considered what led to protest action by ordinary citizens. Furthermore, it sought to explore the actions and reactions of the provincial government towards the local council in situations where citizens have openly and persistently showed discontent to the responsiveness (or lack thereof) of the local council to their service delivery needs.

Because delegation of power and authority occurs in every situation where one entity or principal delegates, devolves or grants authority or power to another (agent) to act in his/her interests, or on his/her behalf, whether the situation involves private companies, political and government institutions and international organizations, Shapiro (2005:271) insists that ‘political scientists should take agency theory outside of the economic marketplace’.

This was also used to explain the agency relationship which exists between provincial government and the Mpofana local council. In a nutshell, the constitutional powers of the provincial government (principal) to withdraw the authority of (or dissolve) the local council (the agent) when it is viewed or deemed to have failed to discharge its responsibilities according to the expectations of the communities they represent, as it was the case in Mpofana, clearly suggested the existence of another agency relationship between these two arms of the state. For example, section 139 (c)(i) of the constitution (Constitution of South Africa, 1996:1267) gives powers to the provincial government (or the provincial executive council) to intervene by dissolving any local council that is viewed or has been deemed as failed to have carried out its mandate to the satisfaction of local citizens. After dissolving the local council, the provincial level can then appoint an administrator to run the affairs of the local municipality until a new council is elected. This clearly demonstrates the powers of the provincial executive council to confer upon or withdraw authority from the local council.

Therefore, taking a cue from Byman’s and Kreps’s (2010:3) view that ‘several factors would motivate a principal to give up some agency over outcomes by delegating to an agent’, a spotlight was also shone on the pattern of actions and reactions of the KZN provincial government) in dealing with Mpofana. Specifically, the issues of common interest or contention between the local communities and their local council and the

role of the KZN provincial government in relation to the issues under scrutiny had to be explored. This helped to explain some of the underlying reasons people eventually take to the streets in order for them to be heard. It also assisted in determining some of the motivations that protesters put behind their actions to protest and why some of them view official platforms of citizen participation as either inadequate, restrictive or tyrannical (Cornwall, 2004; Sinwell, 2009;) and non-responsive, to their needs hence they “invent” (Miraftab, 2005) alternative spaces of participation.

3.2.1 INVITED AND INVENTED SPACES OF PARTICIPATION

Miraftab (2009:39) invokes her earlier work (Miraftab, 2006) on the citizen or grassroots campaign practices in Cape Town during the 2001–06 period, in which she conceptualised their actions in terms of invented and invited spaces of citizenship. She explains that:

“‘Invited’ spaces are defined as those grassroots actions and their allied non- governmental organizations that are legitimized by donors and government interventions and aim to cope with systems of hardship. ‘Invented’ spaces are defined as those collective actions by the poor that directly confront the authorities and challenge the status quo. The two sorts of spaces stand in a mutually constituted, interacting relationship, not a binary one. They are not mutually exclusive, nor is either necessarily affiliated with a fixed set of individuals or groups or with a particular kind of civil society” (Miraftab, 2009:39).

There are two salient points made by Miraftab (2009) about the invited and invented spaces in this regard. The first point emphasizes that those spaces of practicing citizenship are mutually inclusive in that ‘grassroots collective actions move between them, and at different points in their struggles use different sets of tools, and spaces of mobilization’ (Miraftab ,2004:19). The point is that, as they move between these two types of spaces, they (grassroots) are not necessarily affiliated or affiliating with any fixed set of groups, be they political or institutional. This distinguishing feature of social movements is quite critical for this study because it highlights their instinctive ability to insulate themselves from co-option, weakening and to maintain their shape and

independence from any outside influence, political or institutional, despite moving in between the two types of spaces. In a long run, this defence mechanism allows them depth and a unique ability to adapt to both situations within the invited and invented spaces of participation without losing their shape and resilience in the face of adversity.

For Miraftab (2004:19) the distinction lies in the fact that actions taken by the poor within the invited spaces of citizenship, however innovative they may be, aim to cope with existing systems of hardship and are sanctioned by donors and government interventions. Within the invented spaces, however, grassroots actions are characterized by defiance that directly challenges the status quo: in one space strategies of survival are sought within the existing structural system, and in the other resistance is mounted to bring it down.

Sinwell (2009:5) observes that ‘in post-apartheid South Africa, social movements have emerged as a key way through which groups of people express their dissatisfaction with dominant forces, current structures of society or the status quo in order to create a new way of living or of ordering society’. He argues that “in this way, participatory spaces become political and social spaces which are determined, and altered, by power relations”. Therefore, the key component within invited and invented spaces of participation is that citizens, through social movements, seek to challenge authority within and outside the institutional channels provided by government. This allows them to create their own spaces in which they operate, often in opposition to government policies and outside of the institutional spaces for participation, such as ward committees and development forums that have been prescribed by the government (Sinwell, 2009:17).

Moreover, for Gaventa (1980) there is ‘no guarantee that increased participation in decision-making arenas will not meet power constraints’. This led Oliver et. al. (2003:14) to conclude that this is the reason why social movement theorists see protest as ‘politics by other means,’ because they have ‘now well recognized that extra-institutional and institutional politics are intertwined and interdependent’.

Obviously, this is a departure from the past, about fifty years ago ‘when sociologists considered protest to be an intrusion into politics’ (Oliver et. al., 2003:213-4). In the

wake of the movements of the 1960s, protest is now seen as an important adjunct to democratic polities and a significant factor in the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes. This has allowed the study of social movements to grow ‘from a marginalized and almost-dying sub-specialty of social psychology in the 1960s to a large specialty area of sociology in its own right with significant ties to political, organizational, and cultural sociology as well as to social psychology’ (Oliver et. al., 2003:213-4).

Gaventa’s (1980) view indicates a shift in the way participation must be viewed. He suggests that that ‘instead of studying only one aspect of the divide between participants and non-participants’, it is rather more revealing to focus on both such that the study of politics now properly answers the questions of ‘who gets what, when and how and who gets left out and how – and how these two are interrelated’. The latter is particularly important for two critical reasons. Firstly, because the existing institutionalised participatory spaces have their set of limitations which are facilitated through predetermined rules of engagement and lop-sided power relations. The second reason is that the very nature of formal or institutional spaces, in other words, the predetermined nature, configuration and lop-sidedness of power relations against the poor becomes the genesis of the alternative spaces of participation.

In the South African context, the main examples of invited spaces are ward committees or development forums, while popular spaces may consist of protests, resistance or letters to those in government. These invited spaces are usually used when institutional spaces have been closed or non-existent to those who are dissatisfied with government projects or policies and have been defined by people from below. Invited spaces may exist despite the institutional spaces that planners have prescribed (Stinwell, 2009:83). For example, in South Africa, the courts have increasingly become a key non-institutional space in which to challenge the decisions made by the government.

Miraftab (2004:19), points out that “grassroots mobilize within a wide range of spaces of citizenship, making use of what in a specific time and place is effective in presenting demands and gaining results”. She also stresses that “such informal practices follow no blueprint, but are situated in their specific contexts”. For Miraftab (2004) the latter is important in that it stresses “the flexibility of these grassroots strategies and to help

avoid a rigid conceptual barrier between the invented and the invited spaces of citizenship”. In short, which spaces the grassroots opt to utilise at any given point in time is often determined by the prospect of success in shaping the outcomes of engagements in a chosen space of participation.

Service delivery protests over the last few years, particularly over housing but also water electricity, health and education, have become part of the South African political landscape. After nearly 25 years of democracy, South African citizens have begun to demand houses from the government. Despite large degrees of success around the delivery of housing, citizens have begun to understand the fact that they have not been given housing as a failure of the government to deliver to them (Community Survey, 2016). This is particularly problematic since, as the government admits, budgetary restraints clearly inhibit everyone from being given access to housing all at the same time (Stinwell, 2009:111). The main thrust of this study is to determine what motivates South African citizens to embark on protests and what the local / provincial responses to this have been. This is through the lens of Mpofana protests.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Having explained the agency of participation and how citizens delegate or enter into a social contract with political parties who ultimately form government, the study found it necessary to also draw from the theory of invented and invited spaces to explain further what happens when citizens feel that their interests or expectations are not fulfilled or prioritised within formal or institutional spaces of participation. In other words, through the use of two theoretical approaches, namely principal agency theory and the theory of invited and invented spaces, the study will explain some of the motivations for citizens to engage in protests against those that they have voted into power. The vote is a delegation of authority or conditional contract for those elected into local councils to act in the interests or on behalf of citizens. Included in this social compact is the expectation that citizens will participate meaningfully in the decision-making process. The invited and invented spaces will assist in explaining what happens when the principal’s interests appears to have superseded by those of the agent. In other words, this study will also consider motivations for grassroots to move across to

invented spaces of participation when invited spaces appear to be available for them to influence policy and decision making.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this Chapter is to present the research method and the justification for the method chosen to undertake this study. The Chapter also describes various methods used to select the participants, including sampling, recruitment of participants for both focus groups and semi-structured interviews and the reasons why this was done. It also discusses the data collection methods and tools used, ethical considerations and the data analysis approach. Lastly, the Chapter discusses validity and rigour and ends with the limitations and challenges experienced during the study.

The research explored the underlying reasons and motivations for the service delivery protest in Mpofana local municipality. Within this context, the research also examined the response of government towards the needs of the community in this area and the reaction of citizens toward government in response to the fulfilment (or lack, thereof) of their service delivery needs.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The method you choose when undertaking a study will affect your results and how you conclude findings. Most scientists are interested in obtaining reliable observations that help the understanding of a phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) maintain that research methodology or strategy is determined by the nature of the research question and the subject being investigated. As a result the research format used in an investigation should be seen as a tool to answer the research question.

There are two main approaches to a research problem, namely, quantitative and qualitative researches. Due to the fact that this study is exploratory, it used qualitative research methods.

Qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in

their own natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2). The aim of qualitative research is to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it. Thus, people and groups are studied in their natural setting. Accordingly, this type of approach was chosen in order assist in exploring, interpreting some of the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations behind service delivery protests in Mpofana local municipality.

4.2.1 STUDY POPULATION

Mpofana is a small municipal council under uMgungundlovu family of municipalities with a total population of about 38 103(Stats SA, 2016). It is situated about 40km west of City of Pietermaritzburg under uMsunduzi municipality. It hugs the N3 Mooi Toll Road corridor as it spills over on both sides of the Toll road. With its population density of about 21 per square kilometre, its demographic composition comprises of 92.1% Africans, 0.6% Coloureds, 1.8% Indians and 5.2% whites. The main town for Mpofana municipality is Mooi River, an Afrikaans term meaning beautiful river. The town grew from a small farm and, then, later, became the principal node of the Mpofana municipality when a railway linking Durban with Johannesburg and Drakensburg Mountains was established to cater for the needs of the farmers in the area. This suggests that Mpofana has great potential for development through tourism. There are six schools serving Mooi River with others situated further from town to serve traditional farm labourers.

The urban economy is primarily based on retail entrepreneurship, tourism and supporting local agricultural community. Previously, the backbone of the urban economy had been Mooi River Textiles which finally closed down in 2002. The municipality can be classified as rural. However, it has large tracts of commercial farms, subsistence farms, small villages and a small township known as Bruntville. The rural economy is based on agriculture and tourism. The main farming activities are dairy and equine. Local farmers are supported by the Mooi River Farmers Association. Bruntville is a relatively new township having been established after 1994. It consists of free hold Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses and has no noticeable shacks, except for a couple of mud structures in ward five where old

structures were partly demolished by the municipality under the pretext that it will build new RDP houses for families that occupied those houses.

Boasting one state of the art community library built by Department of Arts and Culture after it was burnt down during a protests in 2012, the population of Bruntville is totally African. The town of Mooi River is part of ward one, however, it is more affluent than all other parts of Mpofana, including Bruntville township which has more than a quarter of the population. Bruntville township is the epicentre of many protests that are staged in Mpofana hence it was a perfect location for this study. Therefore, the study population is all the people of Bruntville township. Despite the fact that there are no shacks, Bruntville this is where issues of youth unemployment, poverty, electricity and water cuts are rampant. Therefore, it had all the characteristics that the researcher was interested in

4.2.1 SAMPLING

One of the first steps towards conducting a proper research is sampling. The first step towards sampling is to identify a population from which a sample will be drawn. In statistics or in research terms, the “population” includes all members of a defined group that is being studied or on which information for data driven decisions is being collected. A part of (or a subset of that population) is called a sample.

In the context of this study, the population was the whole community of Mpofana local municipality and the sample (of participants) was drawn from three wards out of five wards of Mpofana local municipality. These were wards one, three and five. The reason for selecting these wards is four-fold. Firstly, these are the wards that have been affected or plagued by protests on a consistent basis. Secondly, even though these wards appear to be much more developed or better in terms of services compared to other wards such as ward four (which has a largely rural component), they seem to be the ones that have more grievances than the other two. Thirdly, despite the persistent nature of the protests in these wards, there is no formal research that has been conducted on the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations behind this phenomenon. Lastly, besides the reasons given above, these three wards are the most accessible ones since they are located along the Mooi River N3 Toll road. In other words, given the budget allocated, it made more

financial sense to conduct research within the wards that are not only active in service delivery protests but also closely located within a walking distance of each other.

After the study purpose had been clearly defined and location of the study properly identified, it became easy to recruit participants from the study population. The sample, a subset of that population, was then drawn using a purposive sampling for municipal participants and convenience sampling procedure for community members.

The sampling frame for the study included both community members and local authorities. Specifically, the focus group sample was drawn from members of the community residing in ward one (1), three (3) and five (5). It included a cross-section of people from within these wards. In particular, as much as possible, deliberate efforts were made to include participants from youth, women and older persons in order to get all the characteristics of the population from the selected sample. The diversity of the group also was crucial as a contributing factor to the variety of perspectives obtained from the participants as they shared their lived experiences and interpretations they place on the different topical issues that were discussed.

According to Gable and Williams (CAPA: 2), focus groups do not use probability or random samples. Focus groups generally utilize convenience sampling. The sample for a focus group has individuals with characteristics of the overall population and can contribute to helping the research gain a greater understanding of the topic (Gable and Williams, CAPA: 2).

It can be said that familiarity with the place helped the researcher to overcome some of the challenges associated with recruitment of participants into focus groups. Therefore, the selection of wards and, ultimately, participants within those wards was largely guided by the value that they were going to add to the research. This was important to ensure that the participants selected from the three wards had all or the majority of characteristics similar to the phenomenon that was being investigated.

For instance, it has already been mentioned that many of the protests in Mpofana have been fomented and staged in wards one, three and five. However, on the contrary, ward four, an urban but predominantly rural ward, has its own unique circumstances and

grievances such as cross-border issues and has rarely staged a protest. So, the fact that wards have different strategy of protesting or airing grievances was an important consideration in the choice of methodological approach.

4.2.2 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

As indicated above, convenience sampling techniques and snowballing were employed to conduct the recruitment process for members of the community. It is important to add specifics. The researcher had previously worked in the area as a Rapid Response Specialist employed by KZN Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). It was during this time that the place became familiar to the researcher and a good rapport was formed with some of the local people. Moreover, part of his previous work entailed responding to such things as protests and grievances before they became protests. Therefore, this became a critical tool and a good foundation to leverage on during the recruitment process.

For example, even though the researcher was no longer an employee of COGTA, during the recruitment process, the researcher was invited to one of the meetings in which all the local development committees, namely wards, one, two, three, four and five were present. However, due to the fact that the scope of the study only covered wards one, three and five, as explained above, recruitment was conducted only in those wards. It is also important to mention that the researcher ceased to be employee of COGTA in June 2017, almost a year before this study was conducted. Similarly, it is worth mentioning that the researcher had no role, whatsoever, during the disbandment of the Mpfana municipality in 2013 because he was not working for COGTA at that time. He only joined COGTA in 2016 long after this incident had occurred.

Notwithstanding the above facts, in an attempt leverage on the rapport built some members of the local development committees of the three wards, the researcher asked them to assist in recruiting participants to which they agreed. However, when the researcher arrived for the interviews, a protest had broken out and he was asked to wait for a month until calm was restored before he could come back to conduct interviews. However, when he called after a month, the members of the identified local development committees reneged on their promise citing reasons that they might be

victimised or suspected of organising another protest or selling out their comrades. However, they were very helpful in advising on how and when to enter Mpofana given the volatility of the area. Therefore for the whole month of August 2018, the researcher could not enter Mpofana because it was not safe to do so. However, on helpful advice of some members of the local development committee, the researcher went back to Mpofana on 9 September 2018 to re-assess the situation. On arrival, though, none of the local development members were answering their phones. It was clear that a new strategy was needed. The researcher had to change tact. He used his familiarity with the area to drive around looking for potential participants.

After driving around and talking briefly to local people, the researcher realised that the time was opportune to come back for recruitment but he was advised to come back on the weekend when most people were at home. The researcher had observed during the time when he was employed by COGTA coming to Bruntville township on a weekend was a bit of risk and that in order to avert the risk of getting disruptions due to a number social activities that occur in this township, he had to be there very early while people are still waking up, shops and taverns are still closed.

On 15 September 2018, the researcher went back to Mpofana and started recruiting people he met on the street. There was a bit of a challenge initially because even though people were keen to participate, they were uncomfortable with the venue which was the local hall in ward three. In addition, since the researcher did not have a confirmed group it meant he still to go around recruiting more until a good number for a focus group was reached. A good focus group has between eight to ten participants. In his situation, there were three people here and two people there. This meant that he must keep another group waiting while trying to recruit another group. This was a bit of a challenge as well. However, eventually, the first group got interested and directed the researcher to another big group which ended becoming a problem as the group became even bigger than the maximum number (i.e. twelve) that was envisaged. However, the upside of this is that the researcher was now spoilt for choice. Eventually a group of twelve people was selected to participate in the focus group for ward three and interviews were conducted in one of homes of the participants who was happy to allow this to happen in his house.

From ward three, the researcher moved to ward five. The recruitment in ward five became a lot easier than that of ward three because the participants in ward three were very kind to advise the researcher about where to find most people and the manner of approach or strategy that was most likely to convince them to participate. The interviews in ward five carried out inside a local shop. The owner of the shop agreed to allow the interviews to take place in one of his makeshift boardroom/meeting room.

Once ward five was completed, the researcher came back to ward one which is nearby the N3 Toll Plaza just next to ward three where he had started earlier. Once again, recruitment in ward one was smooth because the researcher was now familiar with the strategy that worked. It assisted a lot to approach groups of people because even if some within these group did not want to partake, there was always someone or two or three within the same group who wanted to help by recruiting others so that the focus group reached the required threshold. In fact, the researcher could see the disappointment when people were told that we have enough people to proceed with the interviews. In ward five, there were about three participants who left in the middle of the interviews but this did not affect the focus group interviews. Eventually, about three focus groups were done all in one day. The focus was then turned to the recruitment of local municipality officials or interviewees.

Due to the fact that there had been protests after protests, the municipal offices were still closed on the 15 September 2018. So, it was difficult to get hold of the mayor and the officials. Some councillors were phoned because the researcher had their numbers on his database from the days when he was working for COGTA, one agreed to meet but did not turn up for the interview. The researcher persisted until he got hold of the senior official who agreed to be interviewed but wanted to get permission from the municipal manager because he was on suspension. The time went by until the researcher approached the office of the mayor and the office of the municipal manager to request interviews when the word came out that offices were now open. This was in the first week of October 2018. The two principals were not in their offices; however, their managers requested the researcher to send the questions by e-mail in a word format so they can respond to them. The researcher did as requested but when nothing happened, he followed with a phone call. Still nothing happened, so the researcher persisted until the senior municipal official who had been suspended reported back for

duty. Only then things started moving as a date for interview was agreed telephonically but many cancellations occurred subsequently due to the unavailability of the senior municipal official concerned. Eventually, the interview occurred mid-October, exactly a month after the focus group interviews were conducted.

4.2.3 DATA COLLECTION

The decision as to which form of interview to use for a particular research objective is not an easy one, given the relative advantages and limitations of each form (Nachimias and Nachimias, 1976). The researcher has several methods for collecting empirical artefacts, documents, and cultural records, to the use of visual materials or personal experience materials, ranging from the interview to direct observations (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:14).

For the purposes of this study, a triangulation method of collecting data was used. Shenton (2004:65) describes triangulation as a data collection method that ‘may involve the use of different methods, especially observation, focus groups and individual interviews, which form the major data collection strategies for much qualitative research’. He adds that whilst focus groups and individual interviews suffer from some common methodological shortcomings since both are interviews of a kind, their distinct characteristics also result in individual strengths. He argues that the use of different methods in concert compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits. The primary method used for this study semi-structured interviews and focus groups as the main means of data collection.

Barry Nagle and Nichelle Williams (CAPA: 2) indicate that ‘group interaction and non-verbal communication are primary benefits of focus groups’. To explain this point further they point out that ‘group interaction between members of the target population during focus groups may encourage participants to make connections to various concepts through the discussions that may not occur during individual interviews’.

Turning their attention to the researcher during the interview, they emphasise that ‘a skilled facilitator can encourage these group interactions to capture this data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied’. They further add that

‘non-verbal communication is also data that can be captured in focus groups’, and that ‘participants within a focus group may respond very differently to a topic’. A topic related to gender equity, for example, may provoke intense discussion among female participants while male participants withdraw from the discussion. This type of interaction is observation data for analytical purposes (Nagle and Williams, CAPA: 2). Where possible, supporting data may be obtained from documents to provide a background to and help explain the attitudes and behaviour of those in the group under scrutiny, as well as to verify particular details that participants have supplied. Opportunities should also be seized to examine any documents referred to by informants during the actual interviews or focus groups where these can shed more light on the behaviour of the people in question (Shenton, 2004:66). This is one of the reasons why data collection for this study comprised of a combination of methods involving structured interviews for the officials and unstructured interviews for the focus groups.

Based on the foregoing, quite a lot of background information was also drawn from other records, including, but not limited to, personal experiences which came about both through observation and personal interactions with some of the protesters while the researcher was deployed there by KZN COGTA for about a year. In addition, administrative records such as financial statements, annual reports, media reports, audit reports, IDP, Council resolutions and personal records of meetings held with various stakeholders, senior leaders of the ANC, and leaders of protests at different times, were used as a source of information.

The main tool used for data collection in this study was the focus group interview schedule for the focus groups and the semi-structured questionnaire for the councillors and local authorities. The main reasons for the focus group approach to communities was too allow them to express themselves freely so that their opinions, attitudes and motivations for the protests could be clearly understood.

Similarly, the main reason for the semi-structured interviews with councillors and local officials was to allow them to speak on specific areas of their responsibilities with a view to determine their attitudes and opinions on the mandate, resource mobilisation, performance, monitoring and evaluation of their responses towards service delivery. During both the interviews and focus group interactions, audio-recording was used with

consent from the participants. This method assisted in ensuring that all the crucial details of the interviews and discussions were accurately captured which ultimately enabled accuracy of interpretation and analysis.

Furthermore, it the responsibility of any researcher to ensure that that the highest standards of ethical conduct are upheld at all times during this process, therefore, it is important to mention that the informed consent was obtained from all the participants who participated in semi-structured interviews and focus groups as well those who were observed. These informed consent forms were translated from English into the local language, which is IsiZulu, whenever this was necessary, and a copy of the English version of the informed consent is kept under safe lock-and-key conditions for analysis purposes. More importantly, in order to encourage more open discussion and to elicit good responses from the focus groups, questions that were asked and topics that were discussed were translated into the language that all the participants clearly understood.

4.2.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to comply with the prescribed ethical standards as required by the Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, ethical approval was obtained to conduct the study before fieldwork was embarked upon. Furthermore, all ethical prescriptions such as keeping confidentiality on the identity of the respondents were strictly ensured. This included ensuring that utmost care and extreme caution was taken not expose people who live under vulnerable circumstances borne of circumstances of poor service delivery to further vulnerabilities. Even though clearance from the UKZN Ethics Committee had already been obtained, a Consent Form was also used to ensure that participants knew they were not obliged to participate in the study and that their anonymity would be protected.

Furthermore, the participants were informed about their right to unconditionally withdraw from the study at any given point in time and that no questions as to why they were withdrawing would be asked. Gatekeeper permission, in the form of a letter on the relevant authority's their letterhead, giving permission for the study to be conducted, was obtained before the research could commence. This research report is a culmination of the information gleaned from the above processes and procedures of

data collection and analysis. The preliminary report was shared with all the participants in the study in order to ensure that the essential requirements of scientific rigour for the study, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, were adhered to.

4.2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative research is endlessly creative and interpretive. The researcher does not just leave the field with mountains of empirical data and then easily write up his or her findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative interpretations are constructed, and various techniques can be used to make sense of the data, such as content analysis, grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) or discourse analysis.

Due to the fact that the researcher used focus groups and semi-structured interviews, the nature of data collected from the participants required the analysis to be organised into particular themes. In view of this situation, the thematic analysis approach was adopted for the study.

This means that - once both the focus groups and in-depth interviews had been conducted - the data collected was transcribed before it was organised into themes and sub-themes. This paved way for thematic analysis to happen. Thereafter, the research report was produced. Essentially, the data analysis process entailed six steps as follows:

Table 1: Process flow for data analysis describing six (6) stages

| | Phases | Description |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Familiarising myself with data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative preparation, i.e. transcribing data, re-reading the data and noting down initial ideas |
| 2. | Generating initial codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across entire data set • Collating data relevant to each code |
| 3. | Searching for themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating codes into potential themes • Gathering all data relevant to each potential |
| 4. | Reviewing themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking if themes work in relation to the coded extracts • Checking if themes work in relation to the whole data set • Reviewing data to search for additional themes • Generating thematic map of the analysis |
| 5. | Defining and naming themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells • Generating clear definitions and names for the themes |
| 6. | Producing the report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of vivid, compelling extracts examples • Final analysis of extracts • Relating analysis back to the research question, objectives and previous literature review |

Table1 adapted from Braun and Clarke(2006)

While efforts are made to ensure rigour in the collection and analysis of data, it is equally important to heed Braun's and Clarke's (2006:16) advice that the above prescribed six steps should be used as 'guidelines to carry out a thematic analysis and should not be used as prescriptive, linear, and inflexible rules when analysing data. They should rather be used in relation to the research question and available data'.

4.4 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND RIGOUR

Shenton (2004:63) mentions that although many critics are reluctant to accept the trustworthiness of qualitative research, frameworks for ensuring rigour in this form of work have been in existence for many years.

Leedy (1993:40) argues that, with any type of measurement, two considerations, namely, validity, and reliability, are very important. Validity is concerned with the soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instrument. It looks to the end results and it asks the question: Are we really measuring what we think we are measuring?

Reliability, on the other hand, deals with accuracy. It asks the question: How accurate is the instrument that is used in making measurement? There are six types of validity which individually apply in different research situations. These are face validity, criterion validity, content validity, construct validity, internal and external validity. According to (Leedy, 1993:40), face validity is the type of validity that relies on the subjective judgement of the researcher which is applicable to this study. It asks two questions: (1) Is the instrument measuring what it is supposed to measure? (2) Is the sample being measured adequately representative of behaviour or trait being measured?

In the above context, Shenton (2004:63 64) reminds us that 'many naturalistic investigators have, however, preferred to use different terminology to distance themselves from the positivist paradigm'. He cites Guba, who proposes four criteria that he believes should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study [3]. By addressing similar issues, Guba's constructs correspond to the criteria employed by the positivist investigator (Shenton, 2004:63):

- a) credibility (in preference to internal validity);^[1]_[SEP]
- b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability);

- c) dependability (in preference to reliability);^[1]_[SEP]
- d) confirmability (in preference to objectivity).

Considering the above four requirements for scientific rigour, the choice of triangulation method for this study was more appropriate because of its simultaneous use of different methods, especially observation, focus groups and individual interviews as the major data collection strategies. It was strongly believed that applying triangulation would address most, if not all, of the above aspects of validity, reliability and rigour.

Another motivation for the above choice of methods was that both focus groups and individual interviews are interviews of a kind, so they suffer from some common methodological shortcomings, however, their distinct characteristics also result in individual strengths. Accordingly, Shenton (2004:65) cites Brewer and Hunter to emphasise the point that the use of different methods in concert compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits. Appropriately, the method of triangulation was chosen on the basis of the above-mentioned considerations.

4.5 PROBLEMS/LIMITATIONS

Some of the limitations that the study came across related to minor things such as financial constraints. However, others related to the fact that the study municipality was always volatile and relatively unstable, having experienced successive community protests since 2009. On a number of occasions, the researcher had to leave Mpofana as the protests had erupted unexpectedly. As a result, a number of interviews and focus groups were cancelled within a very short notice thereby putting more financial strain on the non-existent budget. On two occasions, protests erupted while the researcher was busy with recruitment for the focus groups which led to the people who had committed to partake to chicken out. In particular, the members of the local development committee who were assisting with recruitment stopped answering the researchers calls. This required a change in recruitment strategy. What also made it difficult was the fact that the protests were between the community and the municipality. The focus groups were to be drawn from the municipality whilst the respondents for semi-structured interviews were to be drawn from the municipality. So, even though many

people wanted to assist, there was that palpable sense of being uncertain as to whether they were doing the right thing or whether they were betraying their neighbours or colleagues within the development committees.

This sense of uncertainty made recruitment a bit difficult in the beginning, therefore, delays were caused and this affected the project timelines, to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the process became much smoother after the rapport had been re-established with other groups that were conveniently approached by the researcher as and when he came across them. The other factor that created problems was that some of the issues or demands such as high unemployment for the local youth, raised by expectations of money before people could participate. However, the nature of the research topic itself and the familiarity of the researcher with the area and the people played a big role in overcoming some of the fears on the side of the participants as it, indeed, appeared to hit the right nerve with the members of the local development committee. What can also be highlighted is the fact that it was difficult to secure interviews with the local municipal authorities. There were times when manager/senior officials in one of the offices of the mayor and municipal manager were assigned to assist in terms of organising the interviews but the efforts did not materialise. Then the researcher was asked to send the questions through the e-mail but no response was received albeit with apologies. However, eventually the researcher using other skills managed to find one of the senior official within the municipality who had been delegated by the municipality to handle the interview. This happened almost a month after the focus groups had been done.

4.6 CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding all the issues raised above in terms of what took place on the ground, there is nothing major that could be assumed or presumed to have compromised the study. All the focus groups were held in venues chosen by the participants where they felt really comfortable. All the participants were free to discuss issues. In fact, in ward three, which is dominated by members of the development committee, participants indicated that they wanted further engagement on these topics because they felt that the time did not allow them to share more information. Even in all other wards, namely one and five, there was that sense that these were important issues which required more

time. Based on all these revelations, it is not farfetched to conclude that the data collection process occurred under conditions envisaged in the methodology and that it was executed successfully as planned. There is a strong causal relationship between the quality of the data collection strategy used and the results of the study. The following chapter presents the results of this study.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the main findings of this study. Protests are a usual occurrence in South Africa, not only because they are enshrined in the laws of the country (Regulation of Gatherings Act, No.205 of 1993), meaning that protests are a democratic right, but also because when ordinary people feel disenchanted with a number of issues involving service delivery in neighborhoods, they make themselves heard. This chapter consists of five sections divided according to the themes identified in this study. These themes are, in turn, sub-divided into subthemes to show how they link to the main themes. The two primary sources of data used for this research are focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The focus groups were conducted on 15 September 2018 while the semi-structured interviews were conducted on 11 October 2018. The focus group interviews were held in three wards of the municipality, namely, wards one, three and five. For the purposes of this reporting and to ensure confidentiality participants will be identified as Participant no. 1, Participant no. 2 up to the total number of participants in each focus group. To ensure clarity, the ward number where focus group took place will be mentioned next to the participant number. Therefore, FG 1 will represent participant number one in each of the three focus groups.

5.2. KEY ISSUES/CHALLENGES AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY IN MPOFANA

All the focus group discussions were held in the three wards as indicated above, namely, ward three, ward five and ward one, respectively. They mainly consisted of young people between the ages of 25 - 40, the majority of whom are serving members of the local development committee. There were fewer female participants. Female participants were reluctant to participate. It was not easy to determine whether this was due to the fact that the area had recently experienced a protest or because they felt dominated by their male counterparts. However, generally, all the participants who agreed to be part of the study were young people within same age group as mentioned above. All the groups were predominantly males and all of them wanted to be interviewed on the spot rather than relocating to a formal venue. Even though there was noise in ward three due to a nearby tavern, they accepted to be recorded and the recordings were audible. It is also worth mentioning that majority of the participants,

particularly in ward three, indicated that they support the ANC and some are even active members in its formal local structures such as the ANC Youth League and the ANC branch. Notwithstanding, the latter, the majority of them were also members of the local development committee that has either participated, supported or initiated many of the protests that have occurred in the area. In many ways this suggests that inasmuch as they support or affiliate with a certain political party, they are more interested in self-activity when it comes to development. They are not interested in hard core politics.

5.2.1 SUB-THEME 1: THE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MPOFANA

The study revealed that one of the most immediate challenges facing the people of Mpofana is unemployment. Throughout all the three focus groups that were held unemployment was highlighted as the most immediate challenge or issue. Every other challenge that was raised - whether it was about the delivery of basic services, main causes, planning and execution of protests - revolved around one theme, unemployment. All participants in the study agreed that there was nothing wrong with the area per se except that there are no jobs, especially for young people. The participants acknowledged that Mpofana is a relatively small municipality with a lot of potential in agri-processing, transport/logistics and agriculture. However, the levels of unemployment were so high that many households are unable to pay for the basic services such as refuse removal, electricity and water which they receive from the municipality. For example, while the population of Mpofana was estimated at 38,103 in 2017 (Stats SA, Community Survey, 2016), its unemployment rate is estimated at 30 percent, which is 5% above the national average of 25%.

Study participants revealed that protests are a manifestation of social discontent in reaction to high unemployment which they blame on the municipality. For example Participant 2 in ward three had the following to say:

There was an incident involving a company that came to Mpofana to install electricity. When this company came, it had already appointed people. This company came with two Toyota Quantum Kombis (or mini buses) full of people who were not from Mpofana municipality. When we asked the Mayor about this, he simply said that he was not aware of how it happened. When we asked how can he say that he doesn't know when he is

'ubaba wekhaya' (meaning father of the house or first citizen of the municipality)....when his children are employed by the same company. To show how dysfunctional the municipality is, all councillors within the local council do not get along. That said, it means nothing will ever go right in Mpofana as long as we have councillors who are not pulling in the same direction, which is why we are saying, all of them must go now!

Therefore, while other issues like water, electricity, refuse removal (these will be discussed later) are on the surface, the main source of anger comes from lack of job opportunities. Even those that emerge through contractors that come to do some work in the area are reserved for those who are either relatives, friends or have close ties with the people who are in decision making positions. The research also found that despite the fact that Mpofana is largely a rural municipality with a number of commercial farms, the municipality was unable to take advantage of this competitive edge/advantage. There is no single agri-processing plant in the form of dairy farm or factory in Mpofana. Furthermore, despite the fact that Mooi-Plaza N3 Corridor is one of the strategic gateways connecting one of the busiest harbours in Africa to three provinces, namely, Free State, Gauteng and Mpumalanga, there are no economic benefits accruing to people of Mpofana. Their perception was that this is due to the fact that the local council was not acting in their interests. Participant no.5 said the following in this regard:

As people of Mpofana, we have a privilege to be located along the N3 which is the gateway to all economic destinations. Therefore, N3 is the economic hub of South Africa. Everything passes through N3 yet we have no jobs. The protests is the only language that is understood by our leaders. In Mpofana, protest is the only language that is spoken and understood by everyone. So, if we block N3 we are listened to because the whole country comes to a standstill. This means that even those who ignore us begin to listen when we cut-off the route between Durban and Johannesburg. In Mooi-River if you want to be listened to: protest is the only way. Therefore, once we stop everything, burn tyres and trucks, we know every leader will stand up and come here to listen.

Furthermore, participants also highlighted the fact that Mpofana was right in the heart of the tourism precinct of Midlands Meander, however, none of the participants were aware of any tourism activity within or around Mooi River, their town. As a result,

participants felt that they were either being let down or left out of the economic and employment opportunities associated with the unlocked tourism potential of the area because the municipality did not have any programmes to involve other social partners in optimizing on this potential. Participant no.3 in ward three added that:

“Even the only time when the person who is active in tourism around KZN, Mr. Sihle Zikalala (MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs), came to our municipality, he did not speak to us about tourism. He spoke about consumer something. Tourism is the only thing that has a potential to bring a lot of opportunities because we are in the heart of Midlands Meander which has very strong in tourism potential. So, if you come to Mpofana and you do not speak to us about tourism, we are going to be angry and we will express this anger by protesting” (Participant no.3, ward three).

In a study conducted by Cele (2009) to assess Mpofana’s local economic development potential, respondents agreed ‘that this area has a very prominent agricultural sector’ and that ‘there is further great potential for industries in the agro-processing sector to be located within the Mooi-Mpofana municipality’ (Cele, 2009:53). However, Gibb and Nel (2007:72) argue that ‘the survival of South African small towns now generally rests on the creativity and ability of local actors to identify and to develop new economic foci’. With that said, the Mpofana municipality openly admits that ‘[t]here has been a very slow economic development progress and investors shy away from Mpofana due to many inhibiting factors that the municipality currently endeavours to address (Mpofana IDP 2015/16:14). Among these inhibitors, is the ‘degenerating town characterised by crumbling and dilapidated infrastructure and poorly maintained buildings which have contributed to the inability to attract new investors to boost Mpofana’s economy and create job opportunities and jobs’ (Mpofana IDP 2015/16:14).

The study also revealed that the agricultural industry which is the main source of employment in the area is declining due to lack of investment caused by the delays in land reform issues bedeviling Mpofana area. Participants indicated that the biggest number of people employed in nearby farms are older people and young people hailing from the rural part of Mpofana. Otherwise, the majority of young people from Mpofana were unemployed while those who are employed have jobs outside of Mpofana. Participants felt that the high unemployment rate in the area was due to the lack of local

economic development (LED) and they hold the municipality for failing to attract investment in this regard. Participant no.5 in ward three had this to say:

“Sir, as you well know, when people are hungry, they become violent and impatient because even the Zulu adage says it: a hungry man, is an angry man. So, similarly, here in Mpofana, people, especially youth, are hungry, that is why they protest when the municipality neglects them. They protests in order to force the municipality to do something about lack of development which causes high unemployment. It would be nice if we could get more than just one factory here” (Participant no.5, ward three).

Unemployment breeds frustration due to hunger and poverty. Therefore, young people are likely to protest when they realise that there is no improvement in the living conditions within their area. Another important finding from the study was that participants in three different wards felt that there are too many foreign owned shops that come to Mooi River yet these shops do not create meaningful employment. Instead, they take money from them. So, they do not believe that the proliferation of shops is benefitting them. Participant no.1 in ward three stated that:

“Can this municipality also reduce these shops that are all over our town. There are just too many small shops here in Mooi River but we don't have money to buy from them because we are unemployed” (Participant 1, ward three).

The excerpt above is a reference to shops owned by foreigners which sprawled within the town of Mooi River. Within the above context, communities felt that there is no point in bringing shops which require them to buy because they do not have money (or disposable income) to pay for what these shops are selling due to unemployment. The municipality must support small local businesses, instead, so that, through these small businesses, local people are able to generate disposable income. The above view was echoed by participants in ward one as follows:

Participant no.4, ward one:

“My view is that the municipality must support SMMEs. As we are speaking, you are here at the carwash. If the municipality can open space and many others like this one so that more business activities can take place, this will surely increase job opportunities

for many young people as they will be able to open new other businesses while also employing others to do other things” (Participant no.4, ward one).

Participant no.5 supported the above view by adding that:

“What I can say is that they must reduce the number of foreign owned shops because they do not add any value in terms of solving the problems we have. These shops want money from us and we do not have money because we are unemployed” (Participant no. 5, ward one).

Interestingly, the study found that residents are aware of their obligation to the municipality to pay for services. They are well aware that for the municipality to meet its service delivery targets or goals, it must have a reliable or sustainable revenue collection system with consistent revenue base or that this means that the municipality must collect revenue from the users who consume services it renders. However, participants strongly argued that one good turn deserves another. They felt that if the municipality resolved the unemployment problem/challenge, they can be in a position to reciprocate by paying for the services. Reciprocity to pay for services hinges on affordability which in turn depends on income received through employment. In this regard, they hold a view that, in conditions of high unemployment such as those which are prevalent in Mpofana, it is impossible for less affording community members to reciprocate by paying for services that are rendered to them by the municipality when they literally do not have money to do so. One participant clarified this point as follows:

“Well, it is simple. We know that the municipality needs money in order to deliver services to the people. We know that for this to happen, we have to pay for services. But we cannot be able to support the municipality in this endeavour because majority of citizens have no money at all due to high unemployment. As we are talking right now bread is about R13.00. That’s the money you need to live by on a daily basis. So, for a person who earns R2500 or even R4000 a month to pay R300 for services, pay for refuse collection, and transport because many local people work outside Mpofana, it means, over and above paying for services, the little they earn outside Mpofana is also taken up by transport expenses. So, it is difficult for people to assist the municipality if the municipality operates under these conditions of rampant unemployment. Unless the municipality extends a helping hand by eradicating unemployment because unemployment means that people have no money to pay for services and that means they can’t pay”(Participant no.5, ward three).

It is clear from the above excerpt that the issue of unemployment is directly linked to affordability. In a nutshell, a person who is unemployed does not have any disposable income. Therefore, no disposable income means that they cannot afford some of their basic needs. So, their view is that unemployment is not only hurting them as citizens, it is also hurting the municipality. Therefore, their argument is that demanding citizens to pay ignores the fact that they simply cannot afford the services as opposed to not wanting to pay for them. Having said that, what also came up repeatedly during the research is the fact that participants did not only raise problems, they also showed that they want to be part of the solution to the problems facing the municipality and its citizens. One participant had this to say:

“Let me start with what our municipality can do to ameliorate the situation facing local people. Like I said earlier, that we are a small area and we have acres of unused land which is strategically located along N3 corridor and we have basic resources and services. Instead of wasting time with small tenders, the municipality has to start by opting to create permanent jobs/employment. Then once people are employed on full time basis, they can then be able to support the municipality by paying for rates and services rendered. Otherwise, currently, it is impossible for the municipality to achieve this (successfully collect money) because its people have no money to pay for these services. On the other hand, if there was more employment, then more and more people will afford to pay money to the municipality, thereby contributing to its revenue base increases”(Participant no.5, ward three).

Another focus group participant added:

“So, as the Mporofana community, we are unable to pay because we have no income since we are unemployed. At the same time, it is difficult to sleep in the dark when there are electricity cables connected to your house and you know there is something you can do about it”(Participant no.2, ward five).

The above quotation from the focus group participants is in reference to electricity disconnections effected by the municipality for defaulting consumers/households. The municipality would disconnect and consumers will often find a way to reconnect themselves to the power grid. The municipality refers to these types of connections as electricity theft or illegal connections while the community is adamant that they are legally connected except that they are disconnected by the municipality when they are unable to pay. In any case, during the structured interview with the senior manager of

the municipality, it came to light that the municipality owes Eskom a sum of R89 million in total debt. This sum includes a carry-over from the previous years. In 2016, this sum of money stood at R33 million, however, due to ‘illegal connections’ or default payments, it has ballooned to this figure. The manager had this to say during the semi-structured interview:

“Let me explain the issue of services to you. You see, here in Mpofana we have a huge debt collection problem. It’s an historical problem that you probably know about because it’s in the public domain. We owe Eskom about R89 million. This is the money we do not have as we speak. It has been like that before 2016, even before I joined the municipality. In 2016 this debt stood at R33 million. Everytime we get money to reduce the debt, it does not work because the money we get is too little to make even a slightest difference. Worse of all, there are illegal connections or what we call electricity theft whereby residents/users are literally refusing to pay because they say the mayor promised them free electricity before he was elected as a mayor. Now, the only factory that we have in Mooi-River will pay us something like R1.5million in lieu of services and rates every month and Super Spar will give us around R30 000 and the rest (far less than this) will come from the shops operating in the town and the other amount comes from the citizens. But you can already see that all of this is just a drop in the ocean compared to what we are owing Eskom. On the other hand, we have to pay operational expenses to keep the municipality running. This includes things like paying employees, buying stationery, paying rent, landlines, mobile phones, pay rent for machinery and so forth. You can see our problems are big” (Mpofana senior official, semi-structured interview).

Another interesting revelation made by participants is that free electricity was a campaign ticket for the mayor before his election. It transpired during the focus group discussion that the mayor had promised residents free electricity if they voted for him. However, once he became a mayor he reneged on this promise and wanted them to pay. Their view was that he must either step down if cannot live up to his promise or they will not allow him to continue as a mayor because it means they voted for him on a wrong ticket. The following quotes from Participant no. 3 is more revealing of this:

“This is the same mayor who promised us free electricity when he was still campaigning but now he wants us to pay for it. It means he was lying to us or it means we voted for

the wrong person. We want him to step down because he lied to us” (Participant no.3, ward three).

Participant no.2 added the following:

“My brother, I want to be honest with you, if I can be clear with you. If the municipality or government were to be here, I will ask them one favour: can they, please, fire the mayor, first. I am sorry to mention names because you asked us not to mention people’s names but can they please fire the mayor. They must not impose the mayor on us” (Participant no.2, ward three).

While unemployment ranked as the topmost challenge that the participants felt was affecting the Mpofana community, it was the view of many of the participants that the latter flowed from the lack of local economic development. For example, it was revealed during the study that there is only one firm or factory that is situated in Mooi River, a local Central Business District (CBD), which produces rubber. This factory is the main source of employment for people in the local community. However, during the focus group discussion, it also transpired that same company employs about 95% of this its workforce from outside of Mpofana municipality. This fact was confirmed by one of the senior officials during the structured interview. Participant no. 3, ward three had this say about the situation:

“You see my brother, here in Mpofana, there is only one factory, the Chinese factory (on further investigation the researcher discovered that it was actually a factor owned by Taiwanese nationals). The owners of this factory, just like the municipality, does not like us local people. It does not like people from Mpofana. You can go there to see for yourself. Majority of the people employed there are not from Mpofana. I can say about 95% of the workers are not from Mpofana. Even those few that are from Mpofana can be fired anytime. They do not like us. I once worked there and I was fired for no reason” (Participant no. 3, ward three).

During the structured interview with the senior manager, it was noted that this factory is the single main source of revenue for the municipality. According to the manager, the rubber factory’s contribution to the municipal revenue is about 1.7% (R1.5 million) of the total Eskom debt. This is three or four times more than the income received from an estimated 70% of the residents who pay their services and other local business combined. For example, the manager indicated that one big local chain store contributed

about 0.03% to municipal revenue alone. This is a drop in the ocean compared to the Eskom debt. Therefore, the study revealed that the municipality is in a bad financial position which requires extra-ordinary efforts to attract local economic development. He had this to say in this regard:

“Now, the only factory that we have in Mooi-River will pay us something like R1.5million in lieu of services and rates every month and Super Spar will give us around R30 000 and the rest (far less than this) will come from the shops operating in the town and the other amount comes from the citizens” (Mpofana senior official, structured interview).

It is also interesting to note that the fact that there is an observable intersection of interests between the people of Mpofana and the local municipality with regards to the importance of having such big factories in their town. The local citizens acknowledge that the factory is the single biggest employer in the area while the municipality sees it as a single biggest source of revenue. In the final analysis, it is clear that both the citizens and the municipality realise that they stand to benefit more if many such businesses establish themselves in Mpofana.

5.2.2 SUB-THEME 2: LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

With regards to local economic development, participants felt that once there is development in the area, there will be a lot of improvement in their socio-economic status. They strongly believe that development means more big businesses such as manufacturing plants, processing coming to do business in the area. Their view is that once there is more business activity locally, the municipality will also benefit a great deal. The participants are aware that the municipality needs money from the services it renders in order to continue to deliver these services. However, participants also felt that the municipality must first go out and lobby external investors to relocate their businesses to Mpofana municipality so that the local people can benefit from the employment opportunity that will be created and development that will take place. One participant had this to say:

“For example, South Africa is a developing country. There are many businesses that may want to relocate to areas that seem to have a big potential for business growth like Mpofana. The municipality must go out there and lobby these businesses to come and build factories here so that people will be employed. If, for instance, you make sure that, at least 50% of the people so employed are local people, then the rest can be people from other areas, you have solved half the problem. We understand that we cannot be an island. If you have a good number of factories coming to our municipality, then people will be employed then they are a good tax revenue base because they are in a good position to pay for services and at the same time they keep cash circulating within the municipality. But as things stand, it is difficult to ask people to pay because they have no money at all” (Participant no.5, ward three).

In light of the above, one can see that local people in Mpofana municipality are not only raising problems, but they are also prepared to be part of the solution. They are contributing ideas in terms of how the situation can be improved. In addition, it is worth mentioning that many of them had raised an issue about people from outside Mpofana getting employment in the area while they as locals are unemployed. Therefore, the issue about 50% in the above excerpt was addressing this aspect. This issue is an important one for this study because it raised quite an emotive discussion during the focus groups as another participant explains in the excerpt below:

“Another good thing about our area is that we are right next to the N3 corridor, we have water, electricity, roads infrastructure, railway passing here and we have acres of unoccupied land or space. That means that should there be anyone who wishes to invest in our area, we have all the necessary requirements, including labour owing to the current high unemployment rate. Since Mpofana is a small area, we expect that if such employment opportunities are invited in our area, we will be prioritised. We understand that also that such opportunities may not simultaneously solve all our employment problems by a single stroke. So, if there is factory that is looking for 20 people and 100 people show up, we understand that only that number can be accommodated. We understand that! But, at least, that number must consist of local people if the skill that is required is readily available. That will definitely make a difference. Over time, more and more companies will come to Mpofana and more people will be employed” (Participant no.5, ward three).

Considering the above extract from the focus group discussion, a finding can be made that Mpofana people are prepared to welcome people from outside Mpofana into their area; however, not if this means that they must be last to benefit. They want to be prioritised. This is understandable given the fact that they are the local citizens. So, once there is talk of paying for services such as refuse removal, electricity, water, it means a lot of burdensome expenditure on their non-existent incomes, but if the municipality extends a helping hand by solving the local development challenge in the area, the unemployment crisis may go some way to being solved and citizens will be more likely to pay for services rendered to them by the municipality. Non-payment of services results in the municipality being unable to implement other projects due to the knock-on effect exerted on other budgets.

5.2.3 SUB-THEME 3: POOR DEBT COLLECTION AND ITS IMPACT ON OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The study further revealed that extent of cash flow problems associated with low or poor debt collections in Mpofana has a knock-on effect on other important projects and mandates that the municipality is supposed to fulfill. For example, one of the managers interviewed indicated that some key infrastructure projects had to be either disbanded, abandoned or suspended due to the fact that funds for these projects were diverted to cover or pay for other important municipal support functions. The senior official painted the following scenario:

“For example, we receive grants in the form of Municipal Infrastructure Grants or MIG. However, because owe so much whatever money we are able to generate from the small revenue base we have, will simply go to pay our debt and we will still be on the negative. This means that our liquidity or cash flow is in crisis. You cannot claim that you are running a municipality when you cannot compensate your employees, when you cannot pay Telkom for landlines; when you cannot pay your service providers for photocopiers; mobile phones, municipal vehicles, stationary, cleaning services and security to name a few. So, we are forced to divert funds earmarked for infrastructure projects towards covering operational costs...just to keep the municipality going. This means that our infrastructure programmes are put on hold or suspended until we have received a new

budget from the equitable share. It is usually not enough to take out of the liquidity crisis we find ourselves in” (Mpofana senior official, structured interview).

The implications of low or non-collections leaves the municipality with a huge consumer debt which forces the municipality to divert funds such as the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG)intended for infrastructure projects to operational budgets. These operational costs include, but they are not limited to, compensation of employees, office equipment, stationary, telephones and mobile phones, computers, cleaning and security services. Inevitably, such a situation creates a problem for the municipality. It is then bound to suspend its infrastructure development projects. The manager explained as follows:

“There are small operational issues that you can take for granted when you look at them from a distance yet when they happen you begin to realise how important they are. For instance, you cannot run a municipality when all the telephone lines have been cut-off. You cannot successfully run a municipality when everyone is not paid their salaries. You cannot run a municipality when there are no fax machines or when there are no photo copiers, no stationary, mobile phones, and computers. Most of all, you cannot run a municipality successfully when there is no cleaning and security to look after the state’s assets. So, when you are in a situation like ours, an endemic cash crisis, when there you run out of funds to do all these things and you realise there are such funds like MIG, you are left with very little choice. You divert those funds to keep the municipality going” (Mpofana senior official, structured interview).

All of these problems have persisted since the inception of the municipality. The municipality does not have basic equipment such as tractors, TLBs, graders and other gardening tools. The crisis also relates to or includes the hiring of equipment. The municipality finds it unaffordable to hire equipment such as TLBs, tractors, drillers, garden equipment or verge cutters, and to pay salaries at the same time. Similarly, the municipality does not have enough funds to buy its own even though this option is much cheaper than hiring. The Mpofana municipality is often forced to divert funds for MIG to other activities not intended for it. Important infrastructure maintenance projects such as construction of access roads, storm water drainage system, re-gravelling and bulk water supply systems for new housing projects end up being suspended indefinitely based on these reasons.

“Once you have diverted the MIG funds, you have created two major problems. The first problem is that you are on a collision course with the Auditor-General for using infrastructure funds on operational mandates. But the second big problem is that on the service delivery side of things, you are forced to suspend all or some of the crucial infrastructure projects such as construction and maintenance of access roads, storm water drainage system, re-gravelling of existing roads and installation of bulk water system for new housing projects” (Mpfana senior official, structured interview).

In effect, the study revealed two divergent views on how the problems of Mpfana could be ameliorated. On one hand, those who participated in three focus groups generally felt that local development was the answer to the problems confronting Mpfana. All that is needed is integrated strategy specifically focused on having more businesses or boosting local investment because that is what will increase the employment opportunities in the area. On the other hand, the semi-structured interview revealed that municipal officials were of the view that Mpfana has a lot of potential if there is external intervention, particularly from the provincial and national government with regards to alternative or additional sources of funding. Ultimately, there is no doubt that the irregular expenditure of diverting MIG funds to operational budgets is a stumbling block to LED in the sense that it comprises the capacity of the municipality develop and maintain the much needed infrastructure that municipality needs to attract more big businesses into the area.

5.2.4 SUB-THEME 4: LACK OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Some participants, particularly in ward five and ward one, felt that the area has a good potential to host, at least, one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) or technikon satellite institution within the area to promote post-matric technical skills. Their view was that if a person from Mpfana wants to further their studies after matric, particularly if they want to acquire technical skills, they have to move out of this area. They claimed that moving is expensive on its own and the only training centre that is available in Mpfana costs R30 000 per annum for a course in forklifting. Having a satellite campus of their own in either a technikon or TVET would also prevent skills drain in that people who find it difficult to stay in Mpfana since there are no job opportunities for advanced skills would find it more attractive once there is an

institution. The TVET College would impart skills while also employing people at the same time.

5.2.5: SUB-THEME 5: HOUSING PROBLEMS IN MPOFANA

In ward three, one young female participant raised a housing issue which related to the old asbestos houses which are situated in the old section of ward three in Bruntville township of Mpopana. These houses are jointed doubles with separate families occupying each of the houses to form a double. Residents' complaints about these jointed houses are twofold. Firstly, there is a complaint that there is no privacy between the families that occupy adjacently jointed houses. They want these houses to be converted to a single family unit or that they (residents) be given alternative houses.

The second complaint the participant raised was that since 2011, the municipality has been promising to remove the roofs of these houses which are made of asbestos so that they can put tiles roofing instead. Participant no.8 from ward focus group said the following in this regard:

“Awubatshele basilungisele lezindlu phela sikhathele. Number one: lezindlu zihlangene. Awukwazi ngisho ukuzijabulisa kulezizindlu. Nampa omakhelwane bakulalele. Umasipala awuyilungise lenkinga. Number two: lezindlu zino asbestos abathi bazowususa kodwa kuze kube manje akaze beze kithi basho ukuthi kwenzekani (Please tell the municipality to fix our housing problems because we are tired (of trying to talk to them). Number one: these houses are jointed. You cannot even enjoy your privacy in them because your neighbours will hear everything. The municipality must fix this problem, Number two: these houses have asbestos roofs that they promised to replace with proper ones. But up to now, they have not come back to us to explain when this is going to happen)” (Participant no.8, ward three)

What the community is angry about is not only that nothing is happening in this regard, but also that their pleas fall on deaf ears. To them, this is tantamount to being ignored. All the participants of this ward three concurred that it was disheartening that that the municipality is not communicating with the residents about this issue. Another housing issue pertains to the mud structure houses in ward five that were demolished because the municipality wanted to build new RDP houses for the residents. The previous mayor who presided over this project was subsequently removed from his position when the

local council was disbanded in 2014. Ever since that time, no communication has been made with the affected households. Some of the houses are standing there in an incomplete state while others were not rebuilt at all. While the houses were destroyed in 2011 and the local council was disbanded in 2014, nobody is communicating with the affected residents. Not the ward committee nor the ward councillor. For the participants, what makes matters worse is the fact that the current mayor is not only from this ward, but he used to be its councillor. One participant had the following to say:

“Here at ward 5, we are lucky to have the person who is a mayor coming from our ward. So there is no way he can say that someone refused to sign the documents like he used to tell us before. Now he is a mayor, he has all the powers to sign but nothing is happening which is why we are saying he must step down or removed. He used to be only a councillor and now he is the mayor. He used to promise us a lot of things but ever since he has been a mayor, he has never come to us to tell us where the problem is. Our view is that he must go or simply step down because we do not see any improvement despite the promises he made before becoming a mayor” (Participant no.1, ward five).

The above excerpt clearly depicts the frustration and anger that the community is feeling with the situation after their hopes that the mayor will be more empathetic and accessible were dashed. However, one of the managers explained the housing crisis as follows:

“In a municipality as small as Mpofana, houses are a responsibility of the provincial Dept. Human Settlements Department. The first thing they will ask, if we talk about building houses is whether we have met the requirement of putting bulk services in place. If we say: “No!” because we do not have the infrastructure budget to do so, they will tell us that they cannot do anything until the bulk services issue is sorted out. Now given the cash crisis situation I explained previously, it becomes a vicious cycle” (Mpofana official, semi-structured interview)

5.2.6 SUB-THEME 6: CORRUPTION, NEPOTISM AND FAVOURITISM

Participants in the study felt that there are people who are not properly qualified to get certain jobs who easily get them due to their connections within municipal councillors and officials. They argue that when there is a contractor that comes to do some work in the community, the community is usually the last one to know and the way people are employed by these contractors is based on who is in good books with the mayor, local

councilor or some municipal official in charge of that contract. The contractor will sometimes come with people who are not from the area yet there are many young people who are unemployed in the area where the project is being implemented. Another problem that was raised by participants relates to the fact that when there are vacancies in the municipality, there are people who are informed privately and the community is often not informed until late in the recruitment process. In many cases, when the posts are advertised, the municipality officials and councillors already know who is going to get the position. The same applies with tenders. Participants felt that there is a lot of corruption, nepotism and cronyism in this Mpofana municipality. They claim that councillors act as employment agents. If you do not know the councilor, forget about getting the job. They also claim that there are people who have certificates but do not get jobs in this municipality yet there are people they know for sure do not have these qualifications who get employed in the same jobs they are not qualified for. Another participant named, illustrated corruption, nepotism and favouritism problem in Mpofana as follows:

“There was an incident involving a company that came to Mpofana to install electricity. This company came with two Toyota Quantum Kombis (or mini buses) already full of people who were not from Mpofana municipality. When we asked the mayor about this, he simply said that he was not aware of how it happened. When we asked him how can he say that he doesn’t know when he is the “father of the house” (meaning he is first citizen of the municipality)... and when even his own children are employed by the same company, he did not give us a satisfactory response. To show how dysfunctional the municipality is, all councillors within the local council do not get along. That means nothing will ever go right in Mpofana as long as we have councillors who are not pulling in the same direction, which is why we are saying, all of them must go now!”(Participant no.2, ward three).

Another participant added that whenever there are projects in Mpofana, the municipality would ask them to submit CVs at the municipal offices but by that time they already know who is going to get the job. He added that this was very frustrating because they spend their meagre resources such as money and time to put together these documents but they end up not getting the job and there is no courtesy of to come back and tell them on what transpired. Even when they make follow-ups, they will just be ignored or officials will just inform them that they do not know. The study revealed that there is common theme or message from all the focus groups suggesting that while

unemployment was a primary source of frustration, lack of communication was the main trigger of protests. They all felt that in a community that was largely affected by poverty, hunger and unemployment, it was important to keep citizens informed about how certain decisions are taken. It was also important to ensure that there is broader community participation in such decision-making process because failure to do so results in a lot of instability as community members often demand answers on how certain decisions were taken.

5.3 MECHANISMS EMPLOYED BY THE LOCAL COUNCIL TO COMMUNICATE ITS DECISIONS, CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS TO COMMUNITIES

The results of the study showed that Mpofana communities were not impressed with ward committees. They felt that ward committees, just like ward councillors, did not convene meetings, therefore, there was no communication or participation mechanisms employed by the municipality to communicate its decisions, challenges and progress made on certain promises or prior commitments to them. They revealed that only when there is a protest will the community get to interact with the municipality or its local council. They also added that even that type of communication that happens during such contexts, it is the type of communication that happens because the authorities want to calm the community down. There is no remedial action that is often proposed or given to the communities. This is one of the main sources of frustrations that many participants felt were reasons for communities to protest frequently. One participant said:

“Let me start with this local bridge here. There are people who came recently to take measurements. We do not know what is happening. The next thing, you will see a contractor beginning its work on this bridge and you will also see people waking up in the morning to work in this bridge. Then you will have rumours above posts being given to local friends and people from outside Mpofana. You see a lot of NDs, NPs, NURs, NPSs and NNs and no NMR (This is in reference to number plates of vehicle showing where they come from)” (Participant no.1 ward one).

Participant no.2 from ward one also added that:

“We never heard of a WC in our ward. Like we said, if we can take to the street right now and stage a protest, only then you can get a message that there is a meeting in a certain hall” (Participant no.2, ward one).

While participant no.5 spoke in support of the other participants as follows:

“You will find that the intention of that meeting is to tell us that guys just leave what you are doing, we will sort out your problems. Few weeks down the line, nothing has happened” (Participant no.5, ward one)

For example, the study revealed that there is a recurring problem of services that are cut off abruptly without any form of prior communication or information given to communities about what, when or which of these services will be affected. The study further revealed that, by and large, water and electricity disruptions are the most frequently experienced problems in Mpofana yet there is seldom any communication, if at all, prior to, during or even after these interruptions. One participant explained that sometimes three days will pass by without water or electricity in the community.

“The first thing I hate about this area, especially our ward, is that the municipality does not communicate with us or inform us beforehand when there is going to be a problem with water supply. So, we will be without water for about three days and still there is no communication from the authorities and that is annoying because even the electricity will be cut without any prior notice” (Participant no.1, ward one).

In spite of that, the municipality will still not communicate this problem to frustrated residents. Even though participants from ward one, which includes part of Bruntville township and the whole town of Mooi River, felt that their water and electricity disruptions were more frequent than others, there was a general consensus that all the wards were equally affected. The disruptions, which others preferred to call disconnections as they suspect the municipality does it to punish them for not paying their dues, alternate between water and electricity. In other words, when there is a power outage on a certain day, the next two day will be disruption of water supply.

“Then you find that this is the way to punish us, by just disconnecting us and they only target our ward and they do not check other wards. There are wards that are given preferential treatment over others” (Participant no.1, ward one).

On the other hand, during the structured interviews, one of the officials revealed that some of community members are not aware that water services are a responsibility of the district municipality in terms of the Municipal Systems Act. However, while protest

leaders are aware of this fact, when they want to earn the sympathy of the local communities to join them during protests, they deliberately act ignorant or hide this fact from communities in order to galvanise their support for a protest.

“For an example, there was an incident which once occurred in Mpofana whereby some disgruntled community members burnt down the Eskom substation that supplies electricity to majority of households in the area. The same substation also provides power to a water pump in the reservoir that supplies water to the same households. This incident created a few problems for us as the municipality. Firstly, the incident created power outages for the households. Secondly, it simultaneously created water outages because the reservoir pump uses the same electricity from the power substation to pump water to households. Thirdly, given the Mpofana municipality’s cash-flow problems that I have already explained and its problems with Eskom, there was no budget readily available to fix or repair the substation because the municipality already is in debt with Eskom for an amount of R89 million. Fourthly, the fact that the expertise to fix the substation is not locally based meant that more waiting time was inevitable. While the municipality was trying to fix the problem, the community was already on the street protesting against the water and electricity outages. Obviously, we could have communicated better around or about these problems to the affected residents before they took to the street. But I am just giving a glimpse of how some of the protests are created by certain sections of the community just to spite the municipality” (Mpofana official, semi-structured interview).

One participant retorted:

“The municipality does not inform us when there is going to be water cut-offs. Here in Mpofana there is water reservoir/dam but this water was first given to uMgungundlovu District and then to Umngeni municipality. This is water that is supposed to benefit the local people that is given to uMgungundlovu and other municipalities, like uMngeni. These are all things that make us angry” (Participant 3, ward three).

Another participant added:

Here in Mpofana we have a dam. The other day, in 2016, the president of the country came to Mpofana, to officially open it. In his speech the president said the dam belongs to Howick which is another town that is under Umngeni municipality yet the dam is

located here in Mpofana. So, even that has an impact on people's frustrations and they end up organising themselves into a protest” (Participant no.5, ward three).

With regards to the above excerpt, community participation mechanisms, accountability and responsiveness come into sharp focus. As a solution, the Twenty Year Review proposes that ‘mechanisms for promoting participation, accountability and responsiveness’ must be used effectively (South Africa Twenty Year Review, 2014:26-27). How this must be done is made clearer by the Back to Basics strategy (2014:11) which proposes strict majors of dealing with that non-compliance with the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act on community participation. Some of the basic measures it proposes include monitoring:

- The existence of the required number of functional Ward Committees;
- The number of effective public participation programmes conducted by Councils; and,
- The regularity of community satisfaction surveys carried out (Back to Basics strategy, 2014:11)

While the above ideals sound good in theory, perhaps, the biggest challenge is in the detail. For example, the Back to Basics strategy does not say who must conduct the above proposed monitoring. Therefore, it does not explain how this will bring back the lost trust between communities and ward committees. Given this context, it was important for the study to also specifically investigate the functionality of the ward committees.

5.3.1 SUB-THEME 1: WARD COMMITTEES

The results of the study show that there is a convergence between information gleaned from the structured interviews and that recorded from focus groups as both agreed that Ward Committees (WCs) were ineffective in their work even though reasons differ. The reasons for ineffectiveness of WCs in the opinion of local authorities was that they lack capacity and knowledge of what they are expected to do. However, participants in focus group discussions felt that members of the WCs are just like councillors. They are self-

serving and more concerned about themselves and their stomachs. Participant no. 3 described the relationship between communities and WC as follows:

How do you hold two successive meetings without reporting back to the community you claim to represent? Ngikutshela iqiniso: I ward committee, ifana ntseeeh namakhansela, babolile! (Let me tell you the truth: the WC is exactly the same as the councillors. They are all rotten!). They are working for their stomachs. Once the money from the municipality is in their account on the 25th once they receive the R500, to them, their job is done even though they have done absolutely nothing. Sometimes, you get information through grapevine that there is a meeting in the local hall, when you get there, there is only one person. The rest is apologies, apologies, apologies! But at the end of the day all of them will get the stipend as if they all attended the meeting when they did not attend any meeting”(Participant no.3, ward three).

The above quote is in relation to the information that came to light during the focus group discussion suggesting that WC members receive a stipend of R500 per three meetings attended from COGTA. Therefore, to focus group participants, particularly in ward three, the interest of WC members is in getting that stipend every month to supplement their salaries as they are employed elsewhere as well. This is interpreted by members of the community as greed and self-interest, the same criticism levelled against councillors.

To support their claim, participants highlighted how some WC members would even lie about attending meetings in order to claim the stipend. For example, it was mentioned that, in the wards where a WC exists, most, if not all, of the meetings they convene do not quorate due to inexplicable absenteeism. However, at the end of the month all the WC members will send information to COGTA deliberately misleading COGTA to believe that they held meetings and COGTA will simply pay them on those grounds. Another participant (ward one) explained that they have never heard of a Ward Committee in their ward. He explained his experience as follows: Participant no.1 in ward one focus group had this to say about being neglected by councillors:

“Community meetings would only happen when the community has taken matters to their hands and decided to embark on a protests. Only then you hear that there is a meeting in a particular venue or hall. Then you hear that the mayor or so and so is coming to address us. The aim is often to calm us down or to fool us into believing they will address our grievances. The last time we saw the councillor of this ward was in

January this year (2018). He has never been here since then. There is an old couple which lives in this ward. They were burnt to death while they were sleeping because nobody cared about them. There was no so-called ward committee. They had no electricity. So they lost their lives because of a candle” (Participant no.1, ward one).

Participant No.8 added by citing a practical example of how officials ignore their duties of informing communities about projects that take place within communities. He said:

“Let me start here and use this local bridge here as an example. There are people who came recently to take measurements. We do not know what is happening. The next thing, you will see a contractor beginning its work on this bridge and you will also see people waking up in the morning to work in this bridge. Then you will have rumours above posts being given to local friends and people from outside Mpofana. You see a lot of NDs, NPs, NURs, NPSs and NNs and no NMR (This is in reference to number plates of vehicle showing where they come from). There is supposed to be someone who is telling us what it is happening there. Where is the so-called ward committee to tell us what is happening? Ayikho (meaning, it’s not there). Where is the councillor? Nalo alikho (he is also not there). So, there is no ward committee and there is no councillor to us. But once we go to N3, they call a meeting to try and calm us down” (Participant no.8, ward one).

The above extract from a participant reveals a big social distance that exists between the councillor, The WC and the community. Moreover, it also shows that there is little or no trust between communities and the WCs. Participants felt that WCs are not any different from the councillors in that they are driven by self-interest instead of the interests of the interests of communities they are supposed to serve. One participant said the following about WCs:

“The main responsibility of the WC is to facilitate community meetings. We are not supposed to facilitate meetings ourselves as the community. But here in Mpofana we do it. When the public calls a meeting you must know the situation has reached boiling point. That is when we are fighting as the community. Because we have elected this person into a WC but they do not come back to us. You know how WCs work?! They know that, OK, if we claim to have had a met today, R500 is coming our way. So, they submit falsified information to COGTA suggesting that they had a meeting. COGTA will then pay at the end of the month on the basis of that falsified information. They know

the meeting did not sit. They did not even report back to the community (Participant no.3, ward three).

5.3.2 SUB-THEME 2: THE ROLE OF MPOFANA MUNICIPALITY IN REALIZING/MEETING/RESOLVING COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

There is nothing much that the participants said about their role in helping the municipality except that they repeated the call that once they are employed they can be in a position to meet the municipality halfway. Until the issue of local economic development is resolved as community they remain in a position that makes it impossible for them to help in anyway. However, they are prepared to support the municipality, if asked, in lobbying for businesses to come to Mpfana because the mere fact that they were unemployed means that they cannot be able assist the municipality even if they want to.

5.4 PROTEST AS AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM/METHOD OF COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERNMENT

All the focus groups agreed that protest is the most effective language of communication that's better understood by authorities. Not only that protests are an easy language, participants also indicated that they attract a very swift response from the government. Based on this understanding, they indicated that protest is the language that is spoken by all Mpfana communities if they want something to happen or not to happen. One participant said:

“Yes! We view protests as an effective way of attracting the attention of government whenever we have grievances because usually we are not listened to. Whereas when we protest, the whole world is watching because we blockade the N3. The roads are not fixed but when we protest, the leaders come to listen” (Participant no.5 in ward five).

Another participant added:

“I can say that to a certain extent, we our own worst enemies sometimes because if you are going to be a municipality that has a reputation of solving your problems through protests, it does attract negative perception from the investors who may think if they invest in Mpfana, where they are recurring protests, they may lose out on their

investments. But if you want the region, the province or even the national leaders to listen to you, go to N3. So, I wish I can say, that may be we need to stop doing it. But that is impossible because people do not just embark on the protest without any reason. They start by engaging with local leaders using formal channels of communication but these leaders simply ignore them. They will go to the region, which will often not respond, then in order to draw our issues to the attention of the province, we end up protesting. This is all because we are simply ignored by the region all the way up to the national” (Participant no.8, ward three).

“Look, you can write your grievances and submit to the mayor, only to find that the mayor simply folds this paper and throws it to the dust bin. So, we know that when we send written grievances to the municipality, they are ignored whereas the protest attracts a quick response. The protest is the quickest way because it also affects external people all the way up to the top echelons of government. This makes them to respond faster because once the N3 is closed, everyone will ask what is happening and then we get the opportunity to be listened to by those who have been ignoring us. So, I can safely say that protests are an effective method of communication that attracts the attention of everyone”. (Participant no.4,ward three)

Participant no 3 in ward three added that:

“If I am not mistaken, all local councillors are ANC councillors. These are all ANC councillors voted in by the people. The ANC issued a directive to all councillors instructing them to regularly report to communities, but councillors do not follow this instruction. That is why we have protests in Mpofana” (Participant no. 3, ward three).

5.5 THE IMPACT OF SERVICE ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF MPOFANA

With regards to the impact that levels of service delivery have on the community of Mpofana, the study found that participants felt that service delivery was poor in Mpofana. And because of this they find themselves having to fight, by way of protests, for every service they are entitled to from their municipality. This impacts negatively on their lives because it means little or no social stability. Firstly, the fact that there is high unemployment in the area means that many young people have nothing to do,

therefore, they end up doing things that do not enhance their quality of life like drugs. Secondly, the fact that there are no training facilities for vocational and technical education means that young people have to go out of Mpofana to further their studies or to skill themselves elsewhere more after matric. Since many people are unemployed, not too many people are able to afford to fund travelling costs or rental money for those who get accepted in remote areas. But what is even worse in their view is that once trained, young people cannot contribute in uplifting the community because the local municipality does not make it any easier.

Another finding made by the study is that there is an acknowledgement, particularly by focus group participants that while protests help them to change the status quo, such as the way in which the municipality responds to their needs or grievances, it comes at a big cost to their lives and that of their families. For example, one participant explained that after every protest there is a lot of damage on the infrastructure like roads, drainage systems and community and sometimes private property such as vehicles, shops, schools and libraries.

Participant no.8, ward one:

“I think the other impact relates to the basic infrastructure such roads, libraries and public buildings which are damaged during the strike. The signposts and roads are also affected. That has an impact because that money used to fix the property damaged during the protest was meant to be used for other things. So, in that way, we can say the protest has a negative impact but there is little we can do quite honestly. It is the only language our leaders understand” (Participant no.8, ward one).

This is the very basic infrastructure the communities need to get by. However, participants revealed that most of the damaged infrastructure takes a while to repair, replace or restore due to the cash crisis facing the municipality. Another participant commented that sometimes it takes another protest to get the municipality to repair, restore or replace a damaged property, asset or infrastructure. Therefore, if it is an asset, property or infrastructure that the community heavily relies on to live on a daily basis like a school, road, drainage system and so forth, life becomes difficult for the community without such.

“You will find that these are not repaired after the protest until another protest is organised to force the municipality to fix the damaged property” (Participant no.8, ward one).

Interestingly, participants, some of them frequent protesters, also acknowledged that protests affected them more than the authorities/municipality because municipal workers, councillors and ward committee members get their salaries at the end of the month regardless of whether they worked or not during the protests. On the other hand, those members of the community who did not go to work due to the protest lose their salaries or wages for every day that they did not go to work. This puts a lot of financial strain on their disposable income resulting in them being unable to afford certain things.

In addition, participants indicated that they are acutely aware of the fact that Mpofana’s reputation as protest hotspot of the province could be the reason some big companies do not come to settle in Mpofana. There may be fears that factories that come to Mpofana where there is regular protesting are not only at risk of incurring production losses, but they may also suffer other costs related to vandalism which often occurs during the protests. This was an interesting observation and it gives a sense that somehow protesters do so because they do not have an alternative. If the municipality gave them any choice, they would not do anything that has a potential to scare off investors who might be interested in bringing big business/factories to the area. This is clear from this one participant who said:

“I can even say that, if it was for me, this (protesting) must stop but our municipality is not helping the situation” (Participant 5, ward three).

Another negative impact of protest highlighted by the participants during the focus group discussions was that while the aim of the protests was to force the municipality to improve the quality of life in the communities, as they occur, protests themselves have a negative impact on the education of their children who are prevented from going to school during the protests. In this way, some of the children miss out on important classes. As a result of the protest, some of them do not recover at all while others end up dropping out. One participant summed it up as follows:

“When there is poor service delivery, there is going to be a protest because we cannot tolerate that. However, that also has an impact on our children because many of attend schools which are located outside Mpofana. They are prevented from going to school

during these service delivery protests. The parents are paying for these pupils. The money does not come from government. So, if the government were to listen to our concerns, they will be no need to protest and the local pupils can go and get proper education so that they can be better than us. However, the protests sometimes results in them losing out on their studies and others end up failing or dropping out because they have to join us in the protests. Ultimately, the kids' future is negatively impacted and then they will grow up and be unemployment like us” (Participant 3, ward three).

Participant No.1 from ward one also concurred with the above sentiment from ward three as follows:

“There are children who still go to school who cannot go to school during protests. Furthermore, there are employed people who work for certain companies that lose a lot of money to due to protests. The companies they work for also lose a lot of production when their employees do not turn up for work due to the protests. So, I would say there is a lot of impact” (Participant no.1, ward one).

5.6 SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT TO GOVERNMENT

Notwithstanding the issues and challenges raised above, the people and the municipality continue to be exist side-by-side. Based on this assumption, the study wanted to investigate what suggestions/recommendations participants could offer the local municipality if they had a chance to do so.

5.6.1 SUB-THEME 1: CREATE INVESTMENT/FACTORIES AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

All the participants unanimously agreed that Mpofana needs a lot of investment. They want to see more investment of big factories or big businesses that would provide permanent employment to local people. According to one participant:

“Job opportunities is all we want. That is all we ask for. Mpofana has a big tourism potential if you consider attractions such as Midlands Meander. It is in the heart of Midlands. Now, if leaders can invest more energy in promoting what we already have

as a start, a couple more jobs can be generated. This will go a long way in reducing the rate of unemployment in the area” (Participant no.10 in ward three).

Therefore, the first recommendation was that the municipality must use tourism as a launching pad and a vehicle to drive investment and employment generation in the area.

Participants also suggested that all the learnerships and job opportunities that the municipality has available must be openly advertised to everyone instead of being circulated to a few connected individuals. In addition, once people have served or have been enrolled into learnerships for a year, the opportunity must go to others who have not had the chance. Everyone must get a fair chance to be appointed or selected for a learnership without looking at whether they have a relationship with the councillor. Participants suggested there should be a database which would be used to detect repeat applications for learnerships because there are people who know that once there are learnership vacancies, they are going to be appointed. Another participant said:

“For example, there was a driver’s learnerships, nobody knows how people were appointed into those positions. We just found out that people have been appointed already” (Participant 9, ward three).

Another participant added (Participant no.6, ward three):

“There is no skill that is needed there. Most of the things that are done there do not require special skills. We obviously not referring to high positions. You do not need training for being a general worker. Anyone can do it. The fact is that they just do not like local people. But even this factory has a workforce which consists less than 15% of local people” (Participant no.6, ward three).

5.6.2 SUB-THEME 2: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

All participants were unanimous that councillors must come back to the people who elected them and report regularly. They emphasized the point that protests happen because people mandate councillors to do certain things related to community development, but when councillors fail to deliver, they do not come back to the people to indicate that they encountered problems so that they can receive a new mandate. They simply keep quiet as if nothing happened. Members of the communities become agitated

and embark on a protest to remind them that they have a responsibility to account to communities who mandated or delegated them to serve as councillors. Therefore, citizens have a right to know how far they have progressed (or not progressed) with the mandate that they (councillors) were given.

“We have protests in Mpofana because councillors do not come back to us as the community to report back about the things we ask them to do. We ask them to do certain things. When these things do not happen, communities have to go the street to demand answers. Councillors keep information to themselves. So we say, we sent you to do this but you have never done it and you do not have the courtesy of coming back to us to say, you have failed or you encountered problem, what we do next. We do not mind whether they are reporting that they have challenges or they have failed but we want them to keep us informed about what is happening in our municipality” (Participant no.7, ward three).

For participants and example would be, when there is a tender to be issued for a road or bridge, this information must be disseminated properly to the community openly so that the community can also have a say or inputs into how the process should unfold.

5.6.3 SUB-THEME 3: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN MUST BE REALISTIC/ACHIEVABLE

Another recommendation made by participants relates to the way in which the municipality conducts its IDP forum consultations. The study found that community members felt that the municipality was talking down to them during the IDP consultations instead of listening to them. One participant explained that when the municipality is preparing for IDP consultations, it must not come with pre-conceived ideas of how the IDP should look like. The municipality must listen to the community. Once they have received inputs from the community they take what the community is saying and prepare and come back to the community with a budgeted implementation plan for final approval.

“So, yes when we arrive at the IDP forums, as the community, we are bound to make shopping list of demands because we are often excited that our municipality has finally decided to come to us. Their job is to take our inputs and go back to the drawing board to decide, based on factual information, which things can or cannot be implemented. We

know that our municipality does not have money. So there is no reason for them to be scared of us. They should just be upfront with us because we know that there are things that are possible and there are those that are impossible if you consider the municipal budget. For them to create hopes that all the things we want during the IDP will be realized only to run away and not report on progress smacks of deception” (Participant no.5, ward three).

Participants revealed that they are aware that community members sometimes become excited during IDP consultations because it is one of those few times that municipality comes to the people. So, out of that excitement, communities often listed things many of which were impossible. They highlighted the fact that councillors and officials are aware that certain things are not possible yet they keep quiet.

Communities felt that meaningful participation is about effective communication between citizens and its leaders about community development. Communication cannot be effective and it isn't if it is based on inaccurate information. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the leaders of the municipality to educate and create a sense of awareness among communities about what is possible and what is not possible so that the IDP is realistic. In order to assess the realistic nature of the Mpofana IDP, the researcher studied the Mpofana IDP 2015/16 as part of preparations for the focus group. One of the important discoveries made was that under monitoring and evaluation Section A of the IDP there is a following quote:

“This IDP contains SMART Objectives, Key Performance Indicators, and Targets which will serve as a guide to measure its performance” (Mpofana IDP 2015/16:26).

SMART refers to the requirement that any strategic objective must be specific, measurable, achievable/attainable, realistic and timebound (SMART) for it to be regarded as a sound strategic plan. As indicated above, the above quote claims that this Mpofana IDP meets the requirements of soundness, however, a cursory look at the objectives clearly revealed the opposite. All of them are not timebound, meaning they are open-ended and, therefore, cannot be measured because they lack an important element of measurement, which is time. Furthermore, time also assists in determining whether the set objective is realistic or can be realistically attained within the specified time. Therefore, any plan that lacks specifics in terms of time is not measurable, not attainable and therefore unrealistic.

Having said that, participants felt that it is important for the municipal officials and councillors to advise the community on how the municipality intended to involve the community in implementing the plan. In essence, the study found that the community wants to be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring, reviewing and, ultimately, evaluation of the IDP. For this to happen, they want councillors to provide feedback to communities and to openly convey to the community which objectives are achievable and which are not. This will give the community an idea about which of their wishes on the “wish list” will be implemented and which ones are impossible to implement.

Participants felt that councillors are leaders who are elected by communities, therefore, they must not fear that the communities who elected will fight with them when the things they promised the community do not happen. One participant noted:

“No! In fact, the community will understand if councillors are being honest because, at least, they are asking the community to come up with better solutions to the challenge at hand”(Participant no. 3, ward five).

5.6.4 SUB-THEME 4: THE MPOFANA LOCAL COUNCIL MUST BE DISBANDED

There was another consistent theme permeating among all the focus group discussions which indicated that people have had enough of the municipality’s weaknesses. The unhappiness related largely to how the municipality was failing to deal with unemployment. The fact that the municipality or councillors were not reporting back or communicating with communities seem to have made an already bad situation worse. While some called for the municipality to be disbanded, others called for the mayor to step down. However, as already highlighted, the interpretation of the totality of these views suggests a strong sense of disappointment with the type and quality of leadership provided by the local council under the tutelage of the mayor. In this regard, citizens want anything that will change the status quo whether it is disbandment of the local council as a whole or the removal / replacement of the mayor. As one of the participants clearly stated during the focus group discussions:

“Here is another thing, my brother: My view is that the mayor must be removed. The other recommendation I can give them (government) if they were here is simple. The

current mayor must be fired and we want to elect our own mayor. The current mayor is not from Mpopana but he is from Pietermaritzburg. He keeps on threatening us with his bodyguard who are ex-convicts because he knows they are murderers. He fired qualified bodyguards because he said he does not trust them. He must step down!” (Participant no.3, ward three).

When a follow-up question was posed if participants meant that they have a problem with the current electoral system, the participants all said “No”. They indicated that they only had a problem with the mayor and the fact that the ANC imposed him on them. This was a clear sign that the participants want “self-activity”. One participant indicated that they elect councillors. After that elected councillors elect each other into positions on the basis of the directive from the governing party without consulting communities who are at the receiving end of the services rendered by the local council. Although, the participants felt that they did not have a problem with the electoral law per se, the researcher found the participants’ arguments to be suggesting that the electoral law must amended or improved to allow communities a say, not only on who becomes a councillor, but also on who becomes the mayor among the elected councillors. Participant no.2 in ward three said the following:

“My brother, I want to be honest with you, if I can be clear with you. If the municipality or government were to be here, I will ask them one favour: can they, please, fire Mr. Xolani Duma first (I am sorry to mention names because you asked us not to mention people’s names but can they, please, please, fire the mayor). They must not impose the mayor on us. We voted for the ANC and not the mayor. The ANC chose a mayor for us. We do not have a problem with the electoral system. Only the election of the mayor is the problem. We just want to choose our own mayor. The ANC must not impose a mayor on us. We want to appoint our own mayor” (Participant no.2, ward three).

Interestingly, all the participants in ward five where the mayor comes from felt that he has failed to deliver and he must step down. This is what they had to say:

Participant no.1, ward five:

“We are lucky here that the mayor is also our local councillor. There is no way he can say that nobody wants to sign because sekuyena imeya. Yonke into isayinwa uyena (He is the mayor now, everything is signed by him, therefore he can no longer have an excuse that a mayor is refusing to sign). Kahle kahle sibona ukuthi usehlulekile (In actual fact,

it is clear that he has failed us). That is why we are saying he must leave his position because he has failed us”(Participant no.1, ward five).

Participant no.2, ward five:

“Uqinisile impela, mhlapme uma kungaphuma yena singathola ngisho nemisebenzi” (Meaning: “He is spot on there. May be if the mayor can stepdown we can get jobs”)(Participant no.2, ward five).

Participant no.8, ward five:

“He is right because he used to be our ward five councillor. When we asked to do things for us he would often say that the mayor of that did not want to sign. Now he is the mayor himself, what is his excuse now? He has failed and he must go. Maybe we will be better off without him” (Participant no.8, ward five).

Participant no.7, ward five:

“Le meya le sikhulele phambi kwayo. Iyazi ngisho isimo sasemakhaya ethu ukuthi akusetshenzwa. Uyazi ukuthi akekho umuntu osebenzayo kodwa ngeke uze umbone eqhamuka ethi nasi isikhala somsebenzi akeze umuntu oyedwa azongena emsebenzini. Uzobona bona laba aba grand bezongena emisebenzini thina sibe sihleli la siqhubeka sihlupheka ngenxa yokungasebenzi. (Meaning: “We grew up in front of this mayor. He knows the situation in our homes first-hand. He knows that many of our families have no breadwinners because everyone is unemployed. But you will never see him pitching up here to inform us about, let alone offer us, a job vacancy or to say maybe one person can come and work or try his luck. However, you see the same well-to-do guys taking up every available job in the municipality while we continue to languish in poverty and unemployment. That is why we say he has failed and he must go”) (Participant no.7, ward five).

Another interesting revelation with regards to how the mayor must be appointed in future was made during the study. This relates to another important finding reported earlier in this discussion about the fact the even though the people of Mpofana strongly vote for or support the ANC, they equally believe in ‘self-activity’ (Ballard et al, 2006: 413). The participants were very open about their involvement in various grassroots social movements such as Mpofana Community Mass Action Group (CMCMAG) and Phumlaas Development Committee (PDC) even though many of them are members of

the ANC and others support the ANC. They were very firm about the fact that they want to elect the mayor or to be active participants in the election of the mayor. In fact, they even revealed that one of the recent protests against the municipality was organised by them not because they hate the people who work there but because they want them to deliver on their promises. This is a good example of how Mpfana residents believe in self-activity more than delegating to the authorities.

5.6.5 SUB-THEME 5: RESOLVE HOUSING CRISES

There are people who own more than one RDP house in the community. They rent out these houses when there are people who do not have or have not received houses. There are allegations that were made that the mayor is involved in selling these houses so the municipality was also blamed in this regard.

Participant no.9, ward one:

“The municipality must stop this thing of people owning more than one RDP house when there are people who do not have a single house. The municipality must have a system to detect people who fraudulently register for more than one houses” (Participant no.9, ward one).

Participant no.6, ward one had the following to say about RDP houses:

When a person comes to apply for an RDP house, there is a requirement that such person must bring all the identity documents for the members of his or her family. This is done so that when any of these members is used as a proxy to apply for a second RDP house, the system must be able to pick or detect the ID no. so that the application can be declined. But if the mayor or the municipality is complicit in this fraud, he will not insist on the strict adherence to this requirement. So, the mayor is also complicit in this (Participant no.6, ward one).

However, it is important to note these were just allegations, there is nothing that was given or submitted as evidence to prove that the mayor is involved or that there are people who own more than three houses, for that matter. However, it was indeed an issue that bothered the participants as they felt people who register for the government housing scheme must be compelled to bring their particulars, including their

dependents' and next-of-kin' so that the government is able to detect people who claim or apply for a house more than once.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The issues discussed above seem to confirm that Mpofana people are not ne the live under unbearable conditions of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. The lack cooperation between the citizens and the municipality creates tensions between two parties. However, it is also apparent from the above analysis that citizens are always prepared to part of the solution; however, they lack the platform to air them. This requires the municipality to improve communication and participation channels. Notwithstanding the poor communication channels between the municipality and the local citizens, the system itself sets the municipality up for failure. The following section presents the most salient points emanation from this study in the form of a summary. .

5.8 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This study of service delivery in Mpofana municipality revealed an endemic culture of protests which is rooted in the ever increasing disconnect between elected representatives and the communities that elect them. This growing social distance is largely caused by the ineffectiveness of the community participation mechanisms that are employed (or largely not employed) by the local municipality in order to involve communities in the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of community projects or development plans. These include councillors and WC systems that are literally dysfunctional because councillors and WC members do not report back to communities they serve. Service delivery in Mpofana does not only entail provision of basic services such as water, electricity, refuse collection, roads but also entails reduction or eradication of unemployment through a number of ways, including but not limited to, attracting investments which will boost local economic development. This local economic development is understood within the framework of bringing/lobbying big local factories to relocate their businesses in Mpofana. This requires huge investments aimed at improving physical infrastructure. All of these local economic development initiatives can only succeed if the municipality ensures regular interactions with local communities. That said, the next chapter discusses these issues in details before ending with recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the discussion of the salient points revealed by the study. It begins by drawing attention to the rising of protests in South Africa with particular reference to Mpofana. It then applies the principal-agency (PA) theory to analyse the relationship between Mpofana municipality and its local citizens. Within the framework of the PA agency, it delineates and analyses the impact of divided loyalties created through cadre deployment and, ultimately, intra-organisational factions that are inherent in the policy governing the deployment of cadres into positions of authority and control within government and how they negatively impact on service delivery. While painting a picture of community neglect or disconnect, it then illustrates how neglected communities resort to protests as a way of conveying their message of neglect to authorities. It further highlights the shortcomings of the existing mechanisms of public participation and the failure of these mechanisms in Mpofana which has led communities 'inventing' their own spaces of participation. This includes how IDP processes should be conducted. The chapter concludes with recommendations on how the situation could possibly be improved.

6.2 RISING PROTESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since August 2004, South Africa experienced ample evidence of the spread of community protests which later became known as service delivery protests (Twala, 2014:161). Therefore, protests are an endemic reality in South Africa and they have been rising with every succeeding year since 2004 (See also, Booysen, 2002; 2007; Alexander, 2010; Twala, 2014; Botes, et.al; 2010). Mpofana municipality is evidence of this phenomenon. The results of this study show that the primary reason for the protests in Mpofana is high unemployment which is believed to be caused by the municipality's failure to boost local economic development. Having established the fact that the political system can, of course, be understood as a complex network of principal-agent relationships composed of citizens, nation states, elected officials, lawmakers, members of the executive branch, administrative agencies, courts, international organizations, ambassadors, bureaucrats, soldiers, police officers, supervisory officials, civil servants, patronage appointees, and even those who monitor

other agency relationships inside political institutions and in the market (Shapiro 2005:263), it can be inferred that all the parties in Mpofana, namely, citizens and the Mpofana local council, concurrently play principal and agent (PA) roles within and across the area. This is to say, in Mpofana, whether protests are about service delivery (Twala, 2014:162; Chiwarawara, 2014; Allan and Heese, 2010) or the quality of service delivery (Alexander, 2010; Booyseen, 2007; 2009) there is a principal-agent relationship (PA) that exists between citizens of Mpofana and the local municipality so that if the citizens are the principal, the local council is the agent to whom authority has been delegated to act or serve the interests of the principal.

6.3 PRINCIPAL-AGENCY (PA) RELATIONSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF MPOFANA

It is important to start by mentioning that ‘PA relationships exist only when there is a practice of delegation’ (Byman and Kreps, 2010:3). It is also important to emphasise that such a delegation of authority is, in principle, conditional to the agent acting in the interests of the principal that delegated the authority. In principle, this means that an agent should behave as the principal would were it in the same position (Byman and Kreps, 2010:3). In the context of the PA relationship between Mpofana municipality and its citizens, councillors and officials should behave in the manner that citizens would were they in those councillor positions or official positions. In other words, it can be assumed that citizens of Mpofana expect nothing less than what meets their expectations or interests from their local council. This is what governs the PA relationship between Mpofana citizens and their local council.

Byman and Kreps (2010:3) concur with other PA scholars (Stein 1982; Krasner 1991) who argue that PA as a relationship must be founded on the prospect of gains—whether in efficiency or ideological diffusion. However, (Byman and Kreps, 2010:3) extends this further by pointing out that the latter is sometimes not the case because ‘the very nature of delegation means that principals are granting some degree of autonomy to an agent, which inevitably introduces a host of inefficiencies from the standpoint of the principal’.

Shapiro (2005:170) describes these inefficiencies as a “goal conflict” while Byman and Kerps (2010:3) describe it as “shirking”. A goal conflict has occurred when an agent

departs from the interests of the principal (Shapiro, 2005:170). The departure of the agent from the goal of the principal ultimately leads to the failure of the PA relationship. The findings of this study suggest that the protests in Mpofana municipality have occurred persistently because of goal conflict or shirking of responsibilities. The goal conflict or shirking of the responsibility by the local council in Mpofana ultimately resulted in the failure of the PA relationship. Therefore, participants argued that protests are a reaction to this failure.

Failure in the PA relationship then means that the agent's actions deviated from the preferences of the principals and a suboptimal outcome resulted from the standpoint of the principal. Shirking behaviour—the act of an agent seeking to advance his preferences rather than those of the principal—creates agency losses, or costs when agents engage in undesired independent action, which poses organisational challenges for the principal (Byman and Kreps, 2010:3). It is these challenges that are also known as agency costs or losses. To properly describe this situation Byman and Kreps (2010) quote D. Roderick Kiewiet and Matthew McCubbins (1991:129) who have summarized the inherent flaws of delegation as follows:

“Delegation...entails side effects that are known, in the parlance of economic theory, as agency losses. There is almost always some conflict between the interests of those who delegate authority (principals) and agents to whom they delegate it. Agents behave opportunistically, pursuing their own interests subject only to the constraints imposed by their relationship with the principal” (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991:129).

Byman and Kreps (2013:7) acknowledge that agency losses sometimes may occur just as a result of incompetence on the part of the agent, but also as ‘the consequence of divergence in the commitment to the cause, the willingness to accept risks on behalf of the cause, or on the desired goals and tactics’. The cadre deployment policy of the ANC is viewed as one example (or containing examples) of a departure from direct accountability as its weak public accountability brings into sharp focus what Ross (1973:134) describes as ‘the canonical agency problem’. Other scholars (Shapiro, 2005:184) describe it as ‘tangled loyalties’. Simply put, with its eye on the principal, the classic agency paradigm perceives ‘goal conflict’ as the departure of agents from the interests of the principal (Shapiro, 2005:170).

However, according to Shapiro (2005:184) ‘the real agency problem is the fact that ‘the agent is most likely serving many masters, many of them with conflicting interests’ hence ‘tangled loyalties’. In such a situation, even if the agent is able to silence his or her own interests, there is the matter of how to manoeuvre through the ‘tangled loyalties’ he or she owes to many different principals and how to negotiate them (Shapiro, 2005:184). It is of critical importance to point out that the cadre deployment policy of the ANC has been criticised for eroding the intents of mechanisms aimed at ensuring that public servants do not escape public accountability in favour of party-based accountability (Dawson, 2014:534).

There is a lot of literature in this regard. Beresford (2015:3) argues that ‘in South Africa, there is growing evidence of informal patronage-based political networks working in parallel with, and sometimes in opposition to, the impersonal political institutions of the state’. Dawson (2014:524) argues that ‘local councillors and ward committees have therefore emerged as a political arena where the ANC has selected candidates for councils on criteria other than merit or potential’. This has resulted in local government becoming the site of political battles, factionalism, and patronage (Dawson, 2014:524). Political leaders who occupy positions of authority in the party or public service act as gatekeepers by regulating access to the resources and opportunities that they control (Beresford, 2015:2). This is openly raised by the ruling party, which admits that ‘neo-patrimonialism and corruption’ are spreading within the ANC, and that this is creating ‘anarchy and decay’ within the movement itself; stifling its capacity to promote the socioeconomic transformation expected by South African citizens (Beresford, 2015:3).

By subjecting its cadres to party based accountability, the arguments goes, instead of public accountability, conditions are created wherein municipal local councils and, by extension, employees within the municipality can behave opportunistically by pursuing their own interests subject only to the constraints imposed by their relationship with the principal (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991:197). Over time, these divided loyalties provide a conducive environment for ‘political infighting and related clashes between the political and management components in local government’ (Reddy, 2010:2). In turn, the aforesaid also adversely affects municipal service delivery.

6.4 CADRE DEPLOYMENT AND THE IMPACT OF FACTIONALISM AND COUNCILLOR BICKERING ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN MPOFANA

Dawson (2014: 524), observes that it is generally assumed that patron–client relations hinder collective action and claims making that require horizontal ties as a result of the asymmetrical and vertical relations they engender. This study revealed that there was lack of collective action among councillors in Mpofana because they do not get along. As a result there is no service delivery. Protests are a reaction to this lack of service delivery. Participants felt that no service delivery can ever take place in Mpofana if councillors do not get along because it means they cannot agree on anything.

Media and official reports on the dissolution of Mpofana local council (The Witness, 3 September 2014; SA News Agency, 3 September 2014) confirmed that the local council was dissolved because there was bickering between councillors and persistent protests by communities rendering the municipality dysfunctional. In this way, perhaps quite rightly, a strong perception is created that ‘cadre deployment’, through its variants of cronyism and nepotism invariably leads to, not only the entrenchment of corruption, but also the politicisation of the bureaucratic systems within the state which all happen at the expense of service delivery. Consequently, shirking behaviour occurs without detection thereby causing organisational challenges for the principal such as the dysfunctionality evident in Mpofana municipality. It is this evident dysfunctionality that becomes the source of many problems for the municipality. Cronyism, favouritism and rampant corruption becomes deeply engraved in the organisational culture of the municipality. All of these are inward looking and self-serving inefficiencies that inevitably invite perceptions of non-responsiveness and a reason enough to cause communities to take to the street in protest. Dawson (2014:527) describes these grievances as ‘a result of a complex interplay of factors that have generated frustration and anger and represent a breakdown in collective clientelistic arrangements between the ANC and its supporters’. Consequently, ‘the everyday experience of corruption and nepotism in the distribution of jobs, awarding of tenders, or allocation of houses creates a breakdown in trust between citizens and government representatives’ (Dawson, 2014:527).

6.5 PROTEST: AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION MECHANISM

In the study conducted by Chiwarawara (2014:89) in Gugulethu, interviewees were asked if they regarded protest as an effective method of communication. All the interviewees stated that they do not protest for the sake of protesting, but they do so as a way of conveying a message of anger to the responsible authorities. Chiwarawara's study further revealed that although a number of meanings were attached to the protests, anger stood out as one of the primary reasons that protesters attach to their actions. For the protesters, what breeds anger is being ignored by authorities and protests are an expression of the frustration and anger that develops from non-responsiveness or the neglect. In Mpofana, the study participants felt that councillors were self-serving and ignored their interests. They explained that protests were the only way they ever communicated with the municipality. When people feel that they are being ignored by the authorities, they take to the street to show their anger at being ignored. The study also discovered that protests are being used by communities as a form of redress.

Within the context of Batho Pele principles, redress consists of two main elements which must both be observed equally if the principle of 'people first' has to be transformed in an everyday reality, namely, rapid response and remedial action. Rapid response means the agility with which public servants must move to respond to a query, grievance or complaint from the customer or public or the principal. Remedial action refers to the action that is taken by the agent or public servant to correct or remedy whatever is wrong. Therefore, in terms of redress, rapid response is inadequate if it is not accompanied by corrective action. The tardiness of the municipal officials in responding to queries, grievances or complaints from the members of the public is enough to cause discontent among the affected members of the community. This is due to the fact that the non-responsiveness of the municipality can easily be interpreted as shirking the interests of the citizens in favour of those of the municipal officials. In this way, remedial action, including causing the performance of councillors to improve will not take place as a consequence thereby resulting in public or citizens incurring agency losses within the PA relationship. In PA relationships, citizens have imperfect solutions for reducing agency losses or goal conflicts introduced through delegation (Byman and Kreps, 2010:15). The difficulty, as this study shows, is that compared to the internal institutional checks or control mechanisms available to government or municipalities

in the context of local government, those available to citizens are weaker and problematic.

6.6 CHALLENGES OF EXISTING COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS

Section 17 of Chapter 4 in the Municipal Structures Act proposes various mechanisms, processes and procedures for community participation and accountability within the local sphere of government. These mechanisms include ward committees, councillors, petitions, complaints, public meetings, consultative sessions and advisory committees (Municipal Structures Act, 1998). Systemic weaknesses have been noted with regards to the aforementioned mechanisms of control. The first problem or weakness can be found in the wording that WCs do not have original power and they are assigned an advisory role in council and to facilitate local community participation (Municipal Structures Act, 1998). This wording was initially proposed in the White Paper on Local Government (WPLG) and it remained unchanged after the promulgation of the Municipal Structures Act. Three challenges or weaknesses have been associated with this wording in respect of PA relationships.

Firstly, the wording of the Act suggests that WCs cannot take decisions because they lack “original power”. This ignores the fact that they are elected by communities based on their understanding of the issues affecting communities. Secondly, the advisory nature of WCs also means that they can only legitimise, but not effectively oppose, decisions of local councils, even if these decisions are not compatible with citizens’ or principal’s interests, simply because their role is only advisory. Lastly, since WCs lack original powers and they are chaired by the local councillor, they cannot freely, without any political constraints, criticise or hold the councillor to account because they cannot hold their own meetings in the absence of the councillor who is supposed to chair the meetings of WCs.

The latter point means that for a WC to call a meeting, the chairperson, who is a local councillor has to agree or has to be present. If the meeting is about the councillor’s incompetence and non-delivery, the WC meeting is unlikely to occur. Furthermore, if the members of the WC are party aligned, it has been argued that majority of them actually are party aligned (see Buccus and Hicks, 2008:526), they are likely to exercise party-based self-censorship or self-restraint due to “tangled loyalties” (Shapiro, 2005).

In the same way that WCs and councillor systems have failed to prevent agency losses inherent in the PA relationship between citizens and its local council, petitions, complaints, public meetings, consultative sessions and advisory committees as proposed in the Municipal Structures Act have failed to yield or elicit any positive results from the Mpofana local municipality.

6.7 CHALLENGES OF EXISTING COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS IN MPOFANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The municipality openly admits that it has challenges which impact negatively on its good governance (Mpofana, IDP 2015/2016:15). Some of the challenges identified in the IDP include the following:

- poor systems;
- processes and procedures;
- poor monitoring and evaluation of municipal decisions; and,
- poor implementation of municipal bylaws and policies.

Given that the principals' mechanisms of control are aimed at making it 'more difficult for an agent to shirk successfully, or move a particular outcome closer to its own ideal point than that of the principal' (Byman and Kreps, 2010:9), such control mechanisms must, by every means possible, create convergence between agents' behaviour and principals' objectives. Control mechanisms require additional resources, whether for monitoring behaviour or revising checks on an agent's autonomy. Byman and Kreps, (2010:9) argue that these checks, in turn, may be counter-productive, since the agent's expertise and autonomy to conduct its behaviour are part of what, in theory, make them a valuable asset'. Moreover, they may introduce a new set of principal-agent problems, since these mechanisms tend to require additional agents for monitoring, screening, and sanctioning the agent's behaviour.

Section 73 (2) of the Municipal Structures Act (Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998) further states that a ward committee must consist of the ward councillor and 10 other people from the community. Therefore, ideally ward committees

are representative structures of the community aimed at deliberating on community issues. Once they have deliberated, the resolutions made by the ward committee must be given to ward councillor who, in turn, will table these resolutions in the municipal council (Cloete, 2013:70).

Considering the above view, it is clear that if WCs do not meet, the ward councillor cannot be in a position to properly represent the community to the municipal council as there are no community resolutions or inputs to table to council. Of course, this does not in any way suggest that councillors cannot directly interact with community members. Nor does it mean that citizens are barred from approaching the councillors themselves without the assistance of the WC. However, the argument is that in a situation where the breakdown in trust between councillors and communities is a concern (Back to Basics strategy, 2014:5), the disconnect between councillors and WCs spells disaster for communities in terms of service delivery. Ultimately accountability (or participation) is bound to collapse or rendered ineffective because, on one hand, the Municipal Structures Act says that the WCs are supposed to play a pivotal role in strengthening support for ward councillors by supplying them with information regarding community needs but at the same time they are not given the powers they need to successfully carry out this task. Similarly, building accountable and effective leadership by ensuring councillors account to the communities regarding their electoral promises will not be possible if the same Act gives WCs disproportionately less or no powers to actually act on the responsibility as given. This creates a perception that perhaps government wants to maintain or institutionalise a disproportionately higher degree of control over these mechanisms while communities are made to believe they are in charge. Ultimately, all the systems and institutions associated with government are viewed as unreliable, ineffective, unresponsive and inadequate. The so-called service delivery protests are a reaction to these shortcomings and failures, and “have generated a negative narrative and perceptions for municipalities” (Back to Basics strategy, 2014:5).

6.8 INVITED AND INVENTED SPACES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MPOFANA MUNICIPALITY

The afore-mentioned problem of a negative narrative and perceptions about public participation brings to the fore the adverse consequences of the goal conflict problem

described by Shapiro (2005) earlier. It also serves as the basis on which conditions that lead to widespread grassroots disenchantment with invited spaces of participation begin to unravel or take shape. In other words, it is through the persistent conditions of non-responsiveness, lack of redress and accountability that invented spaces of participation also known as insurgent citizenship or planning (see Miraftab and Wills, 2005; Miraftab, 2006; Miraftab; 2009; Stinwell, 2009) are created. This is to say that when ‘invited’ spaces of citizenship become less favoured by the citizens, ‘invented’ spaces are formed or more favoured. This study revealed that when Mpofana communities feel that they are being ignored or restricted by institutional barriers, they invent their own spaces (Miraftab; 2009:36).

“Yes! We view protests as an effective way of attracting the attention of government whenever we have grievances because usually we are not listened to. Whereas when we protest, the whole world is watching because we blockade the N3. The roads are not fixed but when we protest, the leaders come to listen” (Participant no.5 in ward five).

This also relates to another important finding reported earlier in this discussion about the fact the even though the people of Mpofana strongly vote for or support the ANC, they equally believe in ‘self-activity’ (Ballard et al, 2006: 413). The involvement of Mpofana residents in grassroots social movements such as Mpofana Community Mass Action Group (CMCMAG) and Phumlaas Development Committee (PDC) (The Natal Witness, 3 September 2014; SA News Agency, 3 September 2014) during protests against the municipality is an example of this. .

During the focus group discussion participants made it clear that they do want to vote for the ANC but they do not want the ANC to impose mayors on them (meaning they want to be consulted when the mayor). Their argument is that during elections, they only vote for the ANC as party, but when the ANC has earned their votes it takes it as a blank cheque that allows it to appoint whoever it wants as a mayor. In this context, participants indicated that they often find themselves having to protests against the ANC-led government when it fails to deliver like the situation that is happening in Mpofana. Their protests are about not being consulted and being ignored when they dare raise their displeasure about poor performance because the platforms that are supposed to make it possible for them to raise their concerns are dominated by the same

people they want to complain about. A protest as an alternative or invented space is always much more effective in this regard. Accordingly, this has a strong negative bearing on the ANC's list process even though this was not directly mentioned by participants. that there is a strong source of displeasure about

Instead participants feel that they need to be involved in election and/or appointments of mayors from the beginning to the end because it is them as the community who are at the receiving end of the service (or lack of it) rendered by the local council. In their minds, to appoint a person who is supposed to lead a council is a very important decision that requires direct involvement of the citizens who will be affected by his/her decisions. It also means that such an involvement gives more meaning to the concept of citizen-centred democracy and decision-making. More importantly they often elect each other into positions that are not compatible with their skills within council. The following quote from ward three focus group participant explains this situation;

This re-enforces the view made earlier that the tendency of grassroots to not affiliate with any fixed group highlights their intrinsic ability to insulate themselves from co-option, weakening and it allows them to maintain their shape and independence from any outside influence, political or institutional, despite moving in between the two types of spaces. In the long run, this defence mechanism allows them depth and a unique ability to adapt to both situations within the invited and invented spaces of participation without losing their shape and resilience in the face of adversity. Most members of the focus group, especially in ward three, were also members of the ANC but they have maintained active membership in their communities' civic organisations and they are very active in the local development forum. All of them have been involved in organising and participating in many of the protests that have been staged against the municipality. Therefore, they are bound together by common interest, that is, the development of their community.

In a social attitudes survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, SASA, 2007) to assess the impact of Batho Pele principles in improving the public services, the highest disagreements among those expressing political preferences were found to be among ANC supporters (not members). These disagreements were in

relation to Batho Pele principles of Consultation, Providing information, Redress: rapid response and Redress: remedial action. The survey revealed that citizens believed government was not consulting meaningfully and was not providing all the necessary information in an easy to understand manner nor was it responsive to grievances. This meant that, in their view, there was less corrective or remedial action to mistakes or agency losses suffered by the citizens at the hands of public servants. Crucially, though, the report (HSRC, SASA, 2007) pointed out that ‘these attitudes could be a reflection of the upwelling of discontent within the ANC which characterised the mood of Polokwane’. However, a similar case as explained in the latter statement seems to be bothering residents as one participant had this to say about protesting and councillors:

“We have so many protests in Mpofana because councillors do not report back to people. We have this situation (protests) because councillors do not come back to us. If I remember well, all the councillors of Mpofana are ANC councillors. They were elected by the members of the ANC but they were also elected by us...the people. The ANC issued a directive to them (councillors) that they must report back to the people every three months. Either they are coming back to deliver or they come back if they have queries about the things we asked them to do as the community. But councillors do not do that. That is why we have protests in Mpofana. The councillors do not get along and nothing will ever happen if they do not get along” (Participant no.2, ward three).

The above excerpt depicts a combination of frustration and anger. But it is also a clear case of what was referred to as a “ballot and brick” (Booyesen, 2007) approach whereby members of the ANC vote for the party during the elections and take to the streets when they do not deliver. They do not necessarily vote for another party. Another interpretation from the above excerpt shows consistency with the findings made in other studies about protests. Sinwell (2009:97) remarks that Oldfield (2008: 498) makes a good argument about the fact that ‘the state is not immune from politics, neither is it a neutral player, but rather a site of, an agent in, and a product itself of economic, political and social struggle’. Sinwell (2009:97) acknowledges that Oldfield (2008) ‘was emphasising that the state is not a homogenous actor and is influenced by various agents’. Therefore, mechanisms of public participation created by the state are not immune from participation or power constraints.

So, because grassroots are aware that their ‘increased participation in decision-making arenas is no guarantee that there will be no power constraints’ (Gaventa, 1980), they create their own spaces in which they operate, often in opposition to government policies and outside of the invited spaces for participation, such as ward committees and development forums that have been prescribed by the government (Sinwell, 2009:17). By so doing, they are engaging in ‘politics by other means’ (Oliver et. al. 2003:14). This has been described as a way that the interests of the poor and marginalized have claimed a degree of power and influence over the state (Mottiar and Bond, 2012). Buccus and Hicks, (2008:526) opine that this is because ‘public servants are often unenthusiastic about the formalities of public participation, which makes communities unsure about its substance’. One participant said during the study:

“You go to the municipality and communicate your grievance only to find an employee who is listening to his earphones. You don’t know whether s/he can hear you because they don’t care. It feels like you are just talking alone. They just don’t care! But, once we stop everything, close N3, burn tyres and trucks, we know every leader will stand up and come here to listen. This is the language we speak here in Mooi River. This is the languages that everyone understands” (Participant no.6, ward three).

The above is evidence that if people feel ignored, conditions of marginalisation and exclusion persist and become institutionalized. In this way, ‘insurgent’ planning (Miraftab, 2009:35) is fomented. Once insurgent citizen planning takes place, citizen’ spaces of participation are invented. Cloete (2013:58) cite Aragonés and Sánchez-Pagés (2004:2) who reason that “if participatory democracy is a process of collective decision-making, it must combine elements from both direct and representative democracy”. This will help to ensure that citizens have the ultimate power to decide on policy and that politicians assume the role of policy implementation (Cloete, 2013:58). In this way, the strong representivity and accountability which enhances and reforms public participation will ultimately help in ensuring that participatory democracy conforms to the principles of collective decision-making.

Even though South Africa has, through legislation and policy, began to strengthen its forms of public participation, the system continues to attract a strong negative perception that, in practice, has seldom yielded meaningful participation, representation and accountability (Buccus et. al., 2014:16; Cloete, 2013:55). This point is also openly made

by the government in its Twenty Year Review (2014: 26-27) which states that ‘the increase in service delivery protests provides visible evidence that the state is struggling to ensure that poor communities feel that they are being heard. In this regard, the government observes that ‘protests are typically prompted by a range of concerns including access to services, the quality of services and the perceived non-responsiveness of local government’ (Twenty Year Review (2014: 26-27)). In agreement with the above criticism of formal public participation mechanisms (invited spaces), the findings of this research suggest that the residents of Mpofana communities are not only unhappy with their ward committees, but many do not even know that such a structure called a WC exists in reality. In the context of the PA relationship that exists between citizens and the local council, this is a perfect example of how the principles of information sharing, openness and transparency are not implemented in practice. In this way, the principal’s interests are diverted or superseded by those of the agent.

WC members are supposed to be elected by communities yet the study found that in Mpofana there are certain members of the community who have never heard of a concept of WC let alone seeing, meeting or hearing about its members. This can be interpreted within the PA relationship as an example of an agency cost (agent’s departure from the goal of the principal) which is occasioned by the occurrence of agency conflict. Byman and Kreps (2010) advise that ‘one way a principal may control agency losses is to modify the scope of authority that it delegates to the agent’. Pollack (2006) adds that although this relationship is often modelled as either a discretionary or instrumental agent in practice, the degree of autonomy is less likely to be dichotomised and more likely to resemble a continuum along which the principal can move on the basis of his motivations and of his assessment of agency gains and losses. Under these conditions, agency losses are more likely to prompt a contractual shift toward greater instrumentality, enforced through appropriate ex ante controls and ex post sanctioning measures (Byman and Kreps, 2010:17). Rather than repeatedly incurring losses if the agent has opportunistically abused its discretion, the principal is likely to change the arrangement and institutionalize accountability ex ante (Majone 2001).

Pollack (2006) cautions that this relationship is often modelled as either a discretionary or instrumental agent in practice means that ‘the degree of autonomy is less likely to be dichotomised and more likely to resemble a continuum along which the principal can move on the basis of his motivations and of his assessment of agency gains and losses is similar to what Mirafteb (2009:39) cautions about invited and invented spaces of

participation in that ‘the two sorts of spaces stand in a mutually constituted, interacting relationship, not a binary one’. They are not mutually exclusive, nor they are either necessarily affiliated with a fixed set of individuals or groups or with a particular kind of civil society. For Miraftab (2004:19) the distinction lies in the fact that actions taken by the poor within the invited spaces of citizenship, however innovative they may be, aim to cope with existing systems of hardship and are sanctioned by donors and government interventions. However, within the invented spaces, grassroots actions are characterised by defiance that directly challenge the status quo.

For example, the emphasis made about ‘tangled loyalties’ (Shapiro, 2005) or ‘agency costs’ (Byman and Kreps, 2010) or ‘agency conflict’ (Shapiro, 2010) or ‘canonical agency problem’ (Ross, 1973) has been cited by scholars (Oldfield, 2008, Buccus and Hicks, 2010) with regards to how WCs fail to remain non-partisan and independent of political parties and the fact that ward councillors are dismissed as subordinating constituent accountability to party accountability (Pithouse, 2007). In the Mpofana situation, while it can be said that participants had no problem with the fact that all the seven directly elected councillors are members of the ANC, their likening of WCs to councillors is not encouraging. The study revealed that participants’ views were that WCs are exactly the same as councillors in that they are self-serving and corrupt. This is what one participant had to say about WCs:

“You know how WCs work! They know that, OK, if we claim to have had a met today, R500 is coming our way. So, they submit falsified information to COGTA suggesting that they had a meeting. COGTA will then pay at the end of the month on the basis of that falsified information. They know the meeting did not occur. They did not even report back to the community. Ngikutshela iqiniso mina bro wami: I ward committee, ifana ntseeeh, namakhansela, babolile! (Let me tell you the truth: the WC is exactly the same as the councillors. They are all rotten!). They are working for their stomachs. Once the money from the municipality is in their account on the 25th, once they receive the R500, for them their job is done even though they know they have done absolutely nothing. Sometimes, you get information through grapevine that there is a meeting in the local hall, when you get there, there is only one person. The rest is apologies, apologies, apologies! But at the end of the month all of them will get the money (R500 stipend) as if they all attended the meeting when they did not attend any meeting”.

With regards to the above excerpt, the study revealed that COGTA has an arrangement of paying WC members a R500 stipend per three successful meetings they have facilitated. However, participants claim that all WCs of Mpofana are dysfunctional yet they receive the stipend. However, in the main, the study also revealed another crucial point relating to how communities use (or do not use) participation mechanism given to them by government. This could be a sign of how effective (or ineffective) citizens perceive them to be. The study found that there is little or no trust between communities and the WCs. Actually, the study came to the conclusion that participants' views that WCs are not any different from the councillors suggests that WCs are not viewed as an effective mechanism to improve public participation and accountability. WCs are viewed as another community participation mechanism that is inefficient and ineffective which is good in theory but not working in practice.

The Twenty Year Review proposes that 'mechanisms for promoting participation, accountability and responsiveness' must be used effectively (Twenty Year Review, 2014:26-27). How this must be done is made clearer by the Back to Basics strategy (2014:11) which proposes strict measures for dealing with non-compliance to the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act on community participation. Some of the basic measures it proposes include monitoring:

- The existence of the required number of functional Ward Committees;
- The number of effective public participation programmes conducted by Councils; and,
- The regularity of community satisfaction surveys carried out (Back to Basics, 2014:11)

While the above ideals are sound, the challenge is in the detail. For example, the Back to Basics strategy does not say who must conduct the proposed monitoring. Therefore, it does not explain how this will bring back the lost trust between communities and WCs. This brings into question the practicality of the proposed solutions. For this reason, communities create or invent their own spaces of participation which are often more confrontational and protest driven. Accordingly, it is argued that the dysfunctionality evident in the functioning of institutional participation mechanisms such as WCs as noted by many scholars (Buccus and Hicks, 2008:526; Msibi and Penzhon, 2010; Stinwell, 2009; Miraftab, 2009) is indicative of the growing disaffection with invited spaces of participation.

Furthermore, it is contended that the vague or constricted lines of accountability between WC systems and councillors, particularly in relation to how they account to citizens that elect them intrinsically imposes limitations on their functionality due to the legal constraints inherent in the law that gives rise to them (the Municipal Structures Act of 1998). To this extent, it can be said that the legal constraints imposed by the wording of the Municipal Structures Act of 1998, which states that WCs do not have original powers and they must be chaired by a councillor, are sources of systemic weaknesses affecting these participation mechanisms. Another mechanism that the study participants were not happy about is the manner in which the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) forums are conducted.

6.9 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF IDP FORUMS

With regards to IDP forums, the study found that participants preferred a bottom-up instead of a top-down approach. There was a feeling that the municipal representatives often have pre-conceived ideas of what communities would say rather than waiting for the communities to make inputs in the IDP. Participants also mentioned that they are aware of the fact that communities sometimes make unrealistic demands to the IDP forum, however, they also made it clear that they believe it is the responsibility of the IDP officials from the municipality to guide communities on what is practical and what is not practical. This would help to educate the communities, they argued.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Human Development Report (1993) argued that ‘people's participation’ in their own development was not only central but also that such participation cannot take place without ‘communication’. This acknowledgement by the UNDP came amidst the realisation that ‘communication is central’ as a tool to enable planners, when identifying and formulating development programmes, to consult with people in order to take into account their needs, attitudes as well as traditional knowledge. The report argued that ‘only with communication will the project beneficiaries become the principal actors to make development programmes successful’ (UNDP Human Development Report, 1993:3). Helping people at all levels to communicate empowers them to recognise important issues and find common ground for action, and builds a sense of identity and participation in order to implement their decisions (UNDP Human Development Report, 1993:3). Msibi and Penzon (2010:1) describe this approach as ‘participatory communication’.

Serveas (2007:15) argues that development programmes cannot produce change without an ongoing, culturally and socially relevant communication dialogue among development providers and clientele, and within the recipient group itself. Based on the aforementioned fact, it can therefore be argued that all those involved in the analysis and application of communication for development, and social change—or what can broadly be termed ‘development communication’ (Servaes, 2007:15) — would agree that in essence development communication is the sharing of knowledge aimed at reaching a consensus for action that takes into account the interests, needs and capacities of all concerned.

Lagerway (1990: 1) also suggests that ‘if education is the key then communication is the tool’. He argues that the purpose of communication, as a tool, is getting people’s involvement through education because ‘both formal and non-formal education involves processes of communication’. This systematic process occurs over a certain period of time in which the people are informed, instructed and inspired to participate and be involved (Lagerway, 1990: 2). Likewise, Kumar (2011:2) posits that ‘development communication is communication with a social conscience’. It takes humans into account (Kumar, 2011:2). In this regard, Kumar (2011:3) identifies two primary roles for development communication. Firstly, it has a transforming role, as it seeks social change in the direction of higher quality of values of society. Secondly, in playing its roles, development communication seeks to create an atmosphere for change, as well as providing innovations through which society may change’ (Kumar, 2011:2). The main objective of communication is people’s involvement and participation.

Given this context, (Kumar, 2011:3) alludes to the fact that development communication has to deal with two types of audience, namely i) the communicators comprising development bureaucracy, media practitioners and professionals, and ii) the people i.e. the audience who can be informed or uninformed; educated or semi-literate or literate’. This gives rise to three main ideas that clearly define the philosophy of development communication and make it different from general communication (Kumar, 2011:3). These are development communication i) as a purposive communication, ii); that is value-laden; and iii,) that is pragmatic (Kumar, 2011:3). In essence, this means that,

within the domain of development, there is a tacit positive value that is always attached to what one communicates about, which is supposed to motivate the people for social change. If this positive value is conspicuously absent, then people become discouraged to participate and consequently development suffers. The second aspect of development communication, is that because it is pragmatic, it is also “goal-oriented”. The ultimate goal of development communication is ‘a higher quality of life for the people of a society by social and political change’ (Kumar, 2011:2).

6.10 CONCLUSION

ONE OF THE MAIN INTENTIONS OF THIS STUDY WAS TO UNDERSTAND THE LOCAL GRIEVANCES RELATING TO SERVICE DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT IN MPOFANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY. IN PARTICULAR, THIS RELATED TO THE KEY CHALLENGES/ISSUES THAT ORDINARY CITIZENS BELIEVE AFFECT THEM DIRECTLY IN THE AREA OF MPOFANA. THE STUDY WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN UNDERSTANDING HOW THE MPOFANA COMMUNITIES REACTED OR COMMUNICATED THESE NEEDS/CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF FORMAL OR INVITED SPACES CREATED THROUGH VARIOUS INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS SUCH AS LAWS AND FRAMEWORKS AS WELL AS THE WAY THEY PARTICIPATED IN INVENTED SPACES. THE STUDY HAS REVEALED THAT ONE OF THE MAIN CHALLENGES IN MPOFANA IS HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT. THE SECOND FINDING MADE BY THE STUDY IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE RAMPANT UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE AREA OF MPOFANA, LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION ARE THE MOST IMMEDIATE ISSUES/CHALLENGES FACING MPOFANA. THESE ARE THE ISSUES THAT ARE THE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF PROTESTS IN MPOFANA. OTHERS ARE JUST SYMPTOMS AND TRIGGERS. THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT TO MENTION IN THIS REGARD IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE PRINCIPAL-AGENCY RELATIONSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY AND LOCAL CITIZENS, WHICH INVOLVES 'CONDITIONAL' DELEGATION OR GRANT OF AUTHORITY TO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY TO ACT IN THE INTEREST OF CITIZENS, CITIZENS OFTEN RESORT TO CREATING THEIR OWN SPACES OF PARTICIPATION WHEN 1) THEY FEEL THAT GOAL CONFLICT HAS OCCURRED OR AGENCY LOSSES HAVE BEEN INCURRED; 2) WHEN THEIR ATTEMPT AT CONTROLLING THE SITUATION BY DEMANDING ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH ESTABLISHED REPRESENTATIVE AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS FAILS. THE GOAL CONFLICT/AGENCY LOSSES ARE OFTEN A RESULT OF SHIRKING OR TANGLED LOYALTIES. GIVEN THE HIGH LEVELS OF PROTEST NATIONALLY, THE MPOFANA CASE STUDY IS USEFUL IN UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CITIZENS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA. BASED ON THE STUDY FINDINGS I OFFER A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS THAT COULD SUPPORT IN CONSIDERATIONS OF HOW TO REDUCE PROTEST IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS APPEAR BELO **6.11 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is clear from the study that people in communities invent their own spaces of communication because of the fact that the invited spaces do not work or function. Where they function, they do not serve the interests of the communities they are intended to benefit. There is a demonstrable evidence that they are not trusted because they lack representatives and accountability. As a result, principal-agency relationships between governments and citizens fail resulting in agency losses. This study has revealed that

‘there is almost always some conflict between the interests of those who delegate authority (principals) and agents to whom they delegate it. It has also been highlighted that often ‘agents behave opportunistically, pursuing their own interests subject only to the constraints imposed by their relationship with the principal (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991). While there are strong internal institutional checks or control mechanisms available to government or municipalities in the context of local government to control the behaviour of officials, I argue firstly, that it is equally important to also strengthen those available to citizens.

Secondly, the cadre deployment policy with all its good intentions, has become one of the most difficult policies to manage, especially when it is juxtaposed with service delivery in the context of an effective and efficient performance management system. This is because of vulnerability to intra-party loyalty which also extends to intra- and inter-government manipulation and gatekeeping. To deal with this, I recommend that: The local government legislative environment created by the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 be reviewed to allow more latitude to communities to exercise their right to hold their representatives accountable. This relates, in particular, to the powers of WCs to hold meetings with communities. The fact that the ward councillors are designated by law to chair the WCs compounds the situation. Therefore, the wording of the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 should be reviewed with a view to giving WCs room to work more effectively and meaningfully with communities. This must include measures being taken to ensure that such an improvement does not create space for over-ambitious WC members (or community members) to destabilise the service delivery environment by engaging in counter-productive activities, including upstaging the ward councilors and/or using community support/trust to advance their own personal interests. The wording of the councillors’ Code of Conduct must be improved in such a way that if councillors do not convene report back meetings with communities as mandated by the Act, communities must have an effective way/recourse including reporting them. If councillors are found to have contravened the Code of Conduct, they must not be allowed to keep their positions. Such a decision must also be ratified by the community. Currently, the councillors’ Code of Conduct is more inward looking in that it emphasizes the need for councillors to attend all council meetings. If the essence of their being councillors moves from the premise that they are members of communities before they are councillors, it should follow, therefore, that their behavior in council must be compatible with the interests of the communities they represent or ought to represent. If

such wording is inserted in the Code of Conduct for Councillors, it will help close down the existing loopholes or grey areas that allow councillors to attend or prioritise council meetings but then fail to report back to communities on service delivery. In this situation, within the current setting, the councillor can be deemed to have performed well when, in fact, he/she has demonstrated, through measurable action, that they have not neglected an important duty of accounting to the constituencies that elected them into council. If the above changes are adopted, the performance management environment of can improve drastically because councillors who do not see reporting to communities as mandatory will face the consequences, including the possibility of losing their positions. This will also help to introduce, not only accountability, but more so, it will ensure public inclusion in closely monitoring, reporting and controlling of the system of local government performance. The citizens will then become principals or bosses in practice instead being the bosses on paper. Accountability and consequences for errant behaviour and malperformance will also improve.

There must be a review of the one-size-fits-all approach applied in terms of how municipalities generate their incomes. Some municipalities are poorer than others, therefore, even if they have an indigent policy, it will not be adequate to address the endemic or deep-seated poverty that some municipalities inherited from the apartheid system, particularly those that are located in rural and farm areas. Their revenue streams are constricted and they cannot improve their physical infrastructure unless there is an external intervention aimed at solving the intrinsic financial/funding gap inherited through their location. This will also assist in improving local infrastructure which ultimately serves as a good incentive or motivation for big companies or factories to relocate to these municipalities, thereby boosting the local economic development. In return, strong local economic development will create more jobs, particularly for young people.

Employed people are not only the revenue base for the local municipality that dispenses services to them as citizens, it also serves as a revenue base for the national fiscus. A final recommendation following from this study is that development communication should be adopted as the method of communication between public servants and the communities they serve in order to improve the participation and the education of communities about the development projects that are delivered to communities.

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ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Interview schedule for focus groups

Project: Service delivery protest in Mpofana, KwaZulu-Natal

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Participant's name: | |
| Organisation (if any): | |
| Position (if any): | |
| Participant's telephone no.: | |
| Date: | |
| Venue (of the interview) | |
| Interviewer's name: | |

Introduction of the facilitator

Begin by introducing myself stating my full names and surname and where I live and work. I then explain the purpose of the research or study to the participants.

Focus Group Rules

Stating some simple rules at the beginning of the focus group can be helpful in successful facilitation of the group. Rules to be considered will include:

1. **One Person Talking at a Time:** Inform the group that in order to keep notes, it is important that only one person at a time speaks. Ask the participants to signal you if they have something to say.
2. **Cell Phones Off:** Ask people to turn off their connections to the outside world so they can focus on the topic!
3. **Confidentiality:** Inform the participants that everything they say will be kept in the room and that no one will be able to link statements to individuals.
4. Inform participants in the beginning that you may interrupt them, and if you do, you are not being rude. Say that you are just trying to ensure that everyone can participate and that the group stays on task.

Introduction of the participants

All the participants introduce themselves without following any particular sequence to avoid setting the stage for participants to talk in order instead of it being more in an unstructured conversation.

Ask again if anyone objects to being audio-recorded. If anyone says yes, do not record. Also remind participants that all information is confidential. This will help make individuals feel more comfortable about participating if they know that what they say will stay in the room.

After opening the session, and everyone has introduced themselves, proceed through to the questions.

Questions

1. What do you like about your area and briefly describe the main challenges or recent trends related to service delivery protests in your ward?

2. Tell me briefly how these relate to your needs and what is yours and municipality's role in realizing/meeting these needs.

3. To what extent do you think protests are an effective mechanism/method of communication with government whether it's about the progress made, challenges encountered and plans designed to mitigate against challenges faced in implementing promised or agreed upon programmes?

4. How do levels of service delivery impact on the quality of life of people within the community?

5. What improvements, if any, would you recommend to government or those in positions of authority within your area in terms of how effectively they can execute the proposed (service delivery) as proposed in the consultative processes and what can you say is your honest view or opinion about service delivery protests, generally, but more particularly, with regards to how they happen in Mpofana municipality, including their nature (i.e. violent or non-violent, peaceful, etc) sequence and frequency and why?

End of interview: Thank you for your time and for sharing your insights with us

ANNEXURE B: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

General Information to Participants

INFORMATION SHEET

Date:.....

Hi, My name is.....a student/candidate for Master of Social Science in Development Studies, from **University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Built Environment and Development Studies** under the **College of Humanities**. The contact details for my School and Supervisor are as follows:

Name:

Position:

School: **Built Environment and Development Studies**

College: **Humanities**

Institution: **University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Address: **Office No.A729**
Level 7
Shepstone Building
Howard College
Mazisi Kunene Avenue
Durban
4041

Tel:

Fax:

Email:

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs

You are being invited to consider participating in the study that involves research about service delivery and development in your area. The aim and purpose of this study is to explore and get deep insights into how government responds to Mpofana community needs as well as how Mpofana citizens react towards government with respect to service delivery.

The study is expected to enroll on three wards of this municipality whereby between seven to twelve people of different sex and age groups will be selected to participate in the focus group in each of the wards. In total, no less than twenty one (21) or no more than sixty (36) people are expected to partake in this study.

In addition, it is envisaged that structured interviews will be conducted with local councillors and members of the senior management team within Mpofana municipality to get their perspectives on the same topic. It will involve the following procedures: If you agree to partake, you will be then clubbed into a group of seven to twelve people of different ages and sex/gender

coming from the same neighbourhood as yourself wherein you will be asked to give your perspective on a number of topical questions, relating to service delivery in your area, that will be introduced to you by the facilitator of the discussion. The duration of your participation, if you choose to enroll and remain in the study, is expected to be one (1) hour.

There are no known physical and/or psychological risks and/or discomforts that you will be exposed or subjected to if you choose to participate in the study, however, as indicated earlier, should you feel in anyway exposed to or that you are subjected to any form of prejudice or ill-treatment before, during or after the research, please contact:

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any point. Please note that, in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation, the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. Should you wish to withdraw at any point before, during or after the study, please inform the facilitator of your decision with immediate effect.

Should you elect to participate till the end, please be assured that under no circumstances will your identities or any personal information be revealed to other parties other than the research team. Once collected, the data that you share with the research team will be analysed and a draft report will be presented to you for further accuracy. The final report will be submitted to the supervisor and the data received from you will be kept under lock-and-key conditions within the university.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled Service delivery protest in Mpofana by Thokozani S'bongiseni Magwaza.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 082 303 6721.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: +27 31 2604557 - Fax: +27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

(Where applicable)

Signature of Translator

Date

(Where applicable)

ANNEXURE C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Semi-structured interview schedule for local authorities

Project: Service delivery protest in Mpofana, KwaZulu-Natal.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Respondent's name: | |
| Department: | |
| Position: | |
| Respondent's telephone no.: | |
| Date and venue of interview: | |
| Interviewer's name: | |

Introduction (introduce yourself)

1. Tell me **very briefly** about your position: What is your main role and responsibilities in relation to the service delivery within the municipality?
2. Briefly describe the main challenges or recent trends related to protests and other service delivery disruptions in this province?

Legislation, policies, strategies, plans and guidelines

3. Has your local council compiled and submitted an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for the municipality? When was it last updated and can we have a copy?
4. What informed this IDP? (Probe for: the National Development Plan, Local Government Summit, Auditor-General's Report, Provincial Growth Strategy, local research, consultations, etc..?)
5. Does the IDP provide clear policy statements and direction for the municipality to plan and align its plans with different provincial departments and other sectors? Explain? - What are the strengths and challenges/ gaps?
6. Has the IDP provided clear policy statements and direction for aligned resource prioritisation? How? Explain? - What are the strengths and challenges / gaps?
7. Has the IDP provided clear policy statements and direction for measurement of results? Are intended outcomes clear? How? Explain? - What are the gaps?

8. Which of the following systems have the municipality put in place to help with your reporting to the community? Please can you describe them and where possible, please supply supporting documents?
- Performance indicators?
 - M&E plan?
 - Tools?
 - Data base?
 - Commissioned any research?
 - Done any audits / evaluations?
 - Provided any training in M&E for the councillors or ward committee members?
9. To what extent are the overall goal and objectives/outcomes of the IDP are recognised and largely shared or accepted by ordinary citizens and by the various sectors in the municipality? Please explain.
10. How do you ensure alignment between the IDP and other sector plans such as parastatals, national departments and provincial departments plans? What are the successes and challenges with this? Can we get documents to support this?
11. What is your honest view or opinion about service delivery protests, generally, but more particularly, with regards to how they happen in Mpofana municipality, including their nature and frequency and why?

End of interview : Thank you for your time and for sharing your insights