

Challenges facing the effective functioning of ward committees as mechanism to promote local democracy in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction

SI Seithholo

21859043

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Supervisor: Dr M Diedericks

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation submitted for the degree of Master of Arts – Public Management and Governance at the North-West University is my own work and has not previously been submitted, in whole or part, to any institution of higher learning. I further declare that all material and sources cited in this study have been duly acknowledged by means of a complete reference list.

S.I Seitholo

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated challenges facing the effective functioning of ward committees as mechanism to promote local democracy in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, requires local government to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in how they are governed. Ward committees as a mechanism to enhance public participation and promote local democracy in local government were intended to contribute towards bringing about people-centred, participatory and democratic local government. These community structures were specifically introduced to play a critical role in linking and informing municipalities about the needs, aspirations, potential and problems/challenges of communities.

With a view to realise the research objectives of this study, a qualitative research methodology was adopted. In addition, a literature survey of public participation, local democracy and the functioning of ward committees was undertaken, including an analysis of legislative and regulatory frameworks guiding the effective functioning of ward committees.

The qualitative empirical study made use of semi-structured interviews as instrument to obtain valuable data from Tlokwe City Council Officials; these revealed significant insights and provided first-hand knowledge regarding the effective functioning of ward committees. Furthermore, focus group interviews were facilitated with four ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction to investigate the challenges faced by ward committees.

Significant findings include that ward committees play an imperative role in the decision-making processes of the municipal council, thus enhancing local democracy. However, various challenges that affect the effective functioning of ward committees were identified, which include the lack of finances and infrastructure; the lack of knowledge among ward committee members of local government legislation and regulations; the absence of continued training and empowerment and, in some cases, political interference from members of the committee.

Keywords: Ward committees (WC), Public participation, Local democracy, Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Public Participation forum (PPF), Tlokwe City Council

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ANC	AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
CBO'S	COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS
COGTA	DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
DPLG	DEPARTMENT OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
IDASA	INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA
IDP	INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
MFMA	LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MUNICIPAL FINANCE MANAGEMENT ACT
MSA	LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES ACT
MSA	LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION
PPP	PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP
RSA	REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
SALGA	SOUTH AFRICA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 ORIENTATION

Local government in South African has, after 1994, been constitutionalised as a distinct sphere of government. This approach has signified a conceptual shift from local government acting as administrative service delivery agents to the promotion of developmental goals and principles, including local democracy, sustainable development, a safe and healthy environment and a co-operative government (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:667). Over the past few years, municipalities have been faced with the challenges of providing equitable public service delivery throughout the country, and often inefficiency has inevitably led to protests over unsatisfactory service delivery. These protests could have been triggered by a variety of issues, ranging from improper governing structures to the lack of public participation by community members in the decision-making processes of local and district municipalities (Madumo, 2011:1).

Public participation is a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa (SA) (Nyalunga, (2006:1) that was introduced after 1994 in order to streamline decision-making processes in government. According to Madumo (2012:45), public participation in South Africa is construed to mean any activity ranging from the election of the representatives to consultation with citizens when formulating legislation by those elected.

The South African Government has committed itself to instituting wide-ranging participatory processes in the different spheres and institutions of government in the country with the introduction of participatory and direct democracy. This is evident in the institutions at national and provincial spheres, and in planning processes and policy formulation of local government structures (Ababio, 2007:615). Civil society is an essential part of democracy in South Africa as it affords citizens the opportunity to participate in public life and to administer the exercise of state power (Reddy & Sikhakhane, 2008:618).

Reddy and Sikhakhane (2008:618) state that public participation in the local sphere is crucial for good governance as it enhances transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of the local community. Therefore, citizens can hold their local governments accountable for the decisions that are made on their behalf. According to Madumo (2012:45), public participation is an essential element of local democracy, which makes it a sacred initiative for every citizen. Madumo (2012:45)

furthermore postulates that public participation is a process that involves a power struggle in terms of who gets to make the decisions. The view that public participation is a crucial component of efforts to enable a local community to exert greater influence over the decisions made by local institutions that affect their lives is well established in the literature (Ndevu, 2011:1248).

The White Paper on Local Government (1998) introduced the concept of “developmental local government” which is defined as “Local Government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their economic and material needs and to improve the quality of their lives” (Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), 2006:9). Developmental local government encourages public participation in the local government sphere (Ntlemenza, 2007: VIII).

The process of public participation is complex yet important in terms of achieving representativeness and accountability in all three spheres of government. The consultation of citizens forms an important basis of the South African Constitution, 1996, and it is therefore imperative that government, especially in the local sphere, should be representative of the community and focus on improving public participation mechanisms in order to engage citizens in their decision-making processes. The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 is clear about the need for public participation. In terms of section 16 of the Act, a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that encourages and creates conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality.

The concept of public participation derives from section 152 (1) (e) of the South African Constitution, 1996, which mandates municipalities to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government matters. The provision of public participation in the Systems Act therefore has a constitutional base (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:668). Due to local government being regarded as the sphere of government closest to the people, the core of all the legislation that has been put in place is to find ways to ensure that citizens give input to the decisions that local councils make. The purpose of all the pieces of legislation is to make sure that citizens participate fully in the decisions that affect them at local sphere (DPLG, 2005:10).

Public participation enhances democratic local government by constantly bringing diverse needs, concerns, views and perspectives into the policy-making agenda of a municipal council. This helps to inform the council about what the public wishes to see

happening in their area. It is thus important that local government should know how to promote public participation. Public participation can therefore be seen as a vehicle to promote and instil a culture of good governance in the local government sphere (Nyalunga, 2006:3).

An existing and imperative mechanism for public participation is the use of ward committees. Ward committees' roles and functions are set out in legislation and policy requirements as "the institution to link communities and local politicians" (Buccus, 2011:Online). Chaired by ward councillors, they are the pillars of public participation in development processes and municipal decision-making, but despite frequently good potential, ward committees often function poorly (Buccus, 2011:Online).

This mechanism of participation is one that has been in place since 2001 and has intended to contribute towards bringing about people-centred, participatory and democratic local government (Smith, 2008:4). These committees have been implemented in the vast majority of wards in local government across the country.

The establishment of ward committees in the South African context is an attempt through legislation to create a space, albeit limited, to complement existing forums by means of which communities can exchange information and to participate more directly in decision-making (Napier, 2008:167). The Constitution, 1996, states in Chapter 7 section 152 (1) (e) that the object of local government is "to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisation in the matters of local government" (Napier, 2008:168).

Ward committees have been the focus of considerable attention by central government as well as civil society, with substantial investment already made in an attempt to ensure that these structures have the necessary capacity and resources required for them to fulfil their envisaged role as the voice of the communities.

Ward committees have therefore been introduced to local government as community structures and should play a critical role in linking and informing local government about the needs, aspirations, potentials and problems of the communities. By working directly with the municipalities, ward committees serve as a channel that can also give a voice to previously disadvantaged communities. Ward committees therefore have an important role to play in actively participating and determining core municipal processes

such as Integrated Development Planning (IDP), budgeting, and the municipal performance management process (Putu, 2006:5).

Ward committees comprise the ward councillor as chairperson and not more than ten other persons amongst others people who represent:

- women;
- youth;
- religious groups;
- sports and welfare;
- environment;
- education;
- community-based organisations;
- ratepayers' associations;
- traditional leaders;
- the disabled;
- informal traders' associations;
- employment agricultural associations; and
- community safety forums (Reddy & Sikhakhane, 2008:681).

The Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA) is one of the many organisations working in the field of local governance; they have been involved in the assessment of the functionality of ward committees in a number of municipalities throughout the country. These processes were run in partnership with other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); the former Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), now referred to as the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA); South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Provincial Chapters and a number of Development (Donors) Agencies. In these engagements an emerging model for ward committee participation and communication channels existed - however, the model would seem to have been more effective if the municipalities took the public participation process more seriously (Mautjane, 2005:2). How serious municipalities regard the functioning and role of ward committees can be judged by the amount of both human and financial resources allocated to the administration and support of the ward committees.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Tlokwe City Council's Internet website on public participation, Council uses especially two mechanisms for public participation. These are ward committees and mayoral *Izimbizos* (public meetings). There are, of course, also the IDP Representative Forum, open council meetings, suggestion boxes, letters to the local media, and the city's newsletter that the municipality also utilises for aims of participation. However, it may be argued that the main mechanisms highlighted above do not adequately represent the disempowered and underrepresented, who do not have any decision-making powers and who lack access to the necessary resources for ward committees to perform their functions. At the same time, questions can be asked about how effective ward committees actually are; whether they are useful conduits for public involvement in local governance; whether, as 'created spaces' for public participation, they are inherently capable of playing the critical role expected of them; and whether they create opportunities for *real* power-sharing between the municipality and citizens (Smith & De Visser, 2009:2).

According to Groenewald (2013:Interview), former manager in the Office of the Speaker at Tlokwe City Council, there are various challenges facing ward committee structures in Tlokwe City Council at the moment. This assumption is primarily based on unanswered questions from ward councillors as chairpersons of ward committees. This assumption was further validated by the empirical research finding in chapter five of this dissertation. According to the Tlokwe City Council by-law on Guidelines for the establishment and operation of ward committees, part 5 (5.2)(4), the Speaker shall determine the date for elections or by-elections in order to affect the election of ward committees. This suggests that the Office of the Speaker is responsible for public participation and ward committees in particular (Tlokwe City Council, 2008:7). The Tlokwe City Council has thereby established ward committees in terms of Section 73 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 for wards 1 to 26 as determined by the Municipal Demarcation Board.

The ward committees that have been thus established therefore serve as official public participation structures within the municipal area of jurisdiction of the Tlokwe City Council, and are representative of the communities, irrespective of the political representation of the political ward electoral composition and structure - thus promoting ownership and popular participation (Tlokwe City Council, 2008:4).

As indicated above, there are a number of challenges regarding the effective functioning of ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council municipal area. These challenges, according to Groenewald (2013:Interview), include that:

- Ward councillors have limited knowledge of the local government legislative framework under which they have to perform as well as about their role and functions.
- The commitment to really serve and represent the public is questionable.
- Ward committee members generally felt that they were entitled to earn a salary, and to this end, they demand an amount of at least R1000 per month from the City Council.
- Members of ward committees do not always attend meetings and they are often unable to interpret local government policy.
- Failure to attend meetings results in information not reaching respective ward committee members, and this means that the members are unaware of the issues Council wishes to engage them with.
- Members of ward committees had limited knowledge of the IDP and related budgeting process and also attended IDP meetings poorly.
- There are no records of how many ward committee meetings were held and no record of their functionality.
- There was no record of how many vacancies existed within each ward, and no further record existed to prove that training had indeed been provided for members of ward committees.

In a similar study of community participation and ward committee functioning within eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, Nzimakwe and Reddy (2008:678) identified corresponding challenges facing ward committees, such as the following:

- Some councillors and ward committee members were in need of capacity-building programmes.
- Members who served on ward committees were not paid, and some became reluctant to travel and attend meetings.
- Some members of ward committees did not fully understand the system of governance and found themselves not properly participating in democratic processes.

Thus, it is important to look at the composition of ward committees, both in terms of how they are chosen and with regard to, how many ward committee member must represent a ward with the councillor as chairperson. From this perspective, it is clear that there is a need for public participation at all spheres of government, especially local government. It is therefore the purpose of this study to identify challenges facing ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council with a view to enable more effective public participation.

The research problem of this study is therefore:

To investigate the challenges facing ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council, and to propose strategic recommendations regarding the more effective functioning of ward committees in order to enhance public participation in decision-making processes.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Taking the above orientation and problem statement into account, the objectives of this study are to:

- Analyse theoretical perspectives concerning local democracy, public participation and the ward committee system in South Africa (SA).
- Determine the legislative and regulatory framework that circumscribe the effective functioning of ward committees.
- Investigate challenges faced by ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council.
- Propose strategic recommendations for the effective functioning of ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council's area of responsibility.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Against the above background and problem statement, the following research questions are formulated:

- What does local democracy, public participation and the pursuit of more effective functioning of ward committees in South Africa entail?
- What are the legislative and regulatory frameworks that set out effective ward committee functioning in South Africa?

- What are the possible challenges facing ward committees within Tlokwe City Council?
- How should the criteria for public participation and functioning of ward committees be assessed in order to provide strategic recommendations to the Council?

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENTS (CTS)

CTS 1: Municipalities need to develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance (Craythorne, 2003:264). This means that there needs to be a structure in place where proper representation from the community can take place, also in this instance within the Tlokwe City Council. Participatory governance in this regard would require that Council be transparent, responsive and accountable to the people, hence the importance of ward committees.

CTS 2: Ward committee members could facilitate community deliberation within their wards on their communities' needs and priorities, and feed this information through to the municipal planning and budgeting process (Ngqele, 2010:4). Ward committees can thus not only serve as information distributors to Tlokwe City Council, but can also guarantee the dissemination of this in the respective wards.

CTS 3: Ward committees are important tools for participatory local democracy (Reddy & Sikhakhane, 2008:681). Ward committees, when functional and administered properly, can serve as an important participatory participation mechanism for Tlokwe City Council and local government in general. It is thus important for ward committees to function properly in order to can eradicate the abovementioned and identified challenges in the Tlokwe City Council.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Brynard and Hanekom (2006:36), the research methodology of collecting data necessitates a reflection on planning, structuring and execution of the research in

order to comply with the demands of truth, objectivity and validity. The notion of research methodology is concerned with the processes and the decisions that the researcher has to take in order to execute the research project. The research methodology for this dissertation is elaborated upon in the subsequent sections.

1.6.1 Research approach

A qualitative research approach was followed in the present study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:135), qualitative research encompasses several approaches in research that are, in some respects, quite varied. Qualitative approaches have two things in common. Firstly, they focus on a phenomenon that occurs in natural settings – that is, in the real world. Secondly, they involve studying those phenomena in all their complexities. A qualitative research approach can also refer to research that produces descriptive data, and generally makes use of the participants' own written or spoken words pertaining to their experience or perception (Brynard & Hanekom, 2006:37). In this study, the aim of the researcher was to understand the context regarding the perspectives with regard to the challenges facing ward committees within Tlokwe City Council. The qualitative research approach was used in this study with a view to allow the researcher to “read between the lines” in an effort to capture the human experience, as well as those underlying actions and behaviours that are not always capable of being quantified (Jarbandhan & Schutte, 2006:673). The purpose of the research approach was to produce descriptive data; and to this end, qualitative research was conducted because it is descriptive in nature. Having discussed the importance of a qualitative research approach for this study, the following section outlines the components of a qualitative research approach used in this study.

1.6.2 Literature review

For the purposes of this study, secondary literature including books, journal articles, and internet-based articles, together with a number of Masters' dissertations were used to carry out the literature overview part of the study. According to Mouton (2005:87), when one embarks on a study, one of the first aims should be to find out what has been done in the field. One should start with a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge to gauge how other scholars have investigated the research problem that one is interested in. The researcher's interest is, therefore, not merely in the literature, but in the body of accumulated scholarship. As a researcher, one should ultimately have conducted thorough research in order to acquaint oneself with all relevant and

applicable literature related to one's topic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:66). Leedy and Ormrod (2001:66) identified the following benefits of conducting a proper literature review:

- It can offer new ideas, perspectives, and approaches that may not have occurred to the researcher.
- It can inform one about other researchers who work in this area – individuals whom one may wish to contact for advice or feedback.
- It can show one how others have handled methodological and research design issues in studies similar to one's own.
- It can reveal sources of data that one may not have known existed.
- It can introduce one to measurement tools that other researchers have developed and used effectively.
- It can reveal methods of dealing with problem situations that may be similar to difficulties that one is facing.
- It can help to interpret and make sense of one's findings and, ultimately, help one tie one's results to the work of those who have preceded one.
- It will bolster one's confidence that the topic is one worth studying, because one will find that others have invested considerable time, effort, and resources in studying it.

Simply put, the more one knows about the investigations and perspectives related to the research topic, the more effectively one can tackle one's own research problem. The literature review for this study was important in order to achieve the set research objectives.

1.6.2.1 *Sources consulted*

The literature review of this study included secondary sources. The selected sources were textbooks, the Tlokwe City Council by-laws and policy documents, government documents and conference papers that contained information related to the research topic.

Additional information on the subject was also obtained from the following:

- NRF Nexus.
- Internet publications.

- Academic books.
- Journals and electronic journals.
- The North-West University on-line library.
- Catalogues of books in the Ferdinand Postma Library at the North-West University.

1.6.3 Sampling

According to Groenewald (2013), the Tlokwe City Council is a municipality that consists of 26 wards with each ward being represented by a ward councillor. The Tlokwe City Council By-law on Guidelines for the establishment and operation of ward committees (2008), however, only mentions the existence of 21 wards. Groenewald's mentioning of 26 wards is supported by the City Council's website, which also refers to 26 wards and also indicated the respective ward councillors for these particular wards. The study therefore recognises 26 wards as the proper number, as also mentioned on the Tlokwe City Council Draft IDP of 2011-2016. Rural wards include informal settlements and surrounding sparsely populated areas. Of the 26 wards, wards 2, and 3 are classified as rural wards and wards 4 and 11 are semi-urban wards whereas the rest are classified as urban wards.

For the purpose of this study, the population sample was supposed to include the four (4) senior officials within the Tlokwe City Council, namely the Municipal Manager, Council Whip, Executive Mayor and Council Speaker. However, provision was made to utilise their respective managers as the researcher was unable to get hold of the aforementioned officials. It is for this reason that the IDP Manager, Council Single Whip, Manager at the Office of the Speaker and Manager in the Executive Mayor's office were used in the place of the aforementioned officials.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the senior officials in Tlokwe City Council. In this form of sampling, the researcher relies on his/her expert judgment to select units that are representative or typical of the population (Burger & Silima, 2006:663). The researcher in this study was interested in interviewing these senior officials or their office managers as representatives, based on their expert knowledge with regard to legislative framework and regulatory requirements of public participation within Tlokwe City Council. Burger and Silima (2006:663) regard as a requirement inherent to purposive sampling that one should have a thorough knowledge of the

population, before the sample can be drawn, in order to ensure representativity of the sample in relation to the population.

With regard to ward committees, the study only focused on those wards with rural and semi-urban stature. Initially, six (6) wards were to be randomly selected from the 26 to be part of the study. However, in the end only four (4) were used. According to Groenewald (2013), the four wards selected would yield the same results as if all the wards were selected. This assumption is based on the nature and extent to which ward committees function in the respective wards. The four wards were studied together with their respective ward councillors. The ward committee members were used as focus groups in order to gather data.

A total sample size for the ward committee focus groups was 40, as each ward committees consists of 10 members. However, due to not all ward committee members being able to attend the focus group interviews, only 29 members of the four ward committees were able to attend the focus group interviews.

A total sample size of 29 respondents in the four ward committees was thus used. This included the ward councillor of the respective wards and the four senior officials in the Tlokwe City Council, which brought the total sample size to 33 respondents.

1.6.4 Research instruments

For the purpose of this study, the following research instruments were used:

1.6.4.1 Interviews (*semi-structured interviews*)

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:148) interviews can yield a great deal of useful information. The researcher can ask questions related to any of the following:

- Facts (e.g. biographical information).
- People's beliefs and perspectives about the facts.
- Feelings.
- Motives.
- Present and past behaviour.
- Standards for behaviour (i.e. what people think should be done in certain situations).
- Conscious reasons for actions and feelings (e.g., why people think that engaging in a particular behaviour is desirable or undesirable).

A typical semi-structured interview is an interview that uses a questionnaire with only or various open-ended questions that would mould the respondent's frame of reference, whilst at the same time giving him/her the freedom to respond in whatever way he/she feels like to respond (Jarbandhan & Schutte, 2006:678). This means that, whatever the respondent wants to say in answer to a question, would be accepted as a response. Jarbandhan and Schutte (2006:678) state that, in practice, some structured questionnaires could include semi-structured and/or even unstructured questions. However, this does not mean that questions have to be treated as such during the structured interview. Semi-structured interviews were used when interviewing the Tlokwe City Council senior officials. The reason why the researcher used semi-structured interviews in this instance is because they were in a position to provide valuable and factual answers regarding the research problem and also had the opportunity to elaborate on issues concerning the research problem.

1.6.4.2 *Focus groups (group interviews)*

Focus groups can be described as group interviews. According to Greeff (2011:360) they provide a means of better understanding how people feel or think about an issue, product or service. In this instance, the ward committee members, or participants, were discussing or rather answering questions about a tightly defined topic. The emphasis in focus groups is interaction, in order to construct a joint meaning around the topic. A focus group interview was regarded as useful for this study because the ward committees comprised several people. The researcher's job in terms of getting information was therefore made easier.

There are aspects of importance to consider when making use of focus groups. Firstly, the researcher must consider the recording of data. The researcher needs to choose the best way of recording the information, either by taking notes or using additional field workers. The focus and use of language in this regard is very important in terms of what is being said during the group interview. Secondly, the researcher needs to use more than one group to ensure that saturation is achieved, hence the use of four wards in this study. Thirdly, the questions that are asked need to be established and the group interview moderator needs to elaborate on those questions in order to obtain as much information as possible. However, there are limitations when using this particular research instrument. For example, the researcher does not have much control over the

proceedings as the case would be when using one-on-one interviews. Information is often difficult to analyse and to extract meaning from the discussion also may prove to be difficult. Focus groups are also inherently difficult to organise as they are time-consuming and require resources that may be expensive. The recording of information tends to be time-consuming and the group dynamic may influence the proceedings, as was the case in this study where discomfort in producing intimate details led to problems in obtaining enough data.

According to Jarbandhan and Schutte (2006:680) respondents may, furthermore, provide ambiguous responses to questions. It is therefore up to the researcher to ensure that he/she probes the respondents for a response that fully answers the question. The focus groups used in this study comprised the ward committee members who represent the selected wards in this study. The purpose of using focus groups in this study was primary because the researcher wanted to investigate the perceptions that ward committee members had regarding their responsibilities and functions as ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council area of responsibility.

1.6.4.3 *Data analysis*

Brynard and Hanekom (1997:55) consider the viewpoints of different authors as critical to a research study. During the in-depth analysis of data, the integration of other author's views is necessary and essential to the research. The purpose of this is to aid the researcher in formulating a personal explanation of the phenomenon under investigation, which can only be determined when the viewpoints of the different authors have been analysed and there was a subsequent integration of these views together with the collected data from interviews and focus groups. In the present study, this contributed to a fairly objective analysis of the findings.

In conclusion, this study made use of semi-structured interviews and the focus group interview technique, and the data collected was captured. The responses from the interviews were grouped into meaningful classifications that had significance for the purpose of the study (Schutte, 2006:622).

1.6.4.4 *Triangulation*

In the social sciences, triangulation is defined as the mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints can cast light upon a topic. The mixing of data types,

known as data triangulation, is often thought to help in validating the claims that might arise from an initial pilot study (Olsen, 2004:3).

The validity of this study was dependent on the literature review together with the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups that were used to collect factual data to achieve the research objective for the research. The strategic recommendations that are proposed in this study are based on the researcher's opinion. Proper consultation of the necessary theoretical literature and perspectives from senior officials together with the respective ward committee members within the Tlokwe City Council proved to be sufficient to validate the gathered data in order to provide strategic recommendations regarding the more effective functioning of ward committees within the greater Tlokwe City Council.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers should treat data in such a way that no alteration or amendments thereof can result in changes to the final observation (Brynard & Hanekom, 2006:85). One of the challenges facing both qualitative and quantitative social science researchers has to do with ethical issues (Lutabingwa & Nethozhe, 2006:694).

In data collection, ethical considerations could vary from manipulating data in order to obtain desired results to the complete fabrication of data (Lutabingwa & Nethozhe, 2006:694). Babbie and Mouton (2001:520) describe ethics as typically associated with morality, and as dealing with matters of both right and wrong. In this study, the following ethical considerations in social science have been upheld:

- Participation of ward committee members and senior officials of the Tlokwe City Council was completely voluntary. A major tenet of social research is that participation must be voluntary, that is, no one should be forced to participate. This study involved human subjects, therefore participants were informed that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time as it unfolded (Lutabingwa & Nethozhe, 2006:697)
- The senior officials and ward committees together with the respective ward councillors of the Tlokwe City Council were approached by the researcher to inform them about the study and the importance and significance of the study.

- It was important that the researcher should not bring harm to the respective participants. According to Lutabingwa and Nethozhe (2006:697) it is difficult to define and predict harm. In this study, the researcher only asked questions that were relevant to the problem statement in order to probe for positive responses from all participants.
- It is also important not to relate findings to the individuals respondents' responses (in order to protect the identity of the respondents).

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study is largely based on its potential to provide advice as to the improvement of ward committees as mechanisms for public participation within Tlokwe City Council. The overall aim of the study is to suggest with proper strategic recommendations that can improve the effective and efficient functioning of ward committees in a way that would benefit the Tlokwe City Council as these recommendations are likely to address the challenges faced by ward committees. The proposed strategic recommendations are original in inception and are developed based on the existing body of knowledge concerning public participation including the empirical findings in chapter five of this study.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One limitation of the study was that it only focused on one particular local municipality within the local government sphere of SA. The results can therefore not be widely generalised, but can be used as a learning curve of a singular case. The aforementioned implies that the present case can be used to improve possible shortcomings where necessary and to address the gap in terms of effective and efficient functioning of ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council and its particular municipal area.

1.10 CHAPTER LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

The exposition of chapters in this research are as follows:

Chapter One: Orientation and Problem Statement

This chapter introduced the topic and set the problem statement of the study. The research objectives and research questions, arising from the problem statement, were outlined. Following that were the central theoretical statements and an elucidation of the research methodology used in order to address the research objectives.

Chapter Two: Theoretical perspectives concerning local democracy, public participation and the ward committee system in South Africa

This chapter reports on the findings obtained from the literature review regarding public participation and effective functioning of ward committees in SA.

Chapter Three: Legislative and regulatory framework guiding effective ward committee functioning

This chapter presents an investigation into and analysis of the legislative and regulatory framework guiding effective ward committee functioning in SA.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology and Design

This chapter highlights the research methodology and sets out the research design adopted in order to accomplish the research objectives of this study.

Chapter Five: Challenges faced by ward committees within Tlokwe City Council: research results and empirical findings

In this chapter of the study, the empirical research is reported as conducted with senior officials in the Tlokwe City Council including ward committee focus groups. The chapter furthermore presents the findings and made relevant deductions from the empirical research.

Chapter Six: Summary and recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the study by outlining what was discussed in each of the previous chapters of this dissertation. Relevant findings and strategic recommendations on the way forward, including areas for further research, are also provided. An appropriate final conclusion for the study is presented in this chapter.

1.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the study by having outlined the locus and focus and parameters of this research. Furthermore, this chapter explained the motivation for the research by outlining the problem statement of the study, objectives of the research and research methods. Furthermore, the chapter indicated the structure of the study follows in terms of the research project and outlined the key areas of the research. In the next chapter the focus will be on the theoretical aspects pertaining to local democracy, public participation and effective functioning of ward committees in South Africa (SA).

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES CONCERNING LOCAL DEMOCRACY, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE WARD COMMITTEE SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The research problem, questions and objectives of this study were explained in chapter one of this dissertation where the purpose of the study was set out, namely to investigate the challenges that are facing ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council, as well as possible strategic recommendations that can be introduced to ensure the more effective functioning of ward committees in order to enhance public participation and decision-making processes. In order to achieve this objective, the present chapter now focuses on the secondary research objective which is to analyse the theoretical perspectives concerning local democracy, public participation and the ward committee system in South Africa (SA).

The above objectives are achieved by firstly, investigating the context of local government and in particular developmental local government in SA. SA has committed itself to a developmental local government whose objectives are to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities, to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner, and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government (Akinboade, Mokwena & Kinfack, 2013:458).

Although SA is plagued by significant challenges such as the perceived lack of responsiveness and effectiveness of municipalities and frequent doubt in their ability to provide services, decentralisation and the development of democratic local governance is a reality (Van der Waldt, Van der Walt, Venter, Phutiagae, Khalo, Van Niekerk & Nealer, 2014:32). According to Vyas-Doorgapersad (2010:43), some of these challenges are deeply rooted in history. Among these are the consequences of the colonial situation, the anti-colonial struggle and the exigencies of the Cold War. Other challenges are ascribed to inappropriate policies as African governments were struggling with the development and democratisation issues.

Secondly, this chapter will investigate what local democracy entails. According to Thornhill (2008:59), South Africa was one of the last African states to obtain a full democratic government with its first general election in April 1994. This important event

required that the democratic system of government had to undergo a total transformation, from all public institutions and the services provided by the state. However, Koma (2010:111) argues that the force that will actually inform the drive for a democratic and developmental state and that will promote growth and development hinges on the capacity of the local sphere of government to effectively discharge its responsibilities.

According to Van der Waldd *et al.* (2014:32), it is accepted that the distance between national government and the populace can be overcome by allowing local governments to provide local public service. This belief is primarily due to the advent system of local government ushered in from 2000 where local government began to build administrative and institutional systems to improve the public service delivery conditions of local communities (Akinboade *et al.*, 2013:458). By bringing local government closer to citizens, decentralisation allows people to participate more effectively in local affairs, including in the identification of community priorities.

Thirdly, this chapter will discuss public participation as a characteristic of local democracy and developmental local government. Public participation is a relatively new phenomenon in SA (Nyalunga, 2006:1), and was introduced after 1994 with a view to streamline decision-making processes in government. According to Maphazi, Raga, Taylor and Mayekiso (2013:57), public participation refers to a process that provides individuals with the opportunity to influence public decisions - it has, in fact, long been a component of a democratic decision-making process.

Lastly, the chapter investigates the role and functions of ward committees. Ward committees' roles and functions are set out in legislation and policy requirements as "the institution to link communities and local politicians" (Buccus, 2011:Online). Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is thus to report on the above topics in order to provide a more profound understanding of the significant value of ward committees within the developmental local government sphere of SA.

2.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section provides a brief overview of the nature of local government in South Africa and provides the context for developmental local government.

2.2.1 Local government: brief overview

In SA, the three spheres of government authority are provided for by the Constitution, namely national, provincial, and local government. Local government, according to Van der Walddt *et al.* (2014:4), is the sphere closest to the people and must serve the needs of communities at grassroots level. It is also normally the sphere that is blamed for a lack of service delivery. This notion is also supported by Thornhill (2008:492), who states that local government is often the first point of contact between an individual and a government institution. Therefore, it is often argued that local government is government closest to the people. The sphere of local government is entrenched in Chapter 7 of the Constitution, 1996. The sphere consists of municipalities with executive authority in respect of, and with the right to administer a variety of functions defined in schedule 4 and 5 of the Constitution, 1996 (Thornhill, 2012:133).

Being the closest service delivery agency to the people, local government must therefore position itself and conduct its business in a way that will enhance the lives of all South Africans (Mothae, 2008:820) According to Venter and Landsberg (2012:134), the local sphere of government consists of a municipality that renders a wide range of services such as the provision of potable water, electricity, refuse removal, and so forth. A municipality, in turn, is defined by Van der Walddt *et al.* (2014:5) as the organisational unit of local government; it can therefore be regarded as a decentralised agency for the national sphere of government.

The onset of democratic transformation in SA in 1994 had a profound influence on local government which developed from being a third tier of government to an equal, autonomous sphere, with extensive implications for the delivery of services (Kroukamp, 2008:646).

The change in government and governance in SA triggered the need for rigorous transformation of the public sector and the society at large. For the society, the shift from apartheid to democratic governance, which was long awaited, conferred obligations and responsibilities on government. There were indeed extremely high expectations on the side of the society for government to deliver services and improve lives of all the South Africans. In order to fulfil its new role in the new dispensation and to respond effectively and manage the demands as well as the challenges brought forward by these changes, the government of SA promulgated a series of laws that served as policy frameworks for the democratisation and development of all South

Africans. The major legislations included the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, according to which SA belongs to all the citizens who are entitled to the rights, benefits and privileges of citizenship and are equally subjected to duties and responsibilities thereof (Mothae, 2008:821)

Local government prior to 1994 in SA was characterised by a strong top-down approach. There was little perceived need for gathering information or for involving the community directly in the process of governance. Information about living conditions or opinions of the majority of the citizens was not required to inform policy direction (Malefane, 2008:708). Being the sphere of government closest to the people where the actual implementation and delivery takes place, the local government sphere was compelled to transform significantly after democracy in order to fulfil its developmental duties as conferred by the SA Constitution, 1996 (Mothae, 2008:822)

Transformation in SA local government was important, because under the apartheid system service delivery was marginalised in Black communities; and thus it failed to meet the basic needs of the majority of South Africans. It is also imperative to note that the policies set by the former government adversely affected the social and economic development of the historically disadvantaged communities, thereby creating a significant backlog in basic service delivery (Govender & Penceliah, 2011:9).

The major transformation of local government commenced in 1998 with the demarcation of fully integrated municipalities with extensive functions that cover the entire geographic area of the country (Thornhill, 2008:54). With the exception of metropolitan areas, single tier local government structures were set up in larger cities and smaller towns. In six metropolitan areas, a two-tier system was set up, allowing for a Transitional Metropolitan Council and Metropolitan Sub-Structures. The fact that both tiers of local government in metropolitan areas were given original powers (meaning that each structure could authorise budgets and was an independent employer body) and had overlapping mandates severely complicated intra-municipal relations, financial management and human resource management (Pieterse, 2007:4)

It is clear, therefore, that local government in South Africa has long been undergoing a process of transformation from apartheid's highly unequal, racially classified local administrative apparatus towards a more integrated, developmental, equitable and sustainable sphere of government (Mogale, 2005:136). Local governments, according to Mogale (2005:136), are pivotal to reshaping and strengthening local communities,

intensifying service delivery (especially to the poor) and thereby deepening the foundations of democratic, integrated, prosperous and truly non-racial local communities.

Therefore, transformation in local government brought about changes in the municipal systems, structures, policies and processes. Giving effect to these changes and the Constitutional mandate and obligations of municipalities are local government policies that include, amongst others, the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998, Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 and Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003. The above-mentioned policies and legislation serve as enabling mechanisms for municipalities to drive transformational progress. This, in turn, implies the changing nature and functioning of municipalities with a view to realise its mandate in transforming SA (Mothae, 2008:822).

In order to deal with the aforementioned challenges regarding achieving local governments' mandate, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996 provides local government with the status of being a decentralised sphere of government that has the objectives of providing democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensuring the provision of service to communities in a sustainable manner; promoting social and economic development; promoting a safe and healthy environment; and encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government. Local governments in the country are thus assigned a developmental role, which means that they are no longer purely instruments of service delivery, but are also assigned a role as agents of economic development.

From the brief overview of the nature of the South African local government, an important concept that should be explored is that of "developmental local government". Literature suggests that developmental local government is an important component of local governments in SA, specifically in terms of deepening local democratic culture where development and participation should be seen as intertwined.

2.2.2 Developmental local government

Section B of the White Paper on Local Government (1998) focuses primarily on developmental local government. This section of the chapter explores developmental

local government as the central responsibility of municipalities to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives. According to Van der Walldt *et al.* (2014:53), developmental local government is a constitutional mandate. Local government is the sphere of government that interacts with citizens, groups and communities with a view to create sustainable human settlements that provide for a decent quality of life and meet the social, economic and material needs of the community holistically. Developmental local government is defined by the White Paper on Local Government (1998:17) as local government that is committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs to improve the quality of their lives.

Sustainability in the public sector, according to De Visser (2005:70), refers to sustainable service delivery that operates in such a manner that the consumer can afford them and that the supplier can provide them within its own means on an on-going basis. A continued, sustainable and improving delivery of services such as water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and municipal health are inextricably linked to standard of living.

Developmental local government should have a major impact on the daily lives of South Africans. In cases where municipalities do not develop their own strategies to meet community needs and improve citizen's quality of life, national government may have to adopt a more prescriptive approach towards municipal transformation.

The following characteristics are spelled out in the White Paper for Local Government (1998) for a developmental local government:

- Maximising social development and economic growth (stimulating local economies and job creation);
- Integration and coordination (mainly through Integrated Development Planning);
- Democratising development (harnessing the input and energy of local citizens); and
- Leading and learning (building social capital at the local sphere to enable local solutions to development problems).

According to Madumo (2012:46), these characteristics prove that the goals that the state ought to achieve in terms of development are the same as those of the municipalities. However, municipalities differ in their composition and function. According to the Constitution, 1996, section 155 (1), there is a number of categories of municipalities in SA:

- Category A: A municipality that has exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in its area.
- Category B: A municipality that shares municipal executives and legislative authority in its area with a category C municipality within whose area it falls.
- Category C: A municipality that has executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one municipality.

As a result of the lack of a common framework applied in municipalities, some municipalities often find that they are faced with unintended malpractice, which has the potential to render the municipality's service delivery ineffective. National legislation provides frameworks for municipalities, where it is expected that the communities would intensively participate in the municipal procedures that are applicable. As stated by Madumo (2012:47), municipalities must at all times strive towards extensive consultation with the people. Non-involvement of the public could be regarded as the most important limitation in this regard, because it defeats the purpose of attempting to mobilise the community to support local government. Involvement of the people can be enhanced by improving the mechanisms of organising community gatherings such as ward committee meetings.

This notion is supported by section 152(1) of the Constitution which outlines the functions of local government as follows:

- To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.
- To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner.
- To promote social and economic development.
- To promote a safe and healthy environment.
- To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

Section 153 of the Constitution further outlines the developmental duties of a municipality. Section 153 states that a municipality must:

- Structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote social and economic development of the community; and
- Participate in national and provincial development programmes.

Local government is therefore no longer limited to service delivery, but must be developmental in meeting the needs of the community in a sustainable manner. To become developmental, local government must adhere to the principles of democracy; local democracy to be precise.

Taking into account the above background information regarding local government in SA, the following section discusses local democracy and its related concepts.

2.3 LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Local democracy refers to a political system in which the eligible people in a polity participate actively, not only in determining the kind of people who govern them, but also participate actively in shaping the policy outputs of the government (Reddy, Naidoo & Pillay, 2005:40). The following section explores local democracy in SA and its related concepts.

2.3.1 Conceptualising democracy

As a concept and form or system of government, democracy is quite old (Fayemi, 2009:3). The origins of the term democracy can be traced back to Ancient Greece (Heywood, 2007:72). According to Heywood (2007:72), democracy is derived from the Greek words *kratos*, meaning power, or rule. Democracy thus means 'rule by *demos*' (the *demos* referring to 'the people', although the Greeks originally used this to mean 'the poor' or 'the many'). Thus, democracy essentially means 'rule of the common people'. For example, during the apartheid years in South Africa, 'The people shall govern' was a popular slogan of resistance and this reaffirms the notion of democracy as being ruled by the people for the people by the people (Van der Waldt *et al.*, 2014:25).

Democracy not only specifies that the people should govern themselves, but also that the purpose of government is the good of the people (Goodwin, 2007:288). The ideas central to democracy according to Goodwin (2007:288) are:

- Supremacy of the people.
- The consent of the governed as the basis of legitimacy.
- The rule of law: peaceful methods of conflict resolution.
- The existence of a common good or public interest.
- The value of the individual as a rational, moral active citizen.
- Political equality and equal civil rights for all individuals.

According to Motale (2012:15), this model of democracy is often upheld as both an ideal and also an example of how democracy should function. Democracy as a concept, according to Fayemi (2009:5), is not cast in iron; and thus in practice, it cannot be a perfect system. However, it holds more potential for enhancing and promoting human development than any other system of government. Every individual should be able to participate in the process of government maximally or minimally. The three essential requisites of democracy are: a well-informed citizenry, freedom to participate in the decision-making process and the accountability to the citizen by those who on their behalf exercise power (Opuamie-Ngo, 2010:132).

From the above, the researcher can conclude that democracy as a concept should thus emphasise the involvement and participation of people in decision-making, and that people should have equal rights in taking part in the decision-making process. Democracy can also be seen as encouraging the involvement of people in the decisions that affect their lives. Democracy should also teach people how to be involved in decision-making, just as much as it gives people the right to participate in decision-making.

Democracy might be subject to many definitions, but it is often intricately linked to the notion of participatory democracy. The following section gives a brief overview of what participatory democracy is and the importance of involving people in the decision-making process.

2.3.2 Participatory democracy

According to Aragonés and Sánchez-Pages (2004:2), participatory democracy entails a process of collective decision-making that combines the elements of democracy: citizens have the ultimate power to decide on policy, and politicians take the responsibility of policy implementation. The most important aspect of participatory democracy is the participation of the people in the planning process and their ability to influence decision-making. Section 4 of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (PAJA), allows the public to contribute and impact upon decisions which affect their lives (Govender, 2003:405).

Participatory democracy can be seen as an active approach in terms of involving the public in the decision-making process. In so doing, the government can directly address problems such as the lack of trust and weak legitimacy. Our Constitution directs legislators in the national, provincial and local spheres to ensure that their law-making functions are discharged with due regard to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public participation (Govender, 2003:45).

Linking participatory democracy to democracy, Heydenrych (2008:709) states that participatory democracy can be viewed as a healthy form of democracy, and is perceived to be very close to the core of democracy. According to Kumalo (2009:246), robust participatory democracy and good governance are some of the most important components of development in a society. Local government constitutes an important level of participatory democracy, where communities play an active role not only as the electorate, but also as end-users and consumers, and thereby can hold their municipal council accountable for their actions (Bauer, 2009:29). Nzimakwe (2012:151) postulates that participatory democracy can only come into being when ordinary men and women, young and old, are afforded an opportunity to actively and meaningfully contribute to their well-being. The researcher can thus argue that participatory democracy exists in order to promote governmental accountability towards its citizens, to create active and knowledgeable citizens, and also to establish conditions necessary for achieving effective and sustainable public participation in decision-making processes.

2.3.3 Local democracy

Both Sections 152 (1) (a) and (e) of the Constitution are informed by the establishment of a democratic dispensation for local government, which rests on the concepts of

representation, accountability and people-centred governance. The involvement of communities and community organisations in local government as well as the onus on local governments to encourage and facilitate these is part of this democracy (De Visser, 2005:70).

Local democracy, which is democracy at the grassroots level, entails the allocation and distribution of public goods according to the preferences and needs of the people (Van der Walddt *et al.*, 2014:25). Local democracy denotes a political system in which the eligible people in a society participate actively, not only in determining the kind of people who govern them, but also participate actively in shaping the policy output of the government (Reddy *et al.*, 2005:40). Grassroots democracy believes in empowering all people to participate actively in the realisation of their own well-being and fulfilment. It is, in short, active citizenship. When individuals are part of a community, they begin to realise that their surroundings are not only a place, but also their home. The community is a place in which they live; a place where they interpret social and natural characteristics, and a place which they know and cherish as their own (Van der Walddt, 2010:7). The importance of local government as the basis of all structures of governance and the universal quest for a stable democratic society cannot be overemphasised.

According to Van der Walddt (2010:7), local democracy could bring about the following advantages to local governments:

- Higher quality of services closer to the people's needs;
- Protection of freedom and human rights;
- Increase of efficiency through delegation of responsibility;
- Enhancement of social and economic development; and
- Policy formulation, decision-making and implementation can be fully under control.

From the discussion on local democracy above, a concept that needs to be addressed is the term governance, particularly good governance. According to the United Nations (hereafter referred to as UN), the terms “governance” and “good governance” are increasingly used in development literature (United Nations, 2014:Online). Van der Walddt (2004:3) further asserts that these terms are used with increasing regularity in the development and public administration/management literature.

The concept “governance” is not new; it is as old as human civilisation. Simply put, “governance” means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) (UN, 2014). However, Van der Waladt (2004:3) states that for our purposes, in terms of the public sector, the following definition applies: governance is the acquisition of and accountability for the application of political authority to the direction of public affairs and the management of public resources. Local democracy focuses on managing the allocation of resources and providing sustainable services in local government, whereas good governance monitors the manner in which the management of resources and services that are to be provided takes place. According to Shah and Shah (2006:2), good local governance is not just about providing a range of local services, but also about preserving the life and liberty of residents, creating space for democratic participation and civic dialogue, supporting market-led and environmentally sustainable local development, and facilitating outcomes that enrich the quality of life of residents. The legislation and upholding of good conduct by public officials is a *sine qua non* (a prerequisite) for sustenance of good governance and service delivery (Ababio & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2010:411).

Good governance has eight major characteristics which assure that corruption is minimised, that the views of minorities are taken into account, and that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society (UN, 2014:Online).

The characteristics of good governance are discussed below as illustrated by Figure 1:

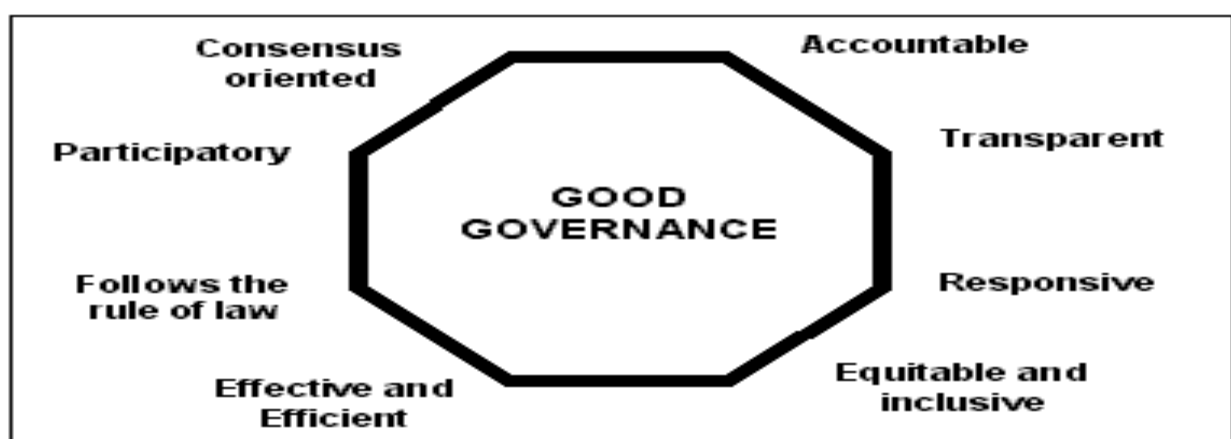


Figure 1: Characteristics of Good Governance

Source: UN (2014:Online)

- **Participation**

Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. It aims to encourage all citizens to exercise their right to express their opinions in the process of making decisions concerning the public interest, both directly and indirectly. Participation generally includes three pillars:

- Public access to information;
- Public participation in decision-making; and
- Public access to judicial and administrative redress often termed “access to justice”.

- **Rule of law**

Good governance requires a fair legal framework that is enforced impartially. It should realise law enforcement which is fair and impartial for all, without exception, while honouring basic human rights and observing the values prevalent in the society.

Transparency

Transparency means that decisions are taken and their enforcement done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. This aims to build mutual trust between the government and the public through the provision of information with guaranteed easy access to accurate and adequate information.

- **Responsiveness**

Good governance requires that government administrators should be sensitive to the aspirations of the public.

- **Consensus oriented**

Several actors and many viewpoints exist in any given society. Good governance requires the mediation of the different interests in society in order to reach a broad consensus in that society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It aims to develop the region based on clear vision and strategy, with participation of the citizenry in all the processes of development so that they acquire a sense of ownership and responsibility for the processes in their regions.

- **Equity and inclusiveness**

Good governance provides equal opportunities for all members of society in order to improve their welfare. This requires all groups, and particularly the most vulnerable, to have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being. A key responsibility of government is to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are equitably distributed across society. Taxation and expenditure measures are prominent instruments for this purpose.

- **Effectiveness and efficiency**

Good governance means guaranteed public service delivery by utilising all available resources optimally and responsibly. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also includes the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment

- **Accountability**

Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Government institutions also private sector and civil society must be accountable with regard to decisions in matters involving the public interest. Who is accountable to whom varies, and depends on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organisation or institution. In general, an organisation or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and rule of law.

Local democracy centres around mainly two issues: firstly, how to make municipalities more responsive to the needs of the community by providing essential services; and secondly, how to facilitate wider public participation and interest in local decision-making (Van der Waldt *et al.*, 2014:26). Public participation is an important pillar for building and sustaining a democracy within any country. Public participation is also crucial for good governance as it enhances transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of the local community. Furthermore, local government cannot succeed without public participation, and failure of many projects - especially in rural areas - can be attributed to lack of involvement by the public (Reddy & Sikhakhane, 2008:681).

The following section investigates relevant literature on public participation, and sets out to define this phenomenon. This section also explores some shortcomings in terms of advantages (benefits) and disadvantages (challenges) that public participation entails.

2.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It is important to provide a definition of the concept public participation as it forms the basis of this study. Literature and authors who have written extensively about this phenomenon seem not to arrive at a definite definition of this concept, but have suggested number of definitions that the researcher can use in order to elucidate this phenomenon.

2.4.1 Defining the nature and extent of public participation

In recent times, there had been an international trend towards increased involvement of the public in the affairs and decisions of policy-setting bodies – a concept that is frequently referred to as public participation (Frewer & Rowe, 2000:3). Over the past 30 years, public participation has taken centre stage in the play of influence that determines how society will manage and protect the environment (Beierle & Cayford, 2002:1). The way in which government makes decisions has therefore changed. It is no longer acceptable for such decisions to be made by few powerful leaders who purport to act on behalf of the many but refuse to involve the many in their deliberations. Phago (2008:239) agrees that decisions should no longer be made by the elite few, but the public should be involved in such processes. As the spread of information through education has been abetted by new technologies, more people have come to feel capable of speaking out about decisions that will affect their lives, and consequently, they have been demanding to have a say in those decisions (Thomas, 1995:1). According to Frewer and Rowe (2000:3) in the United Kingdom, for example, public participation has become apparent in both national and local government in domains as diverse as transport planning, the environment, and health care.

Increasingly, therefore, public participation in governmental decision-making is considered part of the very definition of democracy (Creighton, 2005:1). In South Africa, public participation is regarded as an important means of deepening democracy (Phago, 2008:239). The deepening of democracy is necessary since public participation should influence decision-making in the government. The premise of democracy (as

discussed above) is one that allows officials to make decisions on behalf of the people and allows the public to hold those that make decisions accountable for the decisions they make. Today, executive branches of government make a number of decisions on a daily basis; administrative decisions that have a great impact on the public and communities at large.

Public participation, according to Creighton (2005:1), is an essential element of democracy, which makes it a sacred notion that is applauded by everyone (Madumo, 2011:52). According to Arnstein (1969:216), the idea of public participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because 'it is good for you'. Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy – a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone.

Public participation also entails a process which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process. The roots of public participation can be traced to ancient Greece and Colonial New England. Before the 1960s, governmental processes and procedures were designed to facilitate "external" participation. Public participation was institutionalised in the mid-1960s with President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programme (Maphazi *et al.*, 2013:57).

According to Frewer and Rowe (2000:6), a general definition of public participation with which few would argue is that it refers to the practice of involving members of the public in the agenda setting, decision-making, and policy-formulation activities of organisations/institutions responsible for policy development. Frewer and Rowe (2005:254) argue that this definition of public participation is, however, arguably too broad, leaving room for variable interpretations because the public may be involved (in policy formulation, etc.) in a number of different ways or at a number of levels.

Arnstein (2003:246) defines public participation in greater detail by referring to it as a categorical term for citizen power, where the distribution of power is enhanced to deliberately include the underdeveloped (those that could be excluded from the political and economic processes) to obtain their active participation in the future. This definition suggests that participation exists in those categories within which power exists. This definition, as alluded to also by Madumo (2011:51), could assist in eliminating misinformed perceptions and developing a common understanding on what public participation is. Public participation can be regarded as a strategy by which the have-

nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programmes are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parcelled out. In short, it is the means by which they (the have-nots) can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the wealthy society (Arnstein, 1969:216).

Ababio (2004:273) defines the concept of public participation also in greater detail and attaches a variety of meanings to it. According to this author, it could on the one hand describe the relationship between local governments and the community, while on the other it refers to the extent to which the community influences the involvement of all stakeholders, including the marginalised groups such as women and the youth. The definition given by Ababio (2004:273) highlights the relationship between local government and the community as well as the importance of stakeholders in decision-making. In democratic countries such as South Africa, participation of community members in governance matter (in all three spheres) is a right (Phago, 2008:238). This is because the government is elected with a view to improve the general well-being of the people and, therefore, public participation is required to ensure that the most pressing needs of the people are prioritised. This definition, just like that of Arnstein, could help to develop a common understanding as to what public participation entails.

By definition, the term public participation is not confined to issues pertaining to delivery as it concerns development and policy formulation, and it is also about maintaining good order at local sphere of government (Nyalunga, 2006:1). The researcher has a slightly different take on the definition given by the author above, and believes this not to be the best definition, based on the other definitions by the previous authors set out above. Delivery (service delivery) is dependent on the involvement of the public in matters that affect their lives. This means that public participation enhances service delivery in the sense that municipalities at the local sphere of government should become aware of the needs of the community because they should have engaged them in the decision-making process prior to deciding upon certain services needed by the community. This is more so because the South African government regards public participation as the cornerstone of democracy and service delivery (Maphazi *et al.*, 2013:56).

The rationale behind public participation, according to Creighton (2005:17), is that it creates a new and direct link between the public and the decision-makers. Society's expectations of public participation have also evolved; argue Beierle and Cayford

(2002:4). The justification of public participation, according to the authors, was accountability: to ensure that government were acting in the public interest. Public participation is a key ingredient towards attaining democracy. Public participation also increases transparency in the decision-making process. If citizens are involved in the policy development, they will be able to make government officials more accountable for their decisions. Therefore, individuals must be involved in the decision-making process because their input can help to create useful solutions to problems such as community housing or education, which are integral parts of their everyday lives (Holdar & Zakharchenko, 2002:15). It should be said, however, that knowing the public's values does not mean that there are simple answers.

Creighton (2005:17) argues that public participation is not limited to government only because in the market economy, many of the resources of a society are in the hands of private institutions. Therefore, private companies could use public participation as an overall goal to make better decisions that are supported by the public, *i.e.*, their clients.

Creighton (2005:7) summarises the difficulty in capturing the essence of public participation by noting that there are numerous definitions of this concept. However, most definitions include the following elements:

- Public participation applies to administrative decisions.
- Public participation is not just providing information to the public because interaction is an important component of this process.
- There is an organised process for involving the public.
- Participants have some level of impact or influence on the decisions being made.

From a more South African perspective regarding the difficulty of capturing the essence of public participation, the former Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) (now the Department of Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs – (CoGTA) (2007:15) highlighted the basic assumptions underlying public participation as the following:

- Public participation is designed to promote the values of good governance and human rights.
- Public participation acknowledges fundamental rights of all people to participate in the governance system.

- Public participation is designed to narrow the social distance between the electorate and the elected institutions.
- Public participation requires recognising the intrinsic value of all our people, investing in their ability to contribute to governance processes.
- People can participate as individuals, interest groups or communities more generally.
- In SA, in the context of public participation, community is defined as a ward, with elected ward committees.
- Thus, ward committees play a central role in link elected institutions with the people, and other forms of communication reinforce these linkages with communities like the *izimbizo*, road shows, the *makgotla*, and so forth.

From the above given definitions and rationale, the researcher was able to formulate an operational definition of the term public participation for the purpose of this study. He views it as a process that provides individuals with an opportunity to influence public decisions that are made at every sphere of government. Public participation thus means that citizens are able to engage in decision-making processes, especially decisions that affect them.

Public participation, particularly public participation in local government, is clearly a popular idea in current political thinking across the globe (Piper & Von Lieres, 2008:2). Academic literature suggests that public participation is indeed the cornerstone of local democracy and that developmental local government cannot be achieved without the participation of the community in decision-making processes at local government.

2.4.2 Categories of participation

As indicated earlier, public participation means different things to different people. Sherry Arnstein (1969) made greater strides insofar as providing the difference between participation and non-participation. She did so by introducing a method of categorising participation in the eight rungs of the ladder of public participation. The eight levels of participation, as illustrated in figure 2, may help to analyse the confusion between participation and non-participation. However, Arnstein's ladder of participation is not cast in stone. According to Choguill (1996:431), Arnstein's ladder of participation may only be adequate for analysis in developed countries and not developing countries such as South Africa. Connor (1988:250) also mentions that Arnstein acknowledged that her scheme has some limitations. The ladder of participation is used in this research only

for purposes of distinguishing between participation and non-participation which, based on the literature above, can be rather confusing - more so because there is no acceptable definition to further determine what participation really is and what it is not.

Arnstein's ladder consists of eight rungs – two levels of non-participation (manipulation and therapy), three degrees of tokenism (informing, consultation, and placation) and three degrees of citizen power (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control) (Connor, 1988:250).

The eight levels of participation will each be briefly discussed below in their respective categories as illustrated by Figure 2.

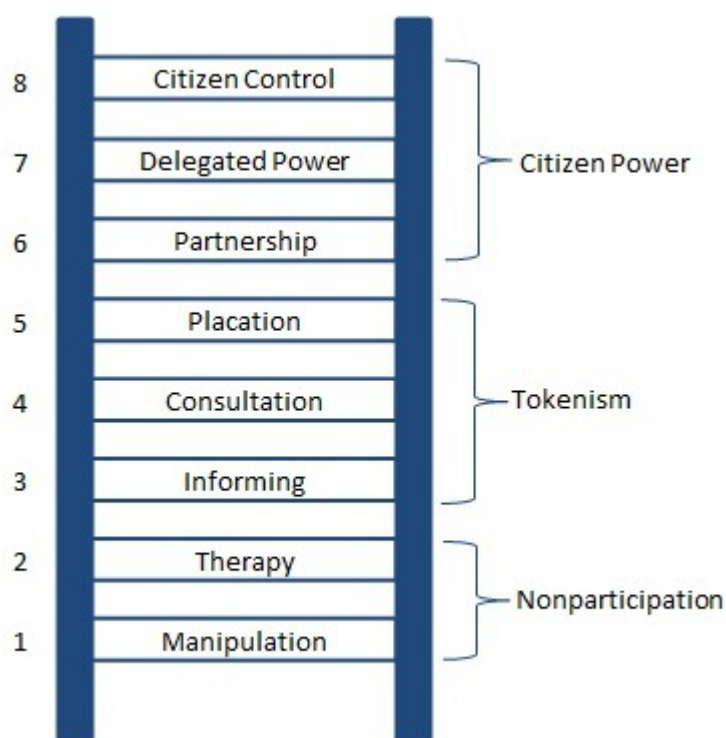


Figure 2: Eight rungs of the ladder of citizen participation

Source: Adopted from Arnstein (1969:217)

2.4.2.1 Non-participation

The first category in the ladder is classified as non-participation and consists of manipulation and therapy.

- Manipulation

The notion of manipulation implies that participation is simply pretence. Arnstein (1969) notes that the notion of manipulation entails that the power holders have no decision-making power (even when these committees think they do) to advance their goals. An example that can be used in this instance is that the community may be only selectively told about a project according to an existing agenda where the community's input is then used to further this existing agenda (DPLG, 2007:17).

- Therapy

Simply put, therapy is having people participate by being told what has been decided or already happened. There is only a unilateral involvement by the administration without listening to people's opinions.

2.4.2.2 Tokenism

Tokenism is the second rung of the ladder and its activities include informing, consultation and placation. In this stage, the power holders inform the citizens and acknowledge their support. The three rungs are discussed below.

- Informing

The concept of informing entails being told something. Informing can take place in different ways, for example, being told about a project through meetings, pamphlets and so forth. The community may be asked for inputs, but their opinions may not be taken into account.

- Consultation

Like informing, the community is given information about a project and asked to comment. However, if consulting them is not combined with other modes of participation, this rung of the ladder is still a sham since it offers no assurance that the community's views will be reflected in the final decision. Such a consultative process does not concede any actual share in decision-making.

- Placation

Similar to both informing and consultation, placation extends an invitation to the community to participate in decision-making. This is where the community is asked for advice and token changes are made. Although the community is invited to participate,

the power holders could be asking for advice from the community only to fulfil legislative requirements.

2.4.2.3 Citizen power

There are three levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making power. The first rung in citizen power is partnership, which enables citizens to negotiate and engage with power holders. The second rung is delegated power, and the third is citizen control, which allows the community to obtain the majority of the decision-making seats, or full managerial power.

- Partnership

Partnership refers to joined decision-making responsibilities by both the community and the power holders. The community has considerable influence of the decision-making process, but the government still takes responsibility for the decisions.

- Delegated power

With this type of power, power holders ultimately run the decision-making process and fund it, but communities are given some delegated power to make decisions. According to Arnstein (1969:222), negotiations between citizens and public officials can also result in citizens achieving dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or programme.

- Citizen control

People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. The notion of democracy, as discussed earlier applies, to citizen control; it is rule by the people. This means that citizens have enough power to control and make decisions on matters that are of concern to them, such as the distribution of resources.

Having provided some clarity on the definition of public participation and the eight rungs of public participation by Arnstein that can be used to distinguish between non-participation and participation, it is also important to briefly highlight the advantages (benefits) and some challenges of public participation in a democratic society such as SA.

2.4.3 Advantages and challenges of public participation

From the literature overview above, it is evident that democratic countries such as SA should be encouraging the involvement of communities in matters of governance, especially at the local sphere of government. The researcher is of the opinion that public participation should be at the centre of governance issues and that communities should be involved in decision-making processes, more so in decisions that affect their lives. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) launched in 1994 asserted that democracy is 'not only concerned with the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry' but also implied that the need for the 'active involvement and growing empowerment' of the population. Ultimately, people would participate in decision-making (Deegan, 2002:46). What is then the significance of public participation in democratic countries such as SA, and what are the shortcomings thereof? This section presents some of the advantages of public participation and the disadvantages thereof, with a view to determine the significance of public participation in democratic countries such as SA.

For De Visser (2005:38), public participation improves the quality of decision-making: many minds are applied to one matter. It also enhances and strengthens the relations between the public and the state, and serves as a check on the administrative authority. The most imperative advantage that the researcher can take from this author is that public participation empowers citizens who, by becoming involved, learn about government. Pope (2000:247) also asserts that an informed citizenry, aware of its rights and asserting them confidently, is a vital foundation for a national system that is characterised by integrity.

Bowler and Shepherd (1997:725), firstly, regard public participation as proper, fair conduct of democratic government in public decision-making activities. Secondly, public participation is widely accepted as a way to ensure that projects meet citizens' needs and are suitable to the affected public. Thirdly, the project carries more legitimacy, and less hostility, if potentially affected parties can influence the decision-making process. Lastly, the final decision is 'better' when local knowledge and values are included and when expert knowledge is publicly examined. These particular advantages are also asserted by Webler, Kastenholz and Renn (1995:444).

Creighton (2005) observes that public participation has the following benefits:

- Improves quality of decisions

The process of consulting with the public often helps to clarify the objectives and requirements of project or policy. The public can compel a rethinking of hidden assumptions that might prevent one from seeing the most effective solution. Public participation often results in considering new alternatives, beyond the time-honoured, and possibly time-worn - such as approaches that have been used in the past. The public often possesses crucial information about existing conditions or about how a decision should be implemented, thus helping to make the difference between successful or an unsuccessful programme.

- Minimises cost and delays

Public participation does not take more time or not as much time as people think, if the participation is an integral part of the decision-making process. Unilateral decisions are always the quickest to make, but often very expensive to implement. Frequently, there is so much resistance that they never implemented at all. The efficiency of making a decision cannot be measured merely in terms of time and costs, but should also take into account any delay or costs created by *how* the decision was made. If decision-making is quick but alienates interested individuals or groups, it may prove to be very expensive in the long run. Unilateral decisions may become tied up in controversy, delays, or litigation. Even if the decision is somehow implemented, the next time the agency needs something in that community, the process will start out with ill will and animosity.

- Consensus building

A public participation programme may build a solid, long-term agreement and commitment between otherwise divergent parties. This builds understanding between the parties, reduces political controversy, and gives legitimacy to government decisions.

- Increased ease of implementation

Participation in a decision gives people a sense of ownership for that decision, and once that decision has been made, they want to see it work. Not only is there political support for implementation, but groups and individuals may even enthusiastically assist in the effort.

- Avoiding worst-case confrontations

Once a controversy becomes bitter and adversarial, it is much harder to resolve the issue. Public participation provides opportunities for the parties to express their needs and concerns without having to be adversarial. Early public participation can help to

reduce the probability that the community will face painful confrontations. Nevertheless, public participation is not magic; it will not reduce or eliminate all conflicts.

- Maintain credibility and legitimacy

The way to achieve and maintain legitimacy, particularly when controversial decisions must be made, is to follow a decision-making process that is visible and credible with the public and involving the public. Public participation programmes will also leave the public more informed of the reasoning behind decisions.

- Anticipating public concerns and attitudes

Because government works with the public in public participation programmes, they will become increasingly sensitised to the public's concerns and how the public views government operations. These views are often internalised, so that the official is more aware of the probable public response to the governments' procedures and decisions, even when the issue is not large enough to justify a formal public participation programme.

- Developing civil society

One of the benefits of public participation is a better educated public. Participants not only learn how decisions are made by their government, and why. Public participation trains future leaders as well. As citizens become involved in public participation programmes, they learn how to influence others and how to build coalitions. Public participation is training in how to work together effectively. Today, individuals may represent only groups or interests. Tomorrow, they form the pool from which regional and national leadership can be drawn. Through public participation, future leaders learn skills of pulling together to solve problems.

These experiences are based on Creighton's (2005) approximately three hundred public participation cases.

The Public Service Commission (2008) also tabled some of the core values of public participation which are listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Core values and principles of public participation

Core values and principles of public participation
• Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in decision-making processes. • Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decisions. • Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers. • Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate. • Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way. • Public participation communicates to participants about how their inputs affect decisions.

Source: Public Service Commission (PSC) (2008:10)

The above overview emphasised the importance of public participation as well as the effort made by Arnstein to distinguish between participatory and non-participatory modes available for government in a country. While the Constitution and local government legislation, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 3 of this study, drive towards promoting local government and developmental local government, the implementation of public participation approaches is not without challenges. The following are some of the challenges of public participation as outlined by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in (2008:11), namely the:-

- Lack of government commitment to adopt a participatory approach

As has been established, in the local government sphere, public participation is imperative for a municipality to keep in touch with the people (Van der Waladt *et al.*, 2014:28). However, while public participation is a useful and imperative process, it is often seen as time-consuming. In reality, however, public participation should not be seen as time-consuming and government should rather focus on the significance of public participation for the community. Therefore, each and every municipality should identify a necessary public participation approach mandated by local government

legislative framework and adhere to the approach with a view to comply with the requirements of local democracy and developmental local government.

- Unwillingness of project officials to give up control over activities, including not acknowledging the importance of citizens' views

The principle of public participation is predicated on the acceptance that municipal programmes are designed to improve the lives of the community (Andoh, 2011:122). The community is the central focus of public participation and their input in decision-making determines the legitimate nature of public participation. It is with this in mind that public officials should acknowledge the important role that the community plays in projects or programmes that the municipality undertakes to better the lives of the latter.

- Limited capacity of local-level participation and insufficient investment in community capacity-building

Communities in South Africa are increasingly demanding a platform where they can voice their opinions and where they can participate. It is even more critical amongst communities who feel that their concerns will only be heard if they organise angry and sometimes violent protests (Andoh, 2011:118). This reality necessitates that communities must be informed on how to participate and be involved in matters that affect their lives in order to appreciate the process and make meaningful contribution instead of a destructive one.

- Participate too late

One of the benefits of public participation, as stated above, is increased ease of implementation. However, it is often not surprising when governments continue to implement projects without having consulted with the public first. To involve the public in the implementation of projects at a too late stage so often results in public protests, as mentioned above.

- Mistrust between government and communities

Local officials rely on citizens' input to stay informed about public concerns as well as to gain insight into citizens' preferences (Van der Waldt, 2010:5). Public participation can only take place when there are effective and efficient channels of communication between local government and the community. Public protests are a significant sign that the community has lost trust in government or that the government does not trust the

community sufficiently to involve them in their decision-making process. Van der Waldt (2010:21) mentions a number of variables on which interaction between local government and the community depend. These variables clearly show that public participation is both the responsibility of officials and the public.

It is important that the above-mentioned barriers are considered when designing any public participation initiative, in order to avoid them. Public participation should not be seen as an act of kindness by government, but should be adhered to as a prerequisite by national, provincial and local government legislative frameworks.

The opportunities for public participation in the process of decision-making in the governance of South Africa have expanded, thereby allowing communities to participate more in government decision-making. Booysen (2009:8) notes the complex nature under which communities can engage in public participation in a democratic South Africa by referring to the typology of public participation in South Africa, 1994-2008. The typologies, for example, use the motivations for and potential effects of public participation as organising criteria. Instead, this analysis uses the modes of participation. This approach enables the assessment of both initiatives of the state and government in facilitating or hindering public participation, and civil society claiming participatory spaces. It considers the phenomenon inclusively, recognising all major modes of citizen engagement with government and policy processes. It also enables analyses of opportunities for participation, participation in relation to political and electoral cycles, and participation in the structures and frameworks created by the state. The typology further allows the different modes of participation to be considered side by side, bearing in mind their complex interactive and co-existing nature. Figure 3 illustrates this complex nature.

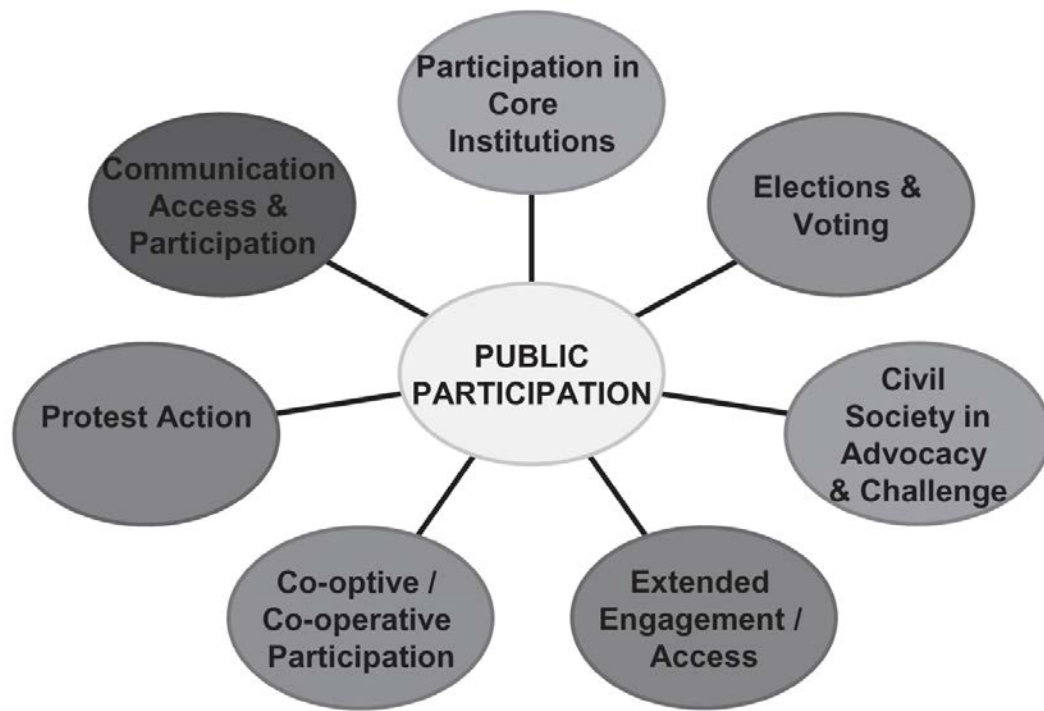


FIGURE 3: The complex nature of public participation in a democratic South Africa

Source: Booysen (2009:8)

Booyesen (2008:8) further introduces the seven modes of participation and offers illustrations of each of the modes.

Table 2: A typology of public participation in South Africa

Mode of participation		Illustration – actions, institutions, organisations
1.	Participation through representative democracy and resultant institutions	Participation in elections; representation by elected public representatives; acceptance of electoral outcomes
2.	Participation in the core institutions of democracy, including Chapter 9 institutions	Constitution of South Africa's requirement of opportunities for public participation; constitutionally established institutions facilitating participation through, for example, public submissions and hearings, outreach programmes (such as 'Taking Parliament to the People') of national, provincial and local government; reviews of effectiveness in engagement with public institutions, such as the 'Asmal Commission'
3.	Co-optive engagement directed from the centre	Presidency and Cabinet Clusters for government management; direct opportunities for consultation and public engagement in government processes; centre-need-defined consultation with civil society enclaves
4.	Civil society in advocacy and challenge	Anti-privatisation Forum, Treatment Action Campaign, strikes, civil society petitions and campaigns
5.	Extended engagement, access and participation	Ward committees, <i>izimbizo</i> , Community Development Workers, Project Consolidate, Thusong Service Centres and e-Government
6.	Direct action and protest participation	Protest against lack of 'service delivery' and government performance in areas such as housing and services
7.	Communicative participation	Dissemination of information by government; coverage of policy and governance by electronic and print media; formation and expressions of public opinion, with implications for other modes of participation

Source: Adopted from Booysen (2009:10)

Having highlighted aspects of public participation, the significance and challenges thereof, the researcher now explores ward committees as a mechanism to enhance public participation. As illustrated in Table 2 of this study, there are a few mechanisms available for municipalities to use in order to enhance public participation; these mechanisms were also highlighted by Van der Waldt *et al* (2014:35). One mechanism, and the one that is the main focus of this study, is the use of ward committees. However, the establishment of ward committees and the implementation thereof often leaves much to be desired, resulting in questions being asked regarding the functionality and usefulness of these in and around different municipalities. Literature on

past research conducted on ward committees suggests that the establishment of these ward structures does not take place according to guidelines, or that they lack the necessary individuals within the municipal council to undertake the establishment and implementation thereof.

According to Smith (2008:5), the mention of ward committees typically solicits quite negative views. While supporters of these structures claim that these committees provide an important channel for citizens to make their voices heard at the local sphere (more so in the context where there are few existing alternatives for citizens to be involved in governance at the local sphere). However, most observers appear to be critical of ward committees, arguing that ward committees in and around the country are not functioning as intended; and, that rather than enhancing the environment of participatory local governance, ward committees have actually undermined it by displaying many other former channels for public participation. Moreover, ward committees are often viewed as highly partisan structures aligned to party political agendas (Smith, 2008:5)

2.5 WARD COMMITTEES

Local government is the sphere of government that interacts with ordinary people most directly, and it is for this reason that the Constitution, Section 152 (1) (e), says that all municipalities must encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of local government (Van der Waldt *et al.*, 2014:42). It is thus an important function of local government to promote local democracy by expanding public participation in municipal governance. International experience has shown that one way of achieving successful and lasting models that will ensure public participation in governance is the establishment of structured and institutionalised frameworks for participatory local governance (Shaidi *et al.*, 2011:116). Since 2001, ward committees have emerged as a key institutional mechanism intended to contribute towards bringing about people-centred, participatory and democratic local governance (Smith & de Visser, 2009:2). These issues highlight the importance and relevance of the establishment of ward committees as a mechanism to enhance public participation and local democracy. In the section that follows, the establishment of ward committees and the composition thereof are discussed.

2.5.1 Establishment of ward committees

Historically, in South Africa, the notion of ward committees was first introduced in the Cape of Good Hope when the *Burghers* (ordinary citizens) pressed for a greater share in the Colony's Government in the 18th century. These wards were governed by the *Wardmasters*, whose responsibilities were to firstly keep a register of persons residing in their area (wards), and secondly to report to the committee of the High Court on particular municipal and criminal matters. However, it later became evident that the role of the *Wardmasters* evolved into particular relationships, where contact between the people and the municipal commissioner was promoted. These commissioners were members of the committee of the High Court, where laws were promulgated (Craythorne, 1997:126-127).

In South Africa, ward committees were introduced after the December 2000 municipal elections to supplement the role of elected councillors. As such, they were intended to create a bridge between communities, political and administrative structures of municipalities.). Despite this, it could also be argued that the main focus of ward committees is to influence public participation in identifying and prioritising their developmental needs (Shaidi *et al.*, 2011:117).

The local government sphere introduced in 2000 in South Africa was the sphere correctly positioned to give meaning and substance to the basic political commitment to bring democracy closest to the people in government. For local government, the mandate was to address basic national challenges such as underdevelopment, unemployment, stagnation and poverty. The newly-created ward committees should play a critical role in helping government, particularly local government, in achieving such development agendas (Ababio, 2007:616). This notion is supported by Raga and Taylor (2005:248) who also state that the introduction of the ward committee system in South Africa represents an innovative approach to local government matters and, in particular, the developmental nature of the new mandate. The ward committee system can also be viewed as a means of furthering the Constitutional requirement of increased accountability and democratisation in local government.

Ward committees are first mentioned in the White Paper on Local Government, 1998. It is the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 that outlines them in

some detail. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) stipulates that municipalities should develop mechanisms for interacting with community groups with the purpose of identifying service needs and priorities as well as community resources that can be unlocked and channelled for development ends. The intention with the introduction of ward committees was to primarily bridge the gap between the respective communities and the municipal structures (Madumo & Thornhill, 2011:130). The authors further state that local government should play an important role in enforcing municipal, provincial and national government within municipalities to ensure effective and accountable service delivery in a specifically defined jurisdiction.

Most municipalities are divided into wards for the purpose of local government elections, with each represented by a ward councillor. A ward committee is an area-based committee whose boundaries coincide with a ward's boundaries. These committees have no specifically assigned duties, be it legislative and executive powers. They are established as committees that must play an advisory role to council, in accordance with section 73 and 74 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998. According to Van der Walddt *et al.* (2007:37) ward committees can also improve communication between the municipal council and local communities, and play a role in identifying community needs and fine-tuning municipal programmes in order to accommodate local circumstances. Madumo and Thornhill (2011:131) further postulate that, despite the variety of challenges that municipalities face, ward committees could encourage and formulate programmes to promote public participation. This could arguably help to ensure that a municipal council is in a better position when making decisions facilitate improved local democracy and public participation.

The effective functioning of ward committees allows for a more democratic local government and, for the purposes of this study, arguably enhances and facilitates public participation. Since communities are so unique and consist of diverse people and organisations, wards represent a wide range of needs and interests. The challenge is to ensure that ward committees work in a way that brings out the diverse needs and interests that exist within a particular ward (Van der Walddt, 2010:42). Due to the diverse nature of wards, the following section explores the composition of ward committees. This is done with a view to establish whether the composition of ward committees is as diverse as the respective ward.

2.5.2 Composition of ward committees

Section 73 (2) (a) (b) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 states that a ward committee consists of the councillor representing that ward in the council, who must also be chairperson of the committee, and not more than 10 other persons. The 10 persons to be represented are, amongst others:

- Women;
- Youth;
- Religious groups;
- Sports and welfare representatives;
- Environmental representatives;
- Education;
- Community-based organisations;
- Ratepayers associations;
- Traditional leaders;
- The disabled;
- Informal traders' associations;
- Employment agricultural associations; and
- Community safety forums.

The Local Government: Structures Act acknowledges the diversity within different wards and therefore requires in Section 73 (3) (a) (b) for a metro or local council to make rules regulating the procedure to elect the subsection members of a ward committee by taking into account the need –

- For women to be equitably represented in the ward committee; and
- For a diversity of interests in the ward to be represented.

The former Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA) as one of the many organisations working in the field of local governance had been involved in the assessment of the functionality of ward committees with a number of municipalities throughout the country. These processes had been pursued in partnership with other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's); the former Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), now referred to as the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA); South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Provincial Chapters and a number of Development (Donors) Agencies. In these engagements,

there had been an emerging model for ward committee participation and communication channels which would seem to be more effective given the municipalities take public participation more seriously (Mautjane, 2005:2). How serious municipalities regard the functioning and role of ward committees can best be judged one way or another by the amount of both human and financial resources allocated for the administration and support of ward committees.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In most of the literature consulted, it was established that authors acknowledge that there is no single definition for public participation. However, the definitions provided by the authors were sufficient for the researcher to deduce a definition for the purpose of this study. The literature consulted also acknowledges the importance of establishing ward committees towards enhancing public participation in local sphere of government by promoting local democracy and developmental local government. In this regard, participation using ward committees as a driving mechanism confirms that the needs of the community can be better met, and this would ensure that local democracy and developmental local government are achieved.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a theoretical perspective concerning local democracy, public participation and ward committees system in South Africa. This was necessary to establish a sound theoretical base that could be related to the reality of the phenomenon being investigated. A brief overview of local government in South Africa was also given due to that fact that it is a sphere identified as the most relevant, and more so pertaining to ward committees because wards are regarded as the most appropriate structures to promote public participation in local government. As a result, the establishment and composition of ward committees were also discussed as it form the basis for this study together with the feasibility of promoting the ward committees to promote local democracy.

The effective functioning of ward committees has mainly been influenced by relevant local government legislation and regulatory frameworks such as the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, the *Batho Pele* White Paper to name but just a few. The next chapter therefore analyses all the applicable regulatory and statutory frameworks influencing the functioning of ward committees.

CHAPTER 3

THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK GUIDING EFFECTIVE WARD COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Pre-apartheid South Africa was characterised by unilateral decision-making processes and a system of government that favoured a small part of the population of the country. Key decisions were taken without the majority of citizens being involved, which led to skewed delivery of services and a biased system of government (Tau, 2013:152). As alluded to in chapter two of this study, the involvement of the public in government decision-making is imperative in driving local democracy; it also forms the basis of democracy in South Africa as required and stipulated by the Constitution. As part of the establishment of a democratic local government, legislation was developed in order to govern local government in South Africa. This legislation had to progressively change the way in which local government planned and rendered its services and, more importantly, how it was going to involve people in local government decision-making.

Legislation is one of the most important instruments of government in terms of organising society and protecting a country's citizens. It determines, amongst others, the rights and responsibilities of individuals and authorities to whom the legislation applies (De Jager, 2000). Without legislation, the law has little or no value if there is neither discipline nor enforcement. Legislation can be regarded as a collection of rules devised by and enforced by a government which has authority over its citizens. It does not only establish punishment for individuals who break the government's rules, but also – more importantly – ensures that government bodies, such as municipalities, adhere to the spirit and stipulations of particular legislation in the designing and execution of policy programmes (Van der Waldt, 2010:8).

The developmental role assigned to the third sphere of government in South Africa emphasises democratisation, public participation and the empowerment of citizens and communities in local government matters. The dawn of democracy in South Africa also brought about a shift and an emphasis on transparency, accountability and a shift in how municipalities include citizens in the decision-making process over issues that affect them.

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the relevant local government legislation and regulatory frameworks influencing the functioning of ward committees. This is achieved by consulting all relevant literature pertaining to the second research objective of this study, namely to determine the legislative and regulatory framework for effective functioning of ward committees. The chapter further discusses the current regulatory environment of Tlokwe City Council as the locus of the study by outlining effective functioning of ward committee systems and the establishment of ward committees within the municipality. The role of the speaker's office in the Tlokwe City Council in terms of facilitating ward committees is discussed with an appropriate conclusion provided at the end of the chapter.

3.2 THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK GUIDING EFFECTIVE WARD COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING

When the new democratic government came into power in 1994, it dedicated its efforts towards transforming and developing decentralised institutions, such as local government with a separate autonomy and a legal status distinct from other spheres of government, to create an enabling environment for public participation (Tau, 2013:157). Ward committees as a primary mechanism aimed at enhancing public participation in local government, more specifically in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction, should be encouraged by all means to facilitate good governance. However, effective ward committee functioning must take place within a prescribed legislative framework. It is thus imperative to pay specific attention to the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks guiding the effective functioning of ward committees.

As a point of departure, summarised tables of ward committee legislation and regulation are presented below in date sequence. The details are then subsequently discussed.

Table 3: Ward Committee legislation in South Africa

Year promulgated	Name of Act / Legislation	Summarised purpose or goal
1996	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996	Section 152 (1) of the Constitution awards local government the status of being a decentralised sphere of government with the objectives to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; to promote a safe and healthy environment and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government.
1998	Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998	Formally introduces the concept of ward committees. Part 4, Chapter 4 of the Act sets out the composition and election of ward committees, as well as a framework for the powers and functions of committees, the term of office of committee members and procedures for dealing with vacancies and the dissolution of committees
2000	Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000	It is the purpose of the Act to actively promote a society in which citizens have effective access to information to enable them to fully exercise and protect their rights.
2000	Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000	The MSA identifies mechanisms, processes and procedures for public participation.
2003	Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003	Calls for public participation in a number of processes related to how municipal resources are used and reported on, such as the drawing up of the annual municipal budget, the establishment of municipal entities and public-private partnership (PPP), and the publication of the annual report of the municipality.

Sources: Constitution, MSA, MFMA

Table 4 below provides a summary of ward committee regulations in SA

Table 4: Ward committee regulation in SA

Year promulgated	Name of regulation	Summarised purpose or goal
1997	White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery	Calls for participatory democracy by highlighting some of the examples that could be used for participation in the local government sphere.
1998	White Paper on Local Government	Proposes active public participation in local government by defining four levels through which citizens and community groups may participate and influence municipal functions.

Sources: White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, White Paper on Local Government

3.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The role and mandate of local government in SA, according to Section 152 (2) of the Constitution, awards it the status of being a decentralised sphere of government with the objectives of providing democratic and accountable government for local communities; ensuring the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promoting social and economic development; promoting a safe and healthy environment; and encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government. The last objective of encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government is clearly applicable to ward committees, because as mentioned in Section 2.5 of this dissertation, these (ward committees) were established as a participatory democracy structures to specifically enhance public participation by communities in the affairs of municipalities. Ward committees as a mechanism for enhancing public participation is, however, not specifically mentioned in the Constitution but it is implied that such structures should be implemented with a view to ensure public participation. Furthermore, Section 195 (1) (e) of the Constitution spells out that, in terms of the basic values and principles governing public administration, people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.

The notion of encouraged involvement of communities in decision-making has also being captured in the Freedom Charter clause, namely "The people shall govern". The Constitution thus obligates local government to allow for the participation of all local

communities in matters of decision-making, and more specifically decisions that affect them.

3.2.2 Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998

According to Van der Waldt *et al.* (2014:46), the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 is designed to regulate the internal systems, structures and office bearers of municipalities and provide for appropriate electoral systems. None of the legislative and regulatory frameworks make specific mention of ward committees. However, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 is the first piece of legislation to formally introduce the concept ward committees. Part 4, Chapter 4 of the Act sets out the composition and elections of ward committees, as well as a framework for the powers and functions of ward committees, the term of office of committee members and procedures for dealing with vacancies and the dissolution of committees (Smith & De Visser, 2009:2). Schedule 1, parts 1 and 2 further deal with the electoral systems for metropolitan and local council, as well as ward elections. The ward participatory system of municipal government allows for the establishment of ward committees to facilitate public participation in matters of local government. Ward committees can also improve communication between the municipal council and local communities, and play a role in identifying community needs and fine-tuning municipal programmes to accommodate local circumstances (Van der Waldt, *et al.*, 2014:46).

Ward committees have by now widely been established in municipalities across South Africa as representative structures to facilitate public participation (Deacon & Piper, 2008:41). The theoretical significance of ward committees including the composition thereof in terms of Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of, 1998 are outlined as well in chapter two of this study where its primary purpose was indicated as enhancing and facilitating the significance of public participation.

Thus, ward committees are allocated several functions which, *inter alia*, include promoting local democracy - and thus the primary aim of this study is to identify challenges facing effective functioning of ward committees as a mechanism to promote local democracy in Tlokwe City Council. It is imperative that ward committees should be regarded as a vehicle to allow the public the opportunity to exercise their democratic right at local government sphere.

3.2.3 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

It is important to take note of the Constitutional emphasis within the above mentioned legislative frameworks in terms of the significance of addressing the importance of public participation. The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of, 2000 (hereafter referred to as MSA) follows the Constitution in emphasising participatory local government and developmental local government in South Africa. This notion is clearly stated in the MSA preamble which stipulates that municipalities need to fulfil their Constitutional obligation to promote social and economic development, and to encourage a safe and healthy environment by working with the communities in creating environment and human settlements which the South African people can lead uplifting and dignified lives.

Chapter 4, section 16 (1) of the MSA deals specifically with public participation and also explains the development of a culture of public participation. The MSA further identifies mechanisms, processes and procedures for public participation. Chapter 4, section 17 (1), while not dealing specifically with ward committees, implies that they are one of the structures through which participation by the local community in the affairs of the municipality must take place. Chapter 4 of the Act is dedicated to public participation in local government. The Act reflects the increasing importance of community engagement in the municipal planning processes. In chapter 4, participation by citizens in the affairs of the municipality is identified as an important pillar in the establishment and operations of different municipal structures. In other words, it is a legislative obligation for municipalities to promote community interest and public participation.

Madumo and Thornhill (2011:133) highlight major challenges facing municipalities and state that it is imperative that the legislature should receive a mandate from citizens concerned with regard to their collective needs. As a result, public participation is without a doubt an effective method to determine respective communities' needs and expectations. Therefore, the MSA promulgates the development of public participation, through community-based structures such as ward committees.

3.2.4 Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) (2011) states that the Local Government: Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 (hereafter referred to as MFMA) is intended to ensure sound and sustainable financial management in municipalities and

deepens the budgetary process in municipalities by making community involvement compulsory.

The MFMA does not mention ward committees explicitly. However, it does call for public participation in a number of processes related to how municipal resources are used and reported on, such as the drawing up of the annual municipal budget, the establishment of municipal entities and public-private partnership (PPP), and the publication of the annual report of the municipality (Smith & De Visser, 2009:10). The aforementioned are areas whereby inputs of ward committees are also requested from time to time.

3.2.5 Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

The above pieces of legislation highlighted thus far all point to the importance of public participation in local government. The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 is no different. The Act gives effect to Section 32 of the Constitution, namely the right to information held by the state. With respect to municipalities, information may include anything from council minutes to annual municipal budgets. The purpose of the Act is to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public institutions, including municipalities, comprising the local sphere of government. It is also the purpose of the Act to actively promote a society in which citizens have effective access to information to enable them to fully exercise and protect their rights.

The significance of the Act, as stated in chapter 1 part 2, is that citizens have the right to access records of public bodies. Municipalities, therefore, should make provision for the availability of council's records as well as the appointment of information officers. However, in as much as the Act gives citizens the right to access information, chapter 4, part 2 makes provision for the grounds for refusal of access to municipal records in cases such as the protection of privacy of third parties, commercial information and the protection of safety of individuals (Van der Walddt, 2010:14).

3.2.6 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997

In line with the Constitutional principles highlighted above regarding public participation, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1998 also calls for participatory democracy by highlighting some of the examples that could be used for participation in the local government sphere. The White Paper, like the Constitution, does not make mention of ward committees as a mechanism for public participation - but does acknowledge that there are mechanisms available for public participation.

The White Paper brought about the *Batho Pele* (*Batho Pele* in Sesotho meaning People First) principles which constitutes the inner core of the White Paper, as a policy and legislative framework that would revolutionise public service delivery in South Africa (Mpehle & Nzimakwe, 2012:279). The *Batho Pele* principles specifically refer to the effective, efficient and economic delivery of public services as well as guiding all government employees in their work in the public sector. Van der Walddt *et al.*, (2014:46) states that the principles promote mechanisms to enable the state machinery to optimise the provision of services to all citizens. The *Batho Pele* principles are briefly discussed in this study in order to highlight the significant role they play in promoting public participation as well as the promotion of local democracy in the local government sphere.

The principles, as encapsulated by the *Batho Pele* White Paper and articulated by Mpehle and Nzimakwe (2012:282-283) as well as Van der Walddt *et al.* (2014:46) are as follows:

3.2.6.1 Consultation with customers on a regular basis

The notion of consultation is one which requires municipalities to regularly consult with communities on basic services. According to the *Batho Pele* White Paper (1997:16), consultation gives citizens the opportunity to influence decisions about public services, by providing objective evidence which can determine service delivery. The *Batho Pele* White Paper further states that consultation can also help to foster a more participative and co-operative relationship between providers and users of public services. Consultation thus enables recipients of services to have a say and to make informed decisions on what kinds of services they need. There are many ways to consult users of services. The *Batho Pele* White Paper identified some of the ways that may be used, including customer surveys, interviews with individual users, consultation groups, and meetings with customer representative bodies, NGOs and CBOs including bodies representing previously disadvantaged groups. However, one of the key questions that this study wishes to address is to investigate whether ward committees as consultative mechanism in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction are serving their purpose in addressing the *Batho Pele* principle of consultation. It is with this in mind that the principle of consultation is important to this study.

3.2.6.2 Setting service standards (level of quality provision of basic services)

The *Batho Pele* White Paper (1997:16) states that National and Provincial departments must publish standards for the level and quality of services they will provide, including the introduction of new services to those who have previously been denied access to them. The level and quality of the provision of basic services is very much dependent on proper and meaningful consultation with communities. Consultation with communities will, by implication, ascertain that the services rendered have been contextualised, and are relevant, customer-focused, measureable, efficient and easily understood by customers. As is the case with the above-mentioned principle of *Batho Pele*, this study seeks to identify the relevance of ward committees in serving as a consultative mechanism in order to improve the basic services provided by municipalities, specifically in Tlokwe City Council.

3.2.6.3 Ensuring high levels of courtesy (access to equal services)

While some South Africans enjoy public services of first-world quality, many others live in third-world conditions (*Batho Pele* White Paper, 1997:18). One of the prime aims of *Batho Pele* is to provide a framework for making decisions about delivering public services to the many South Africans who were and still are denied access to such services, within the parameters of government policy. *Batho Pele* also aims to rectify the inequalities of distribution of existing services. Simply put, ensuring high levels of courtesy refers to the responsibility of local government to ensure that all people are treated with courtesy and consideration. This means that public officials tasked with the responsibility of providing basic services to communities should do so in a manner that demonstrates acceptable behaviour and a respectful attitude. The Code of Conduct for Public Servants as referred to by the *Batho Pele* White Paper (1997:18) issued by the Public Service Commission, makes it clear that courtesy and regard for the public are among the fundamental duties of public servants, by specifying that public servants should treat members of the public “as customers who are entitled to receive the highest standard of service”.

Encouraged access to equal services and high levels of courtesy should be upheld by municipalities in order to adhere to the *Batho Pele* Principle of equal access to services. Through ward committees, municipalities in local government should ensure that community members, particularly those who are in great need, have equal access to basic services.

3.2.6.4 Providing more and better information about services (fair communication)

Information is one of the most powerful tools at the customer's disposal in exercising his or her right to good service. Accurate and up-to-date information about the services provided, and knowledge about who is entitled to those services should be provided to the community. This must be done pro-actively, especially for those who have previously been excluded from the provision of public services. The *Batho Pele* principle of consultation should be used to determine what customers need to know, and then work out how, where and when the information can best be provided. Ward committees as a community-based communicative and consultative mechanism could thus play a crucial role in communicating information back to the community. The *Batho Pele* White Paper also requires information to be communicated in various languages in order to meet the different needs of the community. Due to the composition of ward committees as outlined in chapter 2 of this study, the language used in communicating information would need to cater for every member of the community.

3.2.6.5 Increased openness and transparency about services (full disclosure)

Openness and transparency are the symbols of a democratic country and are fundamental to the public service transformation process. In terms of public service delivery, their importance lies in the need to build confidence and trust between the public sector and the public they serve. The *Batho Pele* White Paper states that a key aspect of this issue is that the public should know more about the way national and provincial departments are run, how well they perform, the resources they consume, and who is in charge of these. However, Motale (2012:66) puts it in even perspective in terms of local government, and more specifically with regard to municipalities, when he mentions that salaries of councillors and managers in municipalities should be disclosed. The notion of good governance and local democracy can thus be achieved by having transparent and open municipalities. Motale (2012:66) further states that municipal ward councillors should hold meetings with residents using ward committee structures to convey relevant information regarding matters pertaining to the community. Annual reports should also be made available to members of communities, indicating the following 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.
- A name of a contact person in a municipality and contact number from whom they could obtain further information.

Particular reports issued to community members ought to be treated as a mechanism through which municipal departments could account to the public, and thus identical information must also appear in municipal annual reports that are submitted to the provincial and national government departments.

3.2.6.6 Remedying mistakes and failures

According to the *Batho Pele* White Paper (1997:21), the *Batho Pele* principle of redress requires a completely new approach to handling complaints. Customers are encouraged to lay complaints on dissatisfaction that they experience. However, complaints are seen by many public servants as a time-consuming irritation. One can only wonder if the channels that currently need to be followed in order to have these complaints investigated by municipalities are sufficient and appropriate. Where complaints procedures do exist, they are often lengthy and bureaucratic aimed at defending the department's actions rather than solving the user's problem. Complaints should, however, not be seen as a threat but rather as an opportunity to address that which is not right. Since communities are so unique and consist of diverse people, wards represent a wide range of needs and interests. It follows that the complaints put forward by communities are diverse and unique. It is for this reason that ward committees as both communicative and consultative mechanism should be utilised to take complaints to municipal council in order to deal with complaints effectively and efficiently. The principles, according to the *Batho Pele* White Paper, that need to be followed in reviewing complaints are: accessibility, speed, fairness, confidentiality, responsiveness, review and training.

3.2.6.7 Getting the best possible value for money

It is the responsibility of every municipality in South Africa to provide effective, efficient and economic delivery of basic services to the communities they serve. This is imperative because one of the key aims of *Batho Pele* is to look for ways to simplify procedures and to eliminate wastage and inefficiency. These above-mentioned principles require that public participation through the effective functioning of ward

committees should be improved and that communities need to have access to municipal services.

The Tlokwe City Council, as part of local government, should adhere to the *Batho Pele* principles in order to encourage public participation using ward committees as a mechanism to encourage and better facilitate public participation.

3.2.7 White Paper on Local Government, 1998

The Constitution asserts that the final form of local government should be “developmental”, and that the White Paper on Local Government seeks to establish the mechanisms by which developmental local government will be achieved (Pycroft, 2000:148). Developmental local government is referred to in chapter two of this dissertation where it is stated that municipalities should develop their own strategies to meet communities’ needs and improve citizen’s quality of life. Chapter two of this study highlighted the significance of the White Paper on Local Government, including the characteristics spelled out in the White Paper for developmental local government. This section therefore only highlights the significance of the White Paper in terms of public participation.

The primary objective of public participation is the promotion of local democracy, as already highlighted in chapter two of this dissertation. The White Paper on Local Government states that local government is expected to actively encourage and promote participation, especially in the case of marginalised groups - including women. This is also stipulated in Section 17 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000.

The White Paper on Local Government, 1998, proposes active public participation in local government by defining the four levels through which citizens and community groups may participate and influence municipal functions. On the *first* level, voters have the opportunity to participate in a democratic process to elect candidates that represent them in local government affairs. Voters should be ensured of the maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote. *Secondly*, citizens should have the opportunity to express, through different stakeholder associations and groupings, their views before, during and after policy formulation processes to ensure that those policies address community needs as accurately as possible. On the *third* level, voters are end-user consumers, and as such

should be the recipients of value for money services and courteous and responsive service (see the *Batho Pele* principle on courtesy above). On the fourth level, community members may participate in local government affairs as organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resources for development via business, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) (Van Rooyen, 2003:132-133).

Achieving the above-mentioned ideals of public participation in the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, requires extended public participation processes and structures in municipalities. In this regard, the following have been proposed:

- The establishment of forums of organised formations (especially in the fields of visioning and issues-specific policies).
 - Structured stakeholder participation in council committees (especially *ad hoc* issue-related committees).
 - Participatory action research, with specific focus on groups (for in-depth information on specific issues).
 - Forming associations (especially for people in marginalised areas)
- (Van Rooyen, 2003:133).

Van Rooyen (2003:133) further asserts that participation should be a continuous and structured process, and that it should focus on certain specific processes with particular outcomes in mind. The decisions on how to structure and manage the particular mechanisms, processes and procedures necessary in order to attain effective public participation are left to the respective municipalities. This, in turn, allows for relevance and appropriateness to accommodate local peculiarities and avoids imposing isomorphic models on stakeholders.

The above discussion presented a brief exposition of the legislative and regulatory framework governing public participation and effective ward committee functioning at the local government sphere. The following discussion focuses specifically on the Tlokwe City Council with specific reference to ward committees as a mechanism to enhance public participation.

3.3 TLOKWE CITY COUNCIL'S REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Municipalities are the organs of state that consist of the political and administration of the municipality and the community (inhabitants) of the municipal area (SALGA, 2011:5). With specific reference to the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, municipalities are required to prioritise residents, communities and other stakeholders as citizens of that municipal area, and also as the clients of the municipal services in the performance of their task.

Section 156 of the Constitution, 1996, establishes three distinct categories of municipalities and provides that national legislation must define the different types of municipalities that may be established within each category. The three types of categories were discussed in chapter two of this dissertation. According to the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998, Tlokwe City Council is a category B municipality and shares authority with a district municipality (category C) in whose area it falls. The municipality is situated in the south-eastern boarder of the North-West Province within the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District municipality (a category C municipality which shares authority with a category B municipality within its area). The neighbouring municipalities are the Matlosana Local Municipality and the Ventersdorp Local Municipality (Tlokwe City Council, 2015-2016:313).

Tlokwe City Council is bordered by Gauteng to the East, the Free State province as well as three other district municipalities within the North-West province: Bojanala District Municipality to the North, Central District Municipality in the North-West and Bophirima District Municipality to the West. The district covers a land area approximately 16 438 square km. Tlokwe itself covers an area of approximately 2 500 square km and is divided into two parts by the N12 route between Johannesburg and Cape Town. The N12 is one of the main designated development corridors in South Africa. Tlokwe is home to the town of Potchefstroom and a number of formal rural settlements along the major highway routes such as Klipdrift, Boskop, Schoemansdrift, Venterskroon and Lindegiesdrift. These settlements are small and consist mainly of informal houses with poor infrastructure and socio-economic conditions. In terms of an international perspective, Potchefstroom is well-known for its university (the North-West University) consisting of the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, as one of the two premium high altitude sports training centres in South Africa (Motale, 2012:74).

3.3.1 Tlokwe City Council's ward committee system

Ward committees, as discussed in chapter two of this study, are the vehicles through which the notion of participatory democracy and representative democracy, as outlined in section 152 of the Constitution, becomes a reality. This study argues that ward committees within local government have a significant role to play in strengthening the link between citizens and government's overall priorities and decision-making. Chapter two of this study, with reference also to chapter one, discussed the establishment of ward committees, the composition of ward committees and the functions of these. According to the MSA, the powers and functions of ward committees are left to the discretion of the municipalities.

Tlokwe City Council has established ward committees in terms section 73 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 for ward 1 to 26 as determined by the Municipal Demarcation Board. The established ward committees therefore serve as official public participation structures within the municipal area of jurisdiction of the Tlokwe City Council, and must be representative of the community - thus representing the respective ward and its composition, irrespective of the political representation of the political ward electoral composition and structure, in this way promoting ownership and popular participation.

With respect to the functions of ward committees, the former Department Provincial and Local Government (DPLG), now the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (2005:6) stated that ward committees must do the following:

- Increase the participation of local residents in municipal decision-making, as they are a direct and unique link with the local council.
- Are representative of the local ward, and are not politically aligned.
- Should be involved in matters such as the Integrated Development Planning process, municipal performance management, the annual budget, council projects and other key activities and programmes as all these impact on local people.
- Can support the councillor in dispute resolutions, and provide information about municipal operations.

- Can help with community awareness campaigns such as waste, water and sewage, payment of fees and charges, because members know their local communities and their needs.

The Tlokwe City Council's Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (2015-2016) highlights the role of ward committees within its IDP. This roles and functions are to represent interests and contribute knowledge and ideas in the planning process by:

- Informing interest groups, communities and organisations on relevant planning activities and their outcomes.
- Analyse issues, determine priorities, negotiate and reach consensus.
- Participate in the designing of project proposals and/or asses them.
- Discuss and comment on the draft IDP.
- Ensure that annual business plans and budgets are based on and linked to the IDP.
- Monitor performance in the implementation of the IDP.
- Conduct meetings or workshops with groups, communities or organisations to prepare for follow-up on relevant planning activities.

The figure below depicts the institutional arrangement of the IDP process in Tlokwe City Council. The figure also reflects the significant role of ward committees in the IDP process as highlighted in the above section.

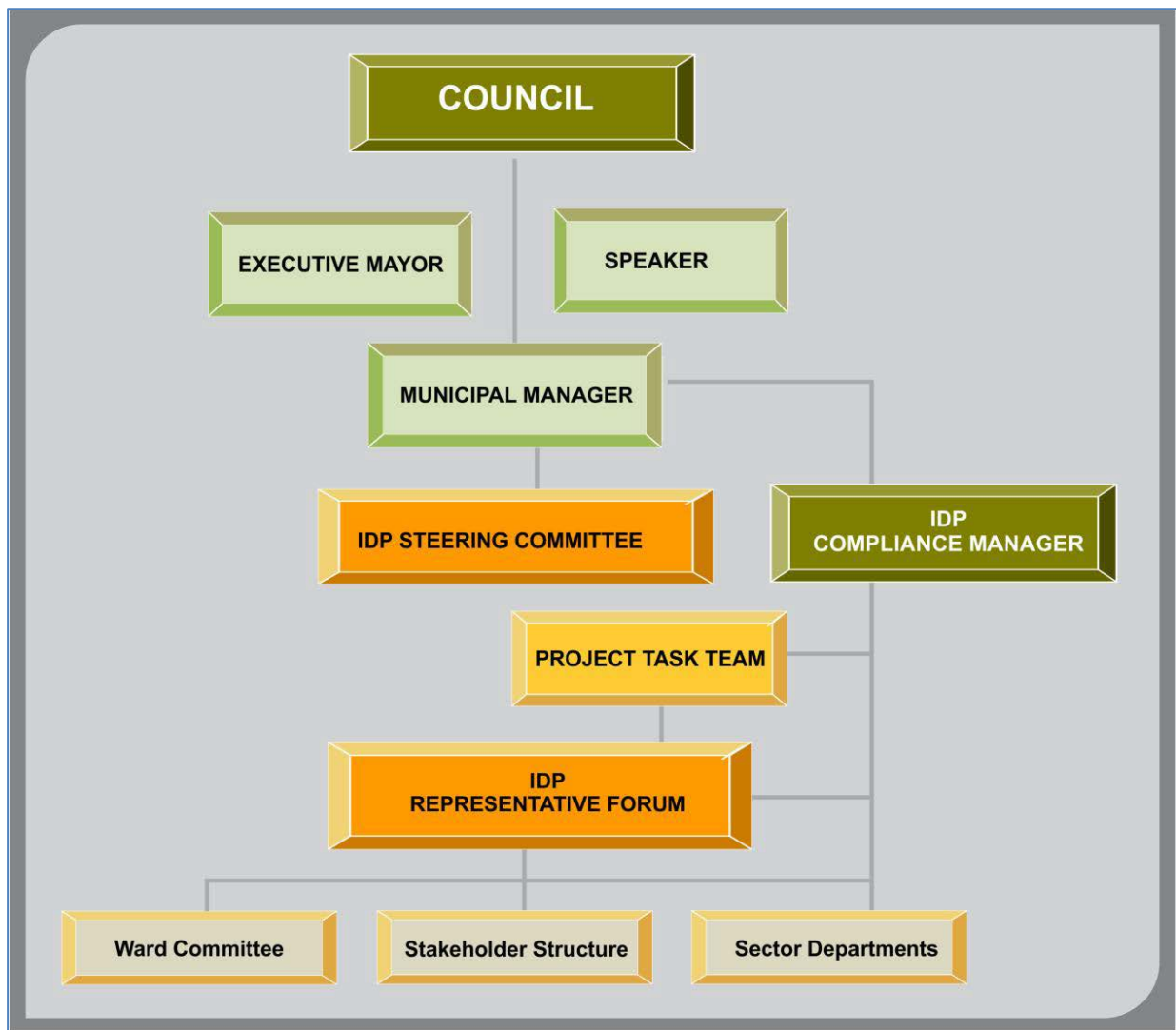


FIGURE 4: Institutional arrangement for IDP process in Tlokwe City Council

Source: Adopted from Tlokwe City Council (2011:21)

However, even with the vast number of legislative and statutory frameworks available to municipalities on the functioning and roles of ward committees, these are not without challenges. In principle, ward committees should not be a burden to municipalities and should be realised as a strategy to enhance local democracy which, in essence, lives up to the Constitutional mandate given to local government. One of the major challenges facing municipalities in South Africa is budgeting for ward committees. It is thus imperative that municipalities should use their resources and annually allocate funds in their budget, since they can afford to develop a culture of public participation (Carrim, 2011:Online). Some of the challenges facing ward committees have been highlighted in chapter 1 of this study. However, Madumo and Thornhill (2011:134) attribute some of the challenges facing ward committees to their being dysfunctional in municipalities

around South Africa. The perceived challenges faced by the Tlokwe City Council are discussed in chapter five of this dissertation in which senior officials and selected ward committee members were used as a unit of analysis. With reference to budgeting for ward committees, the Annual Budget of Tlokwe City Council in terms of council's establishment and operations of ward committees have budgeted one million for the 2014-2015 budget to provide ward committee offices to ward committees who also receive a monthly stipend as determined by council (Tlokwe City Council, 2013-14:49)

3.3.1.1 Establishment of ward committees in Office of the Speaker

The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 defines the speaker as a councillor elected in terms of Section 36 of the Act to be the chairperson of a municipal council as envisaged in Section 160 (1) (b) of the Constitution. The speaker's role in a municipality will mostly depend on the internal arrangements made by the municipality itself. The formulation of the terms of reference for the speaker in terms of Section 53 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 is a critical issue.

The speaker's role in a municipality is primarily to ensure oversight, accountability, discipline of office, and the efficient running of council meetings. As such, impartiality in the exercise of his or her function is essential for the speaker. The speaker must distinguish between his or her activities as a politician and his or her functions as a speaker. This also means that the function of the speaker and the non-partisan exercise of that function must be respected by members, parties and interests in the council.

The key functions of the role of the Speaker are to:

- Chair council meetings;
- Implement the Code of Conduct; and
- Exercise of delegated functions including:
 - I. Facilitating public participation in legislative matters;
 - II. Establishing and functioning of ward committees; and
 - III. Support to councillors.

(SALGA, 2011:16)

As already stated above, Tlokwe City Council has established ward committees in terms of Section 73 of the Municipal Structures Act for ward 1 to 26. The functioning of ward committees in the municipality is assigned to the office of the Speaker. Part 4 and Part 5 of the Tlokwe City Council's guidelines for the establishment and operations of ward committees explain the role of the Speaker when coming to ward committees. Below is the organisational structure of the Tlokwe City Council's office of the speaker.

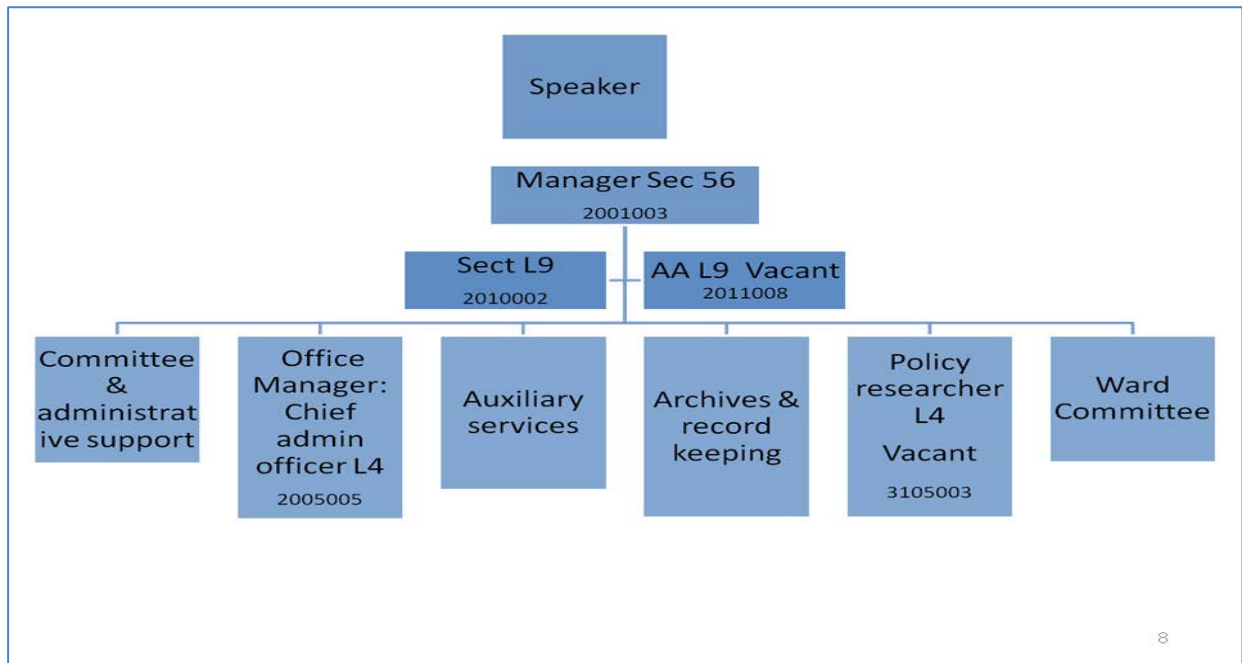


FIGURE 5: Organisational structure of the Tlokwe City Council Speaker's Office.

Source: Adopted from Tlokwe City Council (2011:255)

The office of the speaker should thus:

- Oversee the election of ward committee members.
- Ensure that ward committees meet regularly.
- Ensure that ward committees function in general.
- Ensure that ward councillors report back to the council on their ward committee meetings.
- Co-ordinate the assigned of Proportional Representative Councillors to ward committees if the councillor decides to go that route (SALGA, 2011:22).

The Tlokwe City Council as a local municipality is required to govern itself in accordance with the above-listed legislative and regulatory framework in order to ensure public participation that would promote local democracy in this manner. The success of ward committees in Tlokwe City Council will be judged by the ability of the municipality, more specifically the speaker's office, in discharging the mandate of the Constitution and other relevant legislative and statutory frameworks guided by the Constitution.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The effective functioning of ward committees is mainly influenced by relevant local government legislation, regulatory and policy guidelines as discussed in this chapter. The purpose of this chapter was therefore to provide an analysis of all the applicable regulatory and statutory frameworks influencing the functioning of ward committees in accordance with the second research objective of this study. An overview of the regulatory environment of the Tlokwe City Council as the locus of this study was also provided in order to contextualise the actual environment of the municipality before undertaking empirical research for purposes of achieving the research objectives of this study. This chapter also analysed the role of the office of the Speaker in Tlokwe City Council. The office of the Speaker is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of ward committees within the boundaries of the municipality. This chapter, with reference to both chapters one and two of this study, argues that ward committees should be used as a vehicle to drive the Constitutional and statutory mandate of local government in municipalities across South Africa. Legislation indicates that capacity is needed to develop local communities therefore it is the mandate of municipalities to develop and empower the community to enable transparency and accountability.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology followed to achieve the objectives of this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Public participation, according to the literature, includes the effective functioning of ward committees as a mechanism to enhance public participation in decision-making processes. This was highlighted in previous chapters, also with reference to the Tlokwe City Council. The theoretical and regulatory discussion was of significance for this study as it laid the theoretical basis on how to proceed further in order to achieve the research objectives of this study.

The chapter discusses the research methodology followed to achieve the objectives of this study. The manner of data collection, instruments, procedure and the processing thereof within the framework of the research process are also highlighted.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Research is defined by Bayat and Fox (2007:5) as a study or investigation undertaken in order to discover facts or gain information. It is a universal activity by which a specific phenomenon in reality is studied objectively in order to create a valid concept of that phenomenon. Research provides scientific knowledge that can be used to determine the general applicability of objectives, as well as the efficient utilisation of resources (Brynard & Hanekom, 2006:1).

According to Kumar (2014:2), research not only refers to a set of skills, but is also a way of thinking. Within this framework of thinking, one usually questions that which one observes, and attempts to further explore, understand and explain one's observations, and draws conclusions and interferences ultimately in order to enhance one's skills and knowledge base. One thus needs to observe one's practice inquisitively, critically and analytically to gain in-depth knowledge of its rationale, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Brynard and Hanekom (2006:2) assert that knowledge that is obtained by means of research can be used to improve decision-making. This is specifically important when one considers that decision-making in the public or private sector is based on verified data and not on intuition, tradition or mere gut feeling.

Chinnathambi, Philominathan and Rajasekar (2013:5) propound that research methodology refers to a systematic way to solve a research problem. It is a science of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing and predicting phenomena are all called research methodologies. Coetzee (as cited by Motale 2012:101) states that research methodology, firstly, deals with “what scientific knowledge is” and secondly “which methods to apply or to follow” to obtain scientific knowledge. Its aim is to give the research a proper work plan, i.e. how to get from the starting point to the point where scientific knowledge is achieved.

This study is concerned with the effective functioning of ward committees in the greater Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction, and aims to provide suitable strategic recommendations with regard to improved effective and efficient functioning of ward committees as a mechanism for public participation. Due to the human elements been involved, a qualitative rather than quantitative research design was chosen due to its relevance for this study - as outlined in chapter one.

4.2.1 Qualitative Research Design

Babbie (2010:92-94) proposes that the three purposes of a research design include:

- Exploratory research, which is conducted to explore a topic or to familiarise a researcher with that topic. This would typically include case studies, needs assessments, the use of focus groups or guided small-group discussions;
- Descriptive research that describes what is happening in situations and events. The researcher observes and then describes what was observed. Statistics found in journal articles, news and government reports are used to describe what is happening. Many qualitative studies aim primarily at making use of such descriptions; and
- Explanatory research that examines why something is happening; that is, it attempts to explain why one variable causes change in another variable, or why one variable predicts changes in the other. This type of research answers questions of: What, where, when, how and why.

This study made use of a descriptive research design because theoretical analysis relating to the research problem was applied. This entailed, firstly, that the researcher observed a problem in the effective functioning of ward committees and had to undertake the study in order to ascertain what the reasons were behind the supposed

ineffectiveness. Furthermore, the descriptive nature of this research was done in words because qualitative research is concerned with words rather than numbers (Bryman, 2012:380). Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011:399) assert that qualitative data is, first and foremost, a process of inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorising which certainly is far removed from the more structured, mechanical and technical procedures used to make inferences from empirical data.

The empirical research gathered for this study entails the respondents' own spoken words pertaining to their experiences or perceptions regarding the research problem. Having used the qualitative research approach, the researcher was able to read between the lines in an effort to capture the human experience, underlying actions and behaviours that are not always capable of being quantified. The qualitative research approach also allowed the researcher to engage firstly in an intensive literature study which formed the foundation for the triangulation of data, and in doing so contributed to the validity and reliability of the study.

The descriptive approach allowed the researcher to understand the problem better and to respond with proposed suggestions and recommendations on how ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council could function more effectively (see chapter 6 of this study).

4.2.2 Target population and sampling

For purposes of this study, the population sample included four (4) senior officials within the Tlokwe City Council, namely Municipal Manager, Council Whip, Executive Mayor and Council Speaker, with the proviso of utilising their respective managers should the researcher be unable to get hold of the aforementioned officials. As part of the research process, a request was sent to the office of the municipal manager to interview the said four senior officials of the Tlokwe City Council.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the senior officials in Tlokwe City Council. In this form of sampling, the researcher relies on his/her expert judgment to select units that are representative or typical of the population (Burger & Silima, 2006:663). The researcher in this study is interested in interviewing these senior officials or their office managers as representatives, based on their expert knowledge with regard to legislative framework and regulatory requirements of public participation within Tlokwe City Council. Burger and Silima (2006:663) regard the challenge inherent

to purposive sampling as the necessity of having a thorough knowledge of the population, before the sample can be drawn, in order to ensure representativity of the sample in relation to the population.

With regard to ward committees, the study made use of wards with rural and semi-urban stature. Only six wards with their respective ward committee members were used in the study. The researcher randomly selected the wards that were included in the study. According to Brynard and Hanekom (2006:57), selecting an element from a population is called a random selection when each element has the same chance of being selected for the sample. According to Groenewald (2013), the six wards that were used in the study would very much yield similar results as would be the case if all the wards had been selected. This assumption is based on the nature and extent to which ward committees function in the respective wards. The six wards were studied together with their respective ward councillors. The ward committee members were used as part of the focus groups in order to gather data.

A total sample size of 60 respondents in the six ward committees was targeted, but eventually only 29 people participated (see chapter 5 table 5).

The ethical considerations and significance of the study were discussed in section 7, 8 and 9 of chapter one and are not be repeated here. The data collection procedure and processes followed in this study are discussed next.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

According to Brynard and Hanekom (2006:35), the most time-consuming part of research is the collection of data. Data collection essential because without data the researcher would not be able to broaden one's understanding and explaining the "unknown", or add new knowledge to existing knowledge.

According to Kumar (2014:171), there are two major approaches to gathering data about a research problem. When one undertakes a research study, in most cases, one would need to collect the required information; however, sometimes the information required is already available and needs only be extracted. With this in mind, data collection can be categorised as primary data and secondary data.

When researchers collect their own data, it is called primary data. However, should the researcher use data collected by other researchers concerning their respective research problem, this data is referred to as secondary data. This study made use of primary data and explains the challenges relating to the effective functioning of ward committees based on a qualitative research design.

Data collection comprises different methods; with each is method used with specific research techniques. For the purpose of this study, secondary literature including books, journal articles, and internet based articles together with masters' dissertations were used for the literature part of the study. The Tlokwe City Councils IDP, Draft Budget and ward committee By-law were used for purposes of document analysis.

Research design and techniques refer to a step-by-step process through which data is collected. The various forms of data collection include observation, interviews, printed material and audio-visual material. In qualitative research it is seldom found that only one of these forms is employed. Data collection instruments for this study included a literature review (discussed in detail in 6.2 of this dissertation), interviews including focus group interviews, and observation. A qualitative research study typically makes use unstructured or semi-structured interviews (Greef, 2011:347). For purposes of this study, semi-structured interviews were used.

- **Semi-structured interviews** here the researcher uses a questionnaire with only one or various open-ended questions that would mould the respondents' frame of reference, whilst at the same time giving him/her the freedom to respond in whatever way he/she feels like to respond (Jarbandhan & Schutte, 2006:678). According to Kumar (2014:177), this type of interview is extremely useful for exploring intensively and extensively, and for digging deeper into a situation, phenomenon, issue or problem. The researcher is therefore responsible for reading out the questions and recording the responses by making notes and also observing the respondents' body language when responding to the questions. In this study, respondents were selected based on their expert knowledge with regard to legislative and regulatory requirements of public participation within Tlokwe City Council. This study therefore chose a specific population which comprises the manager at the executive mayors' office, the IDP manager, manager at the Speakers' office and the council Chief-Whip. The semi-structured interviews were conducted by visiting each of the respondents' offices and having face-to-face interviews with the aforementioned officials. Using

semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to listen attentively to the respondents whilst making notes of the interviewees' responses. According to Greef (2011:348), the researcher in semi-structured interview should be neither tries to be objective nor detached, but should rather be engaged. This means that the researcher has to show a willingness to understand the participant's response to a question in the wider context of the interview as a whole. The researcher also has the opportunity to ask follow-up questions for clarification purposes in order to probe for greater clarity and accuracy.

- **Focus groups** are referred to as group interviews, as highlighted in chapter one of this study. Bryman (2012:502) states that the focus group method is a form of interview in which there are several participants (in addition to the moderator/facilitator); there is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular fairly tightly defined topic; and the accent is on interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning. Furthermore, a focus group contains elements of two methods: the group interview, in which several people discuss a number of topics; and what has been called a focus group interview, in which interviewees are selected because they 'are known to have been involved in a particular situation' and are asked about that involvement. The following applies to this:
 - o Ward committee members 'are known to be involved in a particular situation'; the situation in this regard is that they are in a position to respond to ward committee related questions as per the questions asked by the researcher (see annexure C) relating to their roles and functions as ward committees in Tlokwe City Council.
 - o Two aspects were highlighted in chapter one of this study that are important to consider when using focus groups. Firstly, the researcher must consider the recording of data. For the purpose of this study, the researcher relied heavily in the support of Honours students in terms of the recording of data. Due to the researcher being the moderator/facilitator during the focus group discussions, the Honours students were responsible for recording the discussions using smartphones and also taking notes. One of the Masters' students also assisted in data collection and taking notes on behalf of the researcher. The data recorded was transcribed for purposes of data analysis. The researcher had to act as the moderator/facilitator because of the language used during the discussion. The predominant language used during the focus group

discussion was Setswana, while some of the respondents such as ward councillor(s) responding to a number of the questions in English. The researcher had to read the questions as they are written on the questionnaire and then repeat them in the vernacular language so that all the members in the group could understand and respond adequately to the questions. This was also done to make everyone feel comfortable and to make them feel that they did not have to respond in English.

- o Secondly, the researcher had to use more than one group to ensure that saturation is achieved. Initially, the study was supposed to comprise of six focus groups to allow for saturation. Clearly, it was unlikely that only one group would satisfy the needs of the researcher, since there is always the possibility that the responses are particular to that one group. According to Bryman (2012:505), time and resources are factors here, but there are strong arguments for saying that too many groups would also be a waste of time. As stated in chapter one of this study, six ward committees would initially have been used in this study. However, due to time and the inability of the researcher to get hold of certain ward committees, the researcher used only four available ward committee focus groups for this study. Calder (in Bryman, 2012:505) proposed that, when the moderator/facilitator reached the point that he or she is able to anticipate fairly accurately what the next group is going to say, then there are probably enough groups already. From the responses that the researcher had already received from the two ward committees' focus group interviews, it was clear that the other group's responses would not be far off from the ones already received. It could then be argued that even with the use of six ward committees the discussions would have yielded the same or fairly similar responses.
- There are limitations with regard to using focus groups as highlighted in chapter one of this study. For example, the researcher has less control over the proceedings than when using one-on-one interviews. This is however only true to a certain extent, because as a moderator/facilitator the manner in which you control the proceedings can determine how much information one obtains from the respondents. The researcher did not experience any challenges in terms of facilitating the proceedings at either one of the groups. Information can also be difficult to analyse and to extract meaning from discussion may be complex. The

researcher in this regard probed for accurate responses to all the questions asked in order to make it easier to transcribe the responses for purposes of data analysis. Respondents did not provide similar responses to one question, and thus the researcher had to make sure that all the responses were captured and transcribed for purpose of data analysis.

- Focus groups are difficult to organise as they are time-consuming and require resources that may be expensive. With regard to organising the respective ward committees that took part in the study, the researcher relied heavily on the office of the Speaker in the Tlokwe City Council. The official assisted the researcher in determining when the respective ward committees would be holding their monthly ward committee meetings, and requested the ward councillor to allow the researcher to begin with the research questionnaire before the councillors could commence with the ward committee meeting. This was a challenge because some meetings took place during the same days while other councillors cancelled their meetings without the knowledge of the researcher. Due to some councillors not having the proper facilities to hold their meetings, meetings were held in the councillor's homes - either in the living room or the garage. The time spent with the different groups varied depending on how active members were in responding to the questions.
- According to Jarbandhan and Schutte (2006:680), respondents may provide ambiguous responses to questions. It is therefore the responsibility of the moderator/facilitator to ensure that questions are clarified for purposes of having more accurate and unambiguous responses from respondents.
- The purpose of using focus groups in this study was primarily to investigate the perceptions that ward committee members have regarding the responsibilities and functions of ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council area of jurisdiction.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

In a number of cases, regardless of the nature of the research paradigm, there is some work left for analysis after completion of data collection (Sarantakos, 2005:345). This means that before analysis of data there should be data collection. According to Bryman (2012:565), one of the main difficulties with qualitative research is that is very rapidly

generates a large, cumbersome database because of its reliance in prose in the form of such media as field notes, interview transcripts, or other documents.

For purposes of this study, analysis begins when the narration, debate and transcription have been completed. The researcher has considered the viewpoints of different authors as required by Brynard and Hanekom (1997:55). Once the data collected using semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews has been transcribed, it was ready to be analysed. The researcher was now aided with formulating a personal explanation of the phenomenon under investigation, because the different viewpoints of the different authors have been analysed and there is a subsequent integration of the views from the data collected using semi-structured interviews and focus groups

The responses from the interviews have been grouped into meaningful classifications that have significance for the purpose of this study. The researcher is confident that data collected can contribute to a fairly objective analysis of the findings.

4.4.1 *Thematic analysis*

For purposes of analysing responses from the senior officials at the Tlokwe City Council, the researcher needed to follow a thematic analysis approach based on the thematic manner in which the questions were asked to the officials. The research questions for the senior officials were classified according to themes, where each theme had its respective questions based on the research objectives of this study and also on concepts highlighted in chapter two of this study (see annexure B).

Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006:6) as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes one's data set in detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and it interprets various aspects of the research topic.

The themes identified in this study are derived from concepts that form the basis of this study, as can be seen in annexure B. Local democracy, public participation and ward committees are key concepts that form the foundational basis of this study. The researcher has opted to follow a thematic method of analysis when dealing with the research findings from senior officials as highlighted above.

4.4.2 Ensuring reliability and validity by means of Triangulation

Triangulation was used to ensure the reliability and validity of data in this study. Triangulation entails collecting material in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible. This can help researchers to 'home in' on a better understanding of a phenomenon by approaching it from several different angles (Kelly, 2006:287). According to Olsen (2004:3), mixing data types, known as data triangulation, is often thought to help to validate the claims that might arise from an initial pilot study.

The validity of this study depends on the literature review that was undertaken, together with the semi-structured interviews and focus groups that were used to collect factual information to achieve the research objectives of this study. The strategic recommendations that are proposed in this study, as highlighted in chapter one, are based on the research findings from the data collected and not on the researcher's opinion. A literature review and perspectives from senior officials together with the respective ward committee members within the Tlokwe City Council should therefore prove to be sufficient to validate the gathered data in order to provide strategic recommendations for more effective functioning of ward committees within the greater Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overall description of the research methodology, including the appropriate design followed to respond to the problem statement and research objectives of this study. The motivation for a descriptive design was substantiated. The qualitative research design was considered the most suitable to obtain the research objectives of this study and substantive arguments of motivation were tabled as well.

Data collection and data analysis methods were also substantiated and motivated. The study was in favour of using semi-structured interviews to interview senior officials involved in public participation processes as well as focus group interviews to ascertain from ward committees what the challenges were in terms of their effective functioning. Information pertaining to the sample and population was also provided.

The next chapter includes a detailed overview of the research results, data analysis, the findings and interpretation thereof in relation to the theoretical literature discussions made in chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 5

CHALLENGES FACED BY WARD COMMITTEES WITHIN TLOKWE CITY COUNCIL: RESEARCH RESULTS AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter of this study presented the research methodology followed in this dissertation. This chapter presents the empirical findings and analysis to explore the challenges in terms of effective functioning of ward committees and, furthermore, to explore the concerns of respective ward committee members. The secondary objective thus to be addressed in this chapter, as stated in chapter one, was to determine the particular challenges facing effective ward committee functioning within the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction.

5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

As noted in the previous chapter, semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior municipal officials and focus group interviews were conducted with 4 ward committees. Six ward committees were initially targeted, but eventually only four participated. This number still represents a good rate of participation of at least 60% of targeted respondents.

The data that was gathered is presented in the following sequence: firstly, the interviews with senior officials are addressed, and secondly, the focus group interviews with ward committees are dealt with.

5.2.1 Biographical details of senior municipal officials spearheading public participation in Tlokwe City Council

Senior officials responsible for the facilitation and management of public participation, including effective ward committee functioning, were targeted to participate in this research. The officials included representatives from the offices of the Municipal Manager, Council Chief Whip, Executive Mayor and Speaker. The researcher selected the officials based on their expert knowledge with regard to the legislative and regulatory requirements for public participation and ward committee functioning. Four interviews were thus conducted by means of purposive sampling, as explained above,

since these officials had expert knowledge with regard to public participation and ward committee functioning. Significant to note is that all four senior officials were male - with no female managers in any of the targeted offices. An assumption can thus be made that the municipality has yet to empower and promote women to managerial positions. The officials had among the four of them a combined experience of 23 years. Their qualifications include a degree in Financial Management, a degree in Theology, a Master's in Public Administration and an Honours degree in Educational Sciences, respectively.

Based on the experience and qualifications of the respondents, apart from the fact that there were only males involved at senior management level responsible for public participation, the Tlokwe City Council seems to be in a position to deal effectively with the facilitation of public participation.

5.2.2 Core themes discussion from interviews with senior officials involved in facilitation of public participation and ward committees

As outlined, the interviews with senior officials are discussed according to thematic analysis. The four main themes are:

- Theme 1: Local Democracy;
- Theme 2: Public Participation;
- Theme 3: Ward Committee Functioning; and
- Theme 4: Leadership.

5.2.2.1 Theme 1: Local Democracy

This theme was discussed in detail in section 2.3 in chapter two of this dissertation. The purpose of the theme was to determine the extent to which the officials understood the significance of local democracy and to establish the efforts taken by the municipality to ensure the successful inclusion of the public and community in municipal decision-making.

Three interrelated questions were posed to respondents in order to establish their knowledge relating to uplifting democracy, specifically local democracy in the municipality. These questions were also posed to identify challenges associated with effective local democracy in the local sphere of government.

Both Sections 152 (1) (a) and (e) of the Constitution propound the establishment of a democratic dispensation for local government, which is predicated on the concepts of representation, accountability and people-centred governance. The involvement of communities and community organisation in local government as well as the onus on local government to encourage and facilitate such is part of this democracy (De Visser, 2005:70).

Question 1.1: *Democracy is an important concept in South Africa and the principles thereof need to be upheld by all spheres of government. Has Tlokwe City Council been able to uphold the principles of democracy in local government? Motivate how.*

Reponses to Question 1.1

The respondents noted the significance of local democracy as a principle of local government. The respondent from the Chief Whip's Office stated that

“Tlokwe City Council is a democratic institution of local government governed by the laws of the Republic of South Africa and that whatever decisions made which impact on the lives of the local community; those decisions must be taken in consultation with those communities”.

Furthermore, the four respondents agreed that local democracy is a legal imperative in the municipality. In order to make sure that local democracy is upheld in the municipality, the municipality has to bring the public on board. Thus, no decision can be made by Council to accept (a) by-law(s) without having had public participation meetings, which is the cornerstone of local democracy. To further prove that the municipality has and will continue to uphold the principle of local democracy, one can acknowledge the fact that local elections do take place within the municipality. Various stakeholders participate in decision-making processes through the media and other relevant platforms. With regard to local elections, even though the municipality is not in charge of the elections, the municipality has what is called municipal electoral officers who form the link between the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the municipality. The municipality must make infrastructure available in order for the IEC to conduct the elections. School halls, community halls and other available spaces are made available for purposes of local elections. The municipality is also responsible for

making electricity available at these venues; in other words, everything necessary to make the elections run effectively and efficiently is the responsibility of the municipality.

In terms of the law, the municipality needs to go out on processes when compiling the budget, which is currently the case. When compiling the IDP, the same process is followed because the budget needs to be aligned with the IDP. Both processes run concurrently. The municipality has also established the IDP representative forum which comprises of business, government departments, the municipality itself, churches and so forth. In this regard, the municipality does give people an opportunity to participate. Ward councillors are also responsible for having monthly meetings with community members. The respondent in the municipal manager's office gave the following example,

"... when you enhance democracy it means the municipality needs to empower local citizens through different skills that need to be developed in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, chapter 4 subsection 16, which indicates that the municipality in its budget must make funds available for the empowerment of the officials in the municipality, empowerment of councillors and the empowerment of the community".

However, there still seems to be a long way to go in terms of enhancing local democracy. The Tlokwe municipality is still lacking in terms of ensuring that the process actually takes place. What the municipality has been able to do is call public meetings - but these are not enough in terms of enhancing local democracy. The municipality needs to expand the communities' different skills so that they (the community) can be able to hold the municipality accountable as a local municipality. In terms of ward councillors' meetings, not all the ward councillors have the monthly meetings as regularly as they should as per the regulations, more especially the wards in Town. Despite these challenges, the municipality is at the stage of developing a policy that can actually lead the municipality to the right direction with respect to community development skills.

In terms of the responses from all four respondents, it can be deduced that they are aware of the significance of upholding local democracy in local government, and specifically in the Tlokwe City Council. As stated in section 2.3.3 of this study, local democracy denotes a political system in which the eligible people in a society participate actively, not only in determining the kind of people who govern them, but

also to participate actively in shaping the policy output of government. The importance of local government as the basis of all structures of governance and the universal quest for a stable democratic society cannot be overemphasised.

Question 1.2: *Explain how the Batho Pele principles are utilised in the achievement of local democracy in Tlokwe City Council?*

Response to Question 1.2

According to the respondent in the Office of the Speaker, the *Batho Pele* principles are considered to be the “*Bible*” of the municipality. Before any employee can be employed by the municipality, he or she is required to understand and know the principles of *Batho Pele*. Despite this, one might view the municipality as a stakeholder that is actually not doing enough in terms of ensuring that these principles are adhered to. According to the respondent in the municipal manager’s office,

“... the municipality has not gone to the extent of making sure that these principles are actually adhered to”.

The respondent further states that the municipality has failed in monitoring whether these principles are being adhered to, and to also make sure that the people understand these principles. The respondent from the Chief Whip’s office admitted that at times one does not find joy with some of the officials when coming to the adherence of the principles, but for the most part, the officials understand that the people come first.

The principles of *Batho Pele*, as encapsulated by the *Batho Pele* White Paper were discussed in section 3.2.6 of this study. Important to note from the responses provided by the respondents is that not all employees employed by the municipality are upholding the *Batho Pele* principles.

Question 1.3: *In your opinion, what are the challenges associated with effective local democracy in the local government sphere?*

Response to Question 1.3

According to the respondent in the executive mayor’s office, the challenges associated with effective local democracy in local government are plenty. Local democracy is expensive. Furthermore, local government is a highly regulated sphere of government

and one of the challenges pertaining to local democracy is with respect to these laws that regulate local government. Because of this, officials within the municipality often find themselves in a position where they attempt to comply with legislation whereas officials should be doing their other work. Thus, the nature and extent of the local government legislation proves to be a challenge. With regard to local democracy being expensive, the official from the executive mayor's office noted that it costs a lot of money to adhere to effective local democracy and the challenge then becomes the budget.

One of the most pressing challenges, according to the respondent in the Office of the Speaker is literacy, especially amongst the disabled. Residents who are not literate find it impossible to understand local government legislation - including municipal by-laws. The functionality of ward committees in terms of resources such as office space, transport and communication is also a challenge in terms of effective local democracy.

The respondent in the Municipal Managers' office identified capacity-building as a solution to some of the above-mentioned challenges. The municipality needs to ensure that there is a relationship with other organs of civil society so that they are the ones that render skills development services, since the municipality is not best suited to provide such skills. However, the municipality does make resources available, engages with institutions of higher learning, and engages with other NGO's and CBO's to provide accredited courses so that skills development can take place. Developing skills is not limited to calling public meetings and ensuring that people come to those meetings; it involves building skills around different areas such as financial management. Skills development is important because skilled people are better able to hold the municipality accountable; and this will ensure effective and efficient local democracy.

Local democracy was defined in chapter two, section 2.3.3 of this study as democracy at the grassroots level, and this bares significant implications for municipalities. Local democracy entails that municipalities should be able to allocate and distribute public goods based on the preference and needs of the people. The respondents acknowledged that the municipality needs to have a relationship with the community and individuals within the community as part of upholding local democracy standards. It can be deduced that the officials in the municipality are aware of the challenges hampering effective local democracy in the Tlokwe City Council. Despite the above-mentioned challenges, the respondents' knowledge and experience place them in a

much better position to be able to deal with the aforementioned challenges so that they can help to advance local democracy in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction.

5.2.2.2 Theme 2: Public Participation

Public participation forms the cornerstone of local democracy and was discussed in detail in section 2.4, chapter two of this study. Interrelated questions were posed to the respondents regarding the significance of public participation as a theme in order to determine how significant officials considered public participation in the municipality. The questions were also posed in order to determine the knowledge of the officials regarding public participation so that the researcher could compare this with the literature survey presented in chapter two, section 2.4 of this study.

Question 2.1: *What comes to your mind when you hear/think about the concept "Public Participation"?*

Response to Question 2.1

"Public participation, simply put, is government of the people by the people for the people"

These were the words of the respondent in the Chief Whip's Office. Furthermore, public participation is the engagement with stakeholders, engagement with the community, engagement with other organs of civil society and engagement with government. One cannot focus on public participation without practicing the concept developmental local government which must take into account the views of the people whom the municipality represents.

All four respondents agreed that municipalities cannot move forward without entertaining the idea of public participation. The municipality must hear the views of the public on matters because they have a vested interest. The municipality has frameworks set up as to how people are going to participate and how they are going to be empowered. However, according to the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office, the manner in which public participation is done within the municipality entails simply calling a public meeting as a form of public participation. However, this is not really public participation. It is merely gathering people and conveying information to them. Rather, if one refers to the concept public participation, the development of skills

is important, as well as building relations with stakeholders, and making money available for the empowerment of the community.

From the responses provided by officials concerning public participation, it could be concluded that their responses are similar to the operational definition provided in section 2.4.1 of this study which was framed as: *a process that provides individuals with an opportunity to influence public decisions that are made at every sphere of government*. This finding confirms that all four respondents are aware of what is meant when one refers to public participation and also acknowledged the significance thereof in local government.

Question 2.2: *How has public participation helped to enhance local democracy in Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction?*

Response to Question 2.2

According to the respondent in the Chief Whip's Office,

"... public participation has brought about peace and stability in the municipality".

The municipality is one of the few municipalities where there is a serious absence of public protests, marches and the like. In terms of policy developments, public participation has allowed more people to be part of the IDP process, whereas in the past this was not possible as there were no plans in place for this. Public participation has enhanced the delivery of services in the municipality because people are directly involved. Running water and electricity were some of the biggest service delivery challenges based on people's needs. Residents in the municipal jurisdiction got what they wanted because of the pressure they put on Council.

However, even with such success stories, public participation still remains a challenge. The municipality must be in a position to engage with institutions of higher learning as indicated in terms of what their contribution may be towards building and enhancing local democracy; but also by broadening public participation. The availability of funds remains a much more significant challenge. The municipality seems unable to budget properly in order to make funds available for community empowerment as required by legislation.

Public participation, as noted in section 2.3.3 of this study, is the cornerstone of local democracy. The responses from the officials suggest that local democracy cannot

succeed without public participation. From the responses provided, it can be deduced that all four respondents understand the role that public participation plays in maintaining peace and stability in the municipality. Furthermore, the four respondents acknowledged that the municipality was able to provide the above mentioned services due to pressure from the residents - this is because the residents are principal users and clients of municipal services and should thus be valued by the municipality.

Question 2.3: *Is public participation a transparent way in which to involve the public in the IDP process as well as the municipal budgeting process?*

Response to Question 2.3

Public participation is supposed to be a transparent process. When the municipality engages people, this is done because the municipality needs the support of the public. The IDP process in Tlokwe Municipality is fair and transparent. The budget process has its difficulties; however, since the budget must speak to the IDP targets, and the like. Most of the time this is a major battle in local government; in other words, aligning the budget with the IDP. The municipality has to start its budget from ZERO BUDGETING because sometimes the municipality budgets in line with how the trend has been; and this might not be in line with the views of the people. Nonetheless, the budget in this regard is considered to be an internal process which does not actually involve the community. It is important for the municipality to make sure that during the continuation of skills development, and part of this development is in teaching the public about the budgeting process so that they may be able to start asking questions. This remains a challenge because the municipality is presiding over a community that does not know that they should be part of the process for setting performance targets in the municipality.

Public participation, as highlighted in section 2.4.3 of this study, can only take place when there are effective and efficient channels of communication between local government and the community. From the responses provided by the respondents, indeed public participation should be a transparent process when it comes to the IDP and the municipal budget process. However, based on the responses provided, residents are only involved in the IDP process. This suggests that the community is limited in terms of engaging in the municipal budget process as noted by the responses.

It is the responsibility of residents to ensure that the business plans and budget of the municipality are based on and linked to the IDP. The response provided by the respondents with reference to the budget being an internal process can thus not be condoned. Public participation in Tlokwe must not be limited to the IDP; the budget process must also be transparent in order to ensure a link between the two processes.

Question 2.4: Do you think the community of Tlokwe City Council understands public participation, i.e. their role and responsibilities?

Response to Question 2.4

Not all respondents seemed to agree whether the public understood public participation. The respondent in the Executive Mayor's office responded by simply stating that the public does have sufficient understanding of public participation. This notion was supported by the respondent in the Chief Whip's office who responded by saying that the public does understand its role better; and one can see this when communities rise in pursuit of their rights. However, the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office is of the opinion that the public does not understand its role when coming to public participation. The respondent further noted that the municipality has a substantively complacent public. The lack of understanding in terms of their roles and responsibilities is visible when given and afforded the opportunity to participate in matters of local government. According to him, the public does not know that they can hold provincial government accountable when it comes to issues of housing. The public is also not well versed in issues of local government and thus they are unable to hold the municipality accountable. With regard to housing in particular, it was noted that some of the houses built are not according to the required standards and the people do not know that they can hold the province accountable for this.

The respondent in the Office of the Speaker once again highlighted literacy as a challenge when it comes to the community in terms of their role and responsibilities regarding public participation. Tlokwe City Council has 26 ward committees. Some ward committee members are not knowledgeable and this in turn affects the entire community. This problem is visible when it comes to addressing issues and putting inputs forward. The reports received with "*No Comments*" (meaning ward committees did not go over the drafts) speak volumes regarding their knowledge based on their roles and responsibilities.

The responses provided by the four respondents indicate that they had different views as to whether community members understood their roles and responsibilities in public participation. Two of the respondents hold the view that the community does understand their roles and responsibilities when it came to public participation, while the other two respondents shared opposite views. The respondents concurred that there are challenges relating to upholding local democracy as well as the significance of public participation in the municipality. Reasons were provided by the two respondents as to why they were of the view that the community did not understand their roles and responsibilities regarding public participation. The responses provided in question 1.3 by the respondent in the Speakers' office relating to literacy could again be the reason as to why some community members do not understand public participation. However, it can be deduced from the above-mentioned responses that there was not even consensus among senior municipal officials on whether the community understood their roles and responsibilities in public participation.

Question 2.5: *Is there a need for training/retraining and skilling/reskilling of municipal officials to improve the level of public participation within the municipality?*

Response to Question 2.5

All four respondents agreed that there is a need for training and retraining as well as skilling and reskilling of municipal officials. Communities are dynamic and change all the time. To keep abreast of the dynamics within a community, including considerations of cultures and sub-cultures, different groupings, the municipality needs to retrain and reskill officials. The respondent in the Municipal Managers' office noted that there are officials within the municipality who are not conversant when it comes to issues of *Batho Pele* principles, public participation and so forth. Such officials' skills should be sharpened through skills development, because the main purpose why they work in a municipality is to make sure that the needs of the residents are catered for - and not their personal interests. Furthermore, officials need to be reminded of their roles and contributions to the residents as most tend to forget their roles within the municipality.

In terms of the above responses, the researcher can deduce that all four respondents agreed that training/retraining and skilling/reskilling of municipal officials is critical to improve the level of public participation in the municipality. The advantages of public participation were highlighted in section 2.4.3 of this study. Various challenges

concerning local democracy and public participation were similarly highlighted by the Tlokwe City Council senior officials in their responses. Thus, the deduction can be made that based on the identified challenges, that the respondents are indeed correct to suggest that training/retraining and skilling/reskilling are necessary in order to improve public participation.

Question 2.6: *Please mention/elucidate on the different kinds of mechanisms used to encourage public participation in TLM?*

Response to Question 2.6

According to the respondents, there are quite a number of mechanisms that the municipality utilises in order to encourage public participation. The Office of the Speaker is responsible for public participation and good governance, as highlighted in chapter three of this study. The respondent in the Speakers' office highlighted ward committees as the primary mechanism that the municipality utilises in order to enhance public participation. However, ward committees alone do not serve as the only mechanism for public participation. The four respondents all made mention of the mechanisms highlighted in chapter one of this study, such as the mayoral *Izimbizos* (public meetings), the IDP Representative Forum and the like.

The respondent in the Executive Mayor's office referred to Section 80 committees. These are committees set up to enhance public participation accordingly within the executive. Furthermore, the Executive Mayor has a number of committees, such as moral committees that advise on how to participate in moral/religious issues; business fraternities that provide input on certain business-related matters, and so on. Then there is the IGR forum which also gets input from government on different spheres.

From the responses provided, it can be deduced that all four respondents were aware of the various mechanisms available in order to encourage public participation. It is important to note that these mechanisms are not limited to the Office of the Speaker as the office responsible to encourage public participation; the Executive Mayor also has mechanisms available in order to encourage public participation.

Question 2.7: *IGR Forums are structures to provide a place for discussions and consultation on areas requiring cooperation between government spheres. Is Tlokwe City Council partaking in such a forum and how has this helped the promotion of public participation?*

Response to Question 2.7

Not only is the Tlokwe City Council partaking in the IGR forum; it is the leader of this forum with the Executive Mayor as the chairperson of the forum. According to the respondent in the Municipal Managers' office, the IGR is in actual fact a sound concept. However, this respondent believes that the forum fails to achieve on specific mandates. For example, there is supposed to be an IGR for both the district municipality and provincial government. The respondent admitted to having taken part in the IGR forum, and is of the opinion that with this forum the municipality is able to include the overall plans of different sectors in its municipal plans. The advantage of the forum, according to the respondent in the Executive Mayor's office, is that different tiers of government have the opportunity to inform one another of their respective plans.

However, despite the need for this forum, the respondent in the Municipal Managers' office is of the opinion that the forum is not as effective as it should be, and that the Tlokwe City Council should re-establish this forum so that it becomes more effective and efficient.

It can be deduced that the IGR forum is considered to be a good structure by all the respondents. However, not all the respondents agreed that the forum is functioning as effectively as it should, and thus consensus with respect to the functionality of the forum could not be reached among the respondents.

5.2.2.3 Theme 3: Ward Committees

Ward committees, as discussed in chapters one and two of this study with and also in chapter three which specifically highlights ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction, are the primary mechanisms used by Tlokwe City Council to enhance public participation in the municipality. The respondents were asked questions regarding the functionality of ward committees within the municipality in order to clarify the effective and efficient functioning of these.

Question 3.1: *Ward Committees are the primary mechanisms to enhance public participation in Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction. In your opinion, have ward committees been an asset or liability towards the municipality's community development? I.e., are they lacking, improving, good, or not good at all?*

Response to Question 3.1

According to the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office, ward committees are statutory committees or bodies that are set up by municipalities. The four respondents agreed that ward committees are an asset for the municipality. Ward committees, according to the respondents, are the immediate eyes and ears of government and the representatives of the people. The ward councillor, as already highlighted in chapters one, two and three of this study, is the chairperson of the committee and must make sure that the committee sits every month. Ward committees help in dissemination of information. Ward committees, through the ward councillor, also bring information to council and make council aware of conflict areas and problems in and around the municipal jurisdiction. In this sense, they are an asset to the municipality.

However, according to the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office, ward committees are not representative of the diverse community as per the requirements and criteria for setting up ward committees (see chapter two, section 2.5.2 for composition of ward committees). The respondent is of the opinion that some of the ward committees are an extension of political parties and therefore represent the interests of the political party and not the needs and interests of the people. Furthermore, ward committees need to be developed in terms of their members' skills. The four respondents agreed that the training provided to the ward committees is not adequate in terms of developing their skills.

From the responses provided, it is important to note that the respondents understand that ward committees are a legislative requirement and imperative in the municipality. The significance of public participation in enhancing local democracy was addressed in section 2.5.1 in chapter two of this study where it was stated that the effective functioning of ward committees is important to allow for a more democratic local government. Van der Waldt (2010:42) as stated in section 2.5.1 in chapter two of this study, indicated that the challenge for ward committees is to ensure that they work in a way that brings out the diverse needs and interests that exist within a particular ward.

From the responses provided by the respondents, the researcher can deduce that ward committees in Tlokwe Municipality are not representative of the diverse community as required by legislation. Furthermore, the training provided to ward committees can be viewed as inadequate; meaning that the municipality, specifically the Speakers' Office, needs to do more with respect to providing adequate training in order to facilitate effective ward committee functioning.

Question 3.2: Are they (ward committees) representative of the diverse community, i.e. women, youth, disabled, etc.? How would you describe the composition of ward committees?

Response to Question 3.2

The respondent from the Chief Whip's Office stated that

"... it is a requirement that ward committees should reflect the diversity within a community".

The respondent further stated that there is not a problem with the composition of ward committees in the municipality, despite the previous response by the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office regarding the composition of ward committees in the municipality. According to the respondent in the Speakers' Office,

"... the actual composition of ward committees is not focused and is more politicised".

With respect to the disabled residents within the municipality, the respondent in the Office of the Speaker stated that the former manager at the Office of the Speaker during his tenure ensured that the disabled received an office to represent the disabled in the communities. This office located within the Executive Mayor's office.

The four respondents noted the lack of youth involvement in ward committees as a challenge in the municipality. The youth is also required to take part in ward committees as per the composition of ward committees as noted in chapter two, section 2.5.1 of this study. The involvement of the youth, according to the respondent in the Speakers' Office, could increase development in terms of sports, arts and culture within the municipality. In the previous responses, the respondents from the Speakers' Office and Municipal Manager's office respectively, stated that some of the ward committees were extensions of political parties. Echoing the same sentiments, the respondents also

agreed that some members of the community that were elected to be part of ward committees were only there to represent themselves or to represent a certain formation within the community.

From the above given responses, it can be deduced that ward committee composition within the Tlokwe City Council fails to meet the required composition as set out in chapter two, section 2.5.1 of this study. It can further be deduced that ward committees face various challenges in terms of addressing the diverse needs and interests of the community.

Question 3.3: Are ward committees knowledgeable when it comes to local government legislation and council by-laws?

Response to Question 3.3

According to the respondent in the Office of the Speaker, each ward councillor as chairperson of the ward committee is provided with the Local Government Library which comprises of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and other related Legislative Acts. The respondent in the office of the Speaker further stated that workshops are conducted with all stakeholders and ward committees in relation to public participation, with specific training provided to ward committees. The respondent in the Chief Whip's office also emphasised on the workshops provided to ward committees with respect to local government legislation and with regard to their own responsibilities, i.e. what ward committees are supposed to do and so forth.

Despite the Office of the Speaker providing workshops and training to ward committees, the respondent from the Executive Mayor's office stated that

"... not all of the ward committees are knowledgeable when it came to local government legislation and council by-laws".

The respondent in the Municipal Manager's office shared the same sentiments as that of the respondent in the Executive Mayor's office. The respondent attributed ward committees' lack of knowledge to not having proper infrastructure such as offices where they can function. Furthermore, ward committees are unable to refer to legislation and council by-laws when dealing with community problems

Ward committee legislation and regulation in South Africa are listed in Table 3 and 4 respectively in chapter three, section 3.2 of this study. With regard to ward committee

functions as stated in chapter three, section 3.3.1 of this study, ward committees should be involved in matters such as the IDP which requires that ward committees be knowledgeable when it comes to council IDP processes, local government legislation and council by-laws.

From the responses provided by the four respondents, it can be deduced that the two respondents in the office of the Speaker and Chief Whip's office agreed that ward committees are knowledgeable when it comes to local government legislation and council by-laws thanks to the workshops and training provided by the office of the Speaker. However, despite workshops and training being provided to ward committees, the two respondents in the Municipal Manager's office and Executive Mayor's office did not share the same sentiments as the previous respondents; they stated that despite efforts in terms of workshops and training, some ward committee members were still unable to interpret local government legislation and council by-laws. Thus, there was no consensus among the respondents with respect to ward committees' knowledge when coming to local government legislation and council by-laws.

Question 3.4: In your opinion, what are some of the challenges facing the effective functioning of ward committees in Tlokwe City Council?

Response to Question 3.4

From the point of view of the respondent in the Office of the Speaker, challenges facing ward committees are plenty. The respondent singled out the implementation of ward plans as a challenge. In the previous response, the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office stated that lack of infrastructure such as office space contributed to a lack of knowledge by ward committees. The respondent in the office of the Speaker concurred that the lack of resources and infrastructure discouraged ward committees and rendered them ineffective.

However, according to the respondent in the Executive Mayor's office, there are indeed offices which are being constructed for ward committees with three offices to be constructed each year. Ward committees will thus become easily accessible by the community as there will be an address. Ward committees will be able to hold their meetings in those offices instead of having meetings in someone's home.

Other challenges highlighted by the four respondents include making resources available to ward committees. Payment as a form of support to ward committees was

also highlighted as a challenge. The respondent in the Executive Mayor's office stated that council could not agree on when ward committees should get paid and, in order to resolve this challenge, council came to a resolution have an attendance register for all ward committees so that ward committee members are paid as per their attendance in their respective wards.

The respondent in the Municipal Manager's office is of the opinion that ward committee members should be elected based on their level of understanding or higher qualification, without neglecting those that would want to participate. The respondent further stated that the current method of electing ward committee members was not effective because members are elected in a meeting. There are no criteria for what is required from ward committee members, and therefore some ward committee structures are not functional, while others are often at loggerheads with the councillor and other not working due to them being extensions of political parties.

From the various responses provided by the respondents, it can be deduced that ward committees face plenty of challenges in the municipality. It also emerged that the four respondents agreed that there are plenty of challenges that need to be addressed in order for ward committees to function effectively.

Question 3.5: Are you aware of any complaints from communities regarding the effective functioning and meaningful contribution of ward committees?

Response to Question 3.5

Respondents from the Executive Mayor's office and Chief Whip stated that they had no knowledge of any complaints regarding the effective functioning of ward committees from communities. However, the respondents from the Office of the Speaker and Municipal Manager's office agreed that complaints regarding the effective functioning of ward committees coming from communities were plenty.

The respondent from the Office of the Speaker noted that the ordinary residents of various wards know who their ward committee members are and launch their complaints with the relevant portfolio within the committee. However, residents often feel that their complaints are not taken into consideration; hence they come directly to the office of the Speaker to complain. Most of these complaints, according to the respondent, are substantive and make sense. Complaints are typically about basic services such as water, sanitation, infrastructure and the like).

From the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office, it emerged that some of the complaints relate to the behaviour of some ward committee members who behave as though they are the ward councillor. Furthermore, ward committee members are at times not accessible. Some councillors often find themselves in conflict with some of the ward committee members, which results in delayed responses to residents' needs and interests. The respondent in the Municipal Manager's office referred back to the previous responses with regard to ward committees being used as political party extensions as the course of the conflict between members of the committee and the councillors as the chairperson of the ward.

From the responses provided, it can be deduced that residents of respective wards end up suffering as the available reporting structures for complaints are not functional and thus residents of the community end up having to lodge their complaints directly at the municipal offices.

Question 3.6: *What support do ward committees receive from the Municipal Council and/or Office of the Speaker?*

Response to Question 3.6

According to the respondent in the Chief Whip's office, support provided by council is minimal as it is the responsibility of the office of the speaker to provide the necessary support to ward committees. The following, according to the respondent in the office of the Speaker, is the support for ward committees as provided by the Office of the Speaker:

- Stipend of R750 a month.
- Stationery.
- Transport to various council meeting, be it special of ordinary council meetings, (IDP and budget meetings).
- Ward committee offices are being constructed in Ikageng for residents to access members easily and also to provide space for monthly meetings.
- Pay for out of pocket expenses as determined by Council.

In figure 5 of chapter three of this study, the organisational structure of the Office of the Speaker of the Tlokwe City Council was provided in response to the fact that ward committees are the sole responsibility of the Office of the Speaker and therefore Council provides minimal support to ward committees.

Respondents confirmed that a stipend was indeed paid to ward committee members by the Office of the Speaker.

Question 3.7: *Where does Council stand in terms of Ward Committees remuneration?*

Response to Question 3.7

According to the respondent in the Office of the Speaker, this office is considering increasing the stipend for ward committees to R1000 once Council approves the budget. The respondent from the Executive Mayor's office highlighted the support that Council had in terms of remunerating ward committees as part of their support ward committees. The respondent from the Chief Whip's office noted that Council would support the increase provided that this increase is consistent with other increases that will be included in the budget.

From the responses, it can be deduced that the Tlokwe City Council is for the increase of ward committee members' stipend, provided that the increase is in line with other increases in the municipality.

Question 3.8: *Is there a lack of professional participation in ward committees due to it functioning on a voluntary basis?*

Response to Question 3.8

Pertaining to this question, the respondents have confirmed that: "there is indeed a lack of participation in ward committees". With respect to professional participation in ward committees, the respondents in the Office of the Speaker and Chief Whip's office singled out teachers as the most involved professionals in ward committees. However, the respondents agreed that there were more professionals participating in ward committees in town wards and not in those wards located in the township. The respondent in the office of the Speaker is of the opinion that professionals are generally not interested in being members of ward committees, with the exception of those wards based in town, which is where one finds the most professionals taking part in ward committees.

The respondent in the Municipal Manager's office stated that the municipality has good initiatives that it would want to undertake, and often these initiatives require people who are in professional bodies, such as academics, business people and the like.

From the above responses provided, the researcher can deduce that due to a lack of professional participation in ward committees, their ability to function effectively is hampered. It can further be deduced that involvement from professional members of communities, more so in township communities, would be perhaps be in a position to interpret council documents correctly and they would be in a better position to understand the processes involved in how council operates and function.

Question 3.9: *Have you seen any improvements in service delivery as a result of effective functioning of ward committees?*

Response to Question 3.9

According to the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office,

"... service delivery and effective functioning of ward committees are two different things".

With respect to service delivery, the respondent agreed that indeed the municipality is providing services. However, this is not necessarily due to effective functioning of ward committees as they (ward committees) are not effective.

The respondent in the Office of the Speaker indicated that there have been quite a number of improvements in the delivery of services as a result of ward committee functioning – however it can still improve. A number of service delivery protests were still experienced in the municipality but to a lesser extent. According to the respondent in the office of the Speaker, the municipality is one of the few municipalities in South Africa with few service delivery protests. This suggests that services are being rendered properly by the municipality. According to the respondent in the Chief Whip's office:

"... walking around the streets of the former black communities in the Tlokwe area of jurisdiction, one will find that most of the streets are tarred and in the informal settlements there is electricity, water and sanitation. The municipality has received awards to prove that it is the best performing municipality in the North-West Province. The municipality is also the third best in the country but one cannot attribute this to ward committees. Despite all the challenges faced by the municipality, the leadership from both the political and administrative offices in the municipality have done well to make sure that the municipality achieves what it has achieved thus far".

In terms of the above responses pertaining to the matters discussed, the researcher can deduce that respondents do not attribute service delivery improvements to the effective functioning of ward committees; in fact, respondents were of the view that ward committee functioning was not effective. One respondent said that the leadership, both political and administrative, had done well to improve service delivery and not necessarily ward committees.

5.2.2.4 Theme 4: Leadership

Leadership was not discussed as part of the theoretical overview of this study. However, given the above themes, the significance of leadership, both political and administrative, plays a role in determining how effective, efficient, and economical the municipality functions. Respondents were asked interrelated questions regarding leadership in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction.

Question 4.1: *In your opinion, do the residents of Tlokwe City Council trust the leadership of the municipality and are they satisfied with how they are governed and involved in the affairs of the municipality?*

Response to Question 4.1

The purpose of this question was to determine the level of trust in leadership and satisfaction with governance in general of the municipality. The following comments or views were made regarding the issue by the respondents:

- According to the respondent in the Chief Whip's office,

"There have been a lot of service delivery protests across the country and during that whole period, Tlokwe only had one protest and that particular protest was not even about service delivery but residents protesting against the amalgamation process to merge Tlokwe and Ventersdorp. There's [sic] hardly any service delivery protests and this is testimony to the fact that the residents in Tlokwe are very satisfied with the leadership of the municipality".
- The respondent in the Executive Mayor's office shared similar sentiments. The respondent referred to the local election that took place in 2011 where the ruling party (ANC) subsequently won: *"In 2013 by-elections were held and the ANC won again"*. Based on this, the respondent was convinced that the elections were as a result of the trust that the people had in the leadership of the municipality.

The respondent further referred to the lack of conflict absence of protests in the municipality which also proves the trust in leadership.

- The respondents from both the Municipal Manager's office and office of the Speaker highlighted challenges that led to a lack of trust in the leadership of the municipality. The respondents noted the lack of service delivery as the main reason as to why residents had shown levels of untrustworthiness in the municipality.

"This was visible in the number of residents reporting poor services anonymously via the executive mayor's telephone line and also that of the premier". The inability to involve the community in municipal decision-making also plays a role in how much the residents trusted the leadership of the municipality. Despite these challenges both respondents agreed that "generally there is trust in the current leadership from residents".

From the above responses, the researcher can deduce that the four respondents agreed that leadership is crucial, but had different views as to how much residents trust the leadership of the municipality. The respondents made reference to service delivery as a benchmark as to whether the community trusts the leadership of the municipality or not.

Question 4.2: What aspects of leadership are needed or required to promote public participation?

Response to Question 4.2

- According to the respondent in the Municipal Manager's office, *"when talking of leadership one talks of a broad concept"*. However, with respect to aspects of leadership needed to promote public participation *"the municipality needs leaders that have got the skills, not only to lead, but at the same time manage"*.
- The respondent in the office of the Speaker noted that *"the public participation draft outlined what needed to be adopted as a by-law with respect to public participation. Literally going out and providing formal training to the community at large"*.
- The respondent in the Chief Whip's office is stated that *"leadership aspects included taking government to the people such as national government is doing. What is done by national government should cascade down to the provincial and local government. Each ward councillor, whether belonging to the African*

National Congress (ANC) or not, is required to call meetings to report back to the people, this area is a must”.

- *“The municipality needs leaders who understand that they are leaders of the only by virtue to the people wanting them to be leaders, and consequently they have an obligation to serve. Service to the people is of critical importance. The element of giving yourself as a leader to the people is critical”.*

The above responses were not specific as to what aspects of leadership are required in order to promote public participation. However, the researcher can deduce that the respondents do understand what may constitute aspects of leadership required by leaders within the municipality. The responses referred to both effective and efficient political and administrative leadership within the municipality as the reason why services are being delivered to the community at large.

Questions 4.3: To what extent does political interference hamper the progress of ward committees?

Response to Question 4.3

The respondent in the Executive Mayor’s office had no knowledge of any political interference that hampered the progress of ward committees. However, the other three respondents agreed that there is political interference in the functioning of ward committees.

Ward committees, according to the respondent in the office of the Speaker, are there to promote public participation in issues of local government:

“Interference comes in when ward committee members overtake the ward councillor by reporting matters to Council without the knowledge of the councillor”.

Such interference affects service delivery because the ward councillor will refuse to provide the ward committee members with resources so as to be able to function: *“This could be seen as political interference”*. Disagreements, according to the respondent in the Municipal Manager’s office, may also happen between the ward councillor and ward committee members: *“It is natural to have such disagreements, they must happen”*. Lack of understanding from a ward councillor may lead to interference in the functioning of ward committees: *“If the ward committee itself does not understand its role in terms*

of how to function, reaching a consensus and moving forward will not happen effectively as required”.

The responses provided by the respondents stated that some of the ward committees represented a certain political party which could be seen as political interference. However, based on the responses provided by the respondents, the researcher can deduce that the respondents are aware that there is political interference in the functioning of ward committees, even though they would not report on specific cases.

5.2.3 Focus group interviews with ward committees

Focus group interviews with ward committees are presented in this section. The research questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely a section A: Biographical information and a section B: Focus group questions. Section B consists of the questions attached as annexure C of this dissertation. The biographical details of focus group (the respective ward committees) are firstly presented.

Section A: Biographical information of focus groups

The profile/biographical information of focus groups are presented for a statistical overview and to reflect on the opinions of members of the focus groups based on their age, gender, qualifications and experience.

A1: Biographical information of focus group interviews

Ward no	Total participants	Gender	
		Male	Female
9	7	3	4
14	8	4	4
21	6	3	3
19	8	4	4
Total	29	14	15

A total of twenty nine respondents participated in four focus group interviews. Fourteen (48%) were males and fifteen (52%) were females. The statistics are not unusual because many women now participate in issues of governance and community engagement projects. This is a positive indicator that more women have participated in

the focus group interviews. It provides proof that women are being empowered to participate in local government affairs.

The following table displays the age of the respondents.

A2: Age of the respondents

Age of respondents	Total nr of respondents	Valid percentage
Valid 21 - 30	4	
31 - 40	11	
41 - 50	10	
51 - 60	3	
65+	1	
Total	29	100.0

The age of the respondents represented participants across the spectrum of age categories provided. Eleven were represented in the age category of 31-40 years while only one respondent was represented in the age category above 65. The results are an indication that respondents were of a mature age with enough experience to coordinate ward committee services effectively. The age group had substantial energy and drive to address issues of governance by serving as ward committee members.

The following table displays the qualifications of the respondents.

A3: Highest qualifications of the respondents

Highest qualifications	Total
Grade 12	19
Diploma	4
B-degree	0
Postgraduate degree	0
Other (Grade 10 or ABET)	6

The statistical results indicated that the majority (19) of the respondents (66%) were in possession of grade 12 certificates. Only four (14%) had diplomas while six (21%) had grade 10 or lower such as an ABET certificate. This provides some assurance that the majority of respondents went to school and would be in a position to interpret Council documents and information to ensure effective ward committee functioning.

A4: Experience of respondents in ward committees

Experience	Total
0-1 year	7
2-5 yrs	15
6-10 yrs	7
11-15 yrs	0
16-20 yrs	0
20+yrs	0

Fifteen of the respondents (52%) had between 2-5 years' experience of involvement in ward committee functioning. Seven (24%) had between 6-10 years' experience. The results indicate that the majority of respondents had enough experience in order to facilitate effective and efficient functioning of the ward committee structures.

5.2.4 Section B: Responses to focus group interviews

The following section analyses the responses from focus group respondents. The responses are not presented verbatim, but the section provides a summary of how the respondents reacted towards the questions posed to them.

B1. Are you familiar with the functions and responsibilities of ward committees?

B1: Response

Respondents from the respective ward committees responded vaguely to this question by outlining their responsibilities as ward committee members. A more accurate response was that ward committees function within the guidelines provided by the office of the Speaker to guide members on how to perform their particular functions. Respondents stated that their responsibility as ward committee members included helping members of the community with issues relating to services delivered. Respondents continued to make the following example: often residents find themselves having to deal with bust sewerages that smell and could potentially cause health problems to the residents. Within the ward committee there are members who deal with

sanitation and infrastructure as a portfolio. The member tasked with such a portfolio would call the municipality in order to inform them of such a problem. The municipality would, in turn, send the necessary people to fix the sewerage problem. However, respondents noted that sometimes it would take the municipality about three days before attending to the problem.

Some of the respondents highlighted that they should ensure that public participation takes place within and among the community as part of their functions and responsibilities. There are challenges that may arise in the community, and it is thus the responsibility of councillors and ward committee members to provide solutions and record these in documents in order to be able to communicate the challenges to the entire community at large at a later stage. The respondents acknowledged that by virtue of them being ward committee members who are close to the community, it was of outmost importance that they should be familiar with and aware of their functions and responsibilities.

From the responses provided by the four groups, the researcher was able to make a few important deductions: Even though respondents did not respond as per the literature in terms of ward committee functioning, it can be deduced that they had some knowledge and understanding of what their functions and responsibilities entail. The respondents referred to their functioning and responsibilities as guided by the office of the Speaker. In the previous response by the respondent in the office of the Speaker, the respondent referred to the Local Government Library which comprises the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and other Legislative Acts as provided to each ward councillor (see Table 3).

The respondents were aware that they were close to the community and thus have the ability to identify community needs immediately. Section 2.5 in chapter two of this study stated that local government is the sphere of government that interacts with ordinary people more directly. Also, ward committees are established structures in local government to help enhance effective and efficient public participation for successful participatory governance.

B2. Do you see the necessity of well-functioning ward committees within the municipality?

B2: Response

Some of the respondents in the groups highlighted what they considered to be good in terms of well-functioning ward committees, while other respondents reflected on the challenges hampering well-functioning ward committees. With respect to the challenges, respondents stated the ward committees are lacking in terms of reporting community complaints to the municipality. Furthermore, when reporting is done there is a considerable amount of time taken by the municipality in responding to the complaints lodged by the ward committees. Respondents attributed this delay to the municipality's inability to be responsive when it comes to service delivery. Such delays reflect badly on ward committees as residents become impatient and blame ward committee members for not doing their work.

With respect the necessity of well-functioning ward committees, one respondent noted that ward committees are a legislative requirement, and thus it was necessary to have well-functioning ward committees in the community so that they represent the interests of the community. It is also important to have well-functioning ward committees because in the absence of the ward councillor, the ward committee members should be able to carry on with their responsibilities and assist the community in identifying their various needs.

From the various responses provided by the respondents, the researcher can deduce that the respondents understood the significance and need for well-functioning ward committees. Section 3.3.1 in chapter three of this study highlighted the role of ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council. From the roles listed, one can clearly see the need for well-functioning ward committees as well-functioning ward committees are a legislative imperative.

B3. Does the municipality and in particular the Council:

- **Consider the inputs from ward committees?**
- **Involve ward committees in IDP -and budgeting processes?**

B3: Response

- From the four focus group interviews, only two groups of respondents seemed to agree that the municipality does consider inputs from ward committee members. However, this inclusion is not without challenges.
- Respondents from the other two focus groups made examples relating to the IDP document, namely that they are furnished the document without prior consultation. In the IDP document, the municipality already highlights the needs of the entire community at large as well as information as to what each ward committee is entitled to in that financial year. Some of the respondents are of the opinion that only 50% of their inputs are taken into account. However, as highlighted in the previous response, the challenge is the delayed response from the municipality.

One of the roles of ward committees as highlighted in the Tlokwe City Council's IDP (2015-2016) is that ward committees should analyse issues, determine priorities, negotiate and reach consensus. However, based on the responses provided by the four focus groups, respondents are divided on the matter. Thus, the researcher can deduce that as much as it is a legislative requirement for a local council to consider ward committee inputs, some members within ward committees believe that council decides on their behalf as ward committees and only present them with a final draft of what will happen in the municipality. This is somewhat different from what the senior officials alluded to regarding the involvement of ward committees.

With regard to the IDP meetings and budgeting process, the respondents agreed that the municipality does send out pamphlets with the details of meetings, such as the venue and time. The pamphlets also state that community members and ward committee members, including the councillor, should make themselves available for the meeting. However, despite these efforts, the municipality merely conveys information regarding the IDP and the budget. The municipality reports on what money has been spent and for what purpose that is all.

Responding to the kind of mechanisms used by the municipality to inform ward committees and the community about meetings, respondents highlighted the use of the local radio station (*Aganang FM*), secondary to that is the municipality's newspaper, and lastly SMSes through the secretary of the ward committees. The ward councillor would

receive communication directly from the office of the Speaker regarding any meeting requiring the attendance of ward committee members.

The involvement in the budget and IDP process is the crucial role and function of ward committees in local government. Contrary to the previous responses on whether council acknowledges and considers inputs from ward committees, respondents agreed that the municipality does include them in the IDP and budget process. Respondents also acknowledged the various communication mechanisms available which the municipality uses in terms of communicating the dates and venues for the budget and IDP process. One of the respondents, a senior official, responded that the budget process is a challenge to involve ward committees as it is an internal process. However, the Tlokwe City Council's IDP highlights the roles and functions of ward committees in the budget and IDP process as imperative.

B4. Are you as ward committee member knowledgeable with regard to local government legislation and council By-laws?

B4: Response

Respondents from the four focus group interviews highlighted the role played by the office of the Speaker, namely that is to educate and provide training towards the understanding of local government legislation and council by-laws. However, respondents noted that not all members of the ward committee had full knowledge of the legislation and council by-laws. Respondents are aware that there are legislations and council by-laws that they must comply with, and should abide by these in order to address the challenges faced by the residents within the communities. According to some of the respondents from the four focus group interviews, illiteracy among some members of the ward committee members has proven to be a challenge. The respondent in the office of the Speaker in the previous response also highlighted literacy as a challenge among ward committees.

Apart from the issue of illiteracy respondents also alleged that some members of the ward committee were lazy. The office of the Speaker provides the necessary material for ward committees to go read and prepare, but due to them being lazy they do not. The office of the Speaker also has Community-Based Planners who work on grass roots level to inform members of the ward committee about the different legislation and council by-laws. However, this is not happening. Respondents also alleged that some

ward committee members forget these legislation and council by-laws until such time that training is provided to them again in the following year.

In terms of the responses provided by the respondents, it can be deduced that ward committee members acknowledged the role played by the office of the Speaker in providing training to ward committee members so as to acquaint them with local government legislation and council by-laws. However, local government legislation is often too difficult to be interpreted by laypeople.

B5. *Are ward committees representative and inclusive of the diverse community, e.g. youth, women, disabled, elderly, etc.*

B5: Response

All four focus groups respondents agreed that ward committees were representative and inclusive of the diverse community. Respondents referred to the various portfolios they are representatives of, amongst others, children and women, disabled people as well senior citizens. However, the respondents highlighted that there was no one who was physically disabled to represent those who are disabled - only a portfolio has been created within the ward committees to represent the disabled people.

From the responses provided by all four focus groups, the researcher can deduce that respondents all agreed that the ward committees are representative and inclusive of the diverse community. Those not represented, as per the response above, have portfolios created within the ward committees to represent them.

B6. *What support do ward committees receive from the Municipal Council and/or office of the Speaker?*

B6: Response

The respondents have outlined that the number one support received from the municipality is the R750 stipend paid to each ward committee member on a monthly basis. The stipend, as communicated to ward committees by the office of the Speaker, is meant to be utilised for transport and airtime for calling the municipal offices should there be a problem that requires immediate attention by the municipality. According to one of the respondents in the focus groups, the most important support that ward committees receive is the provision of short courses and workshops to members of the ward committees. The respondent further stated that, legislatively, the municipality is

not required to pay incentives to ward committee members and that ward committees should work on voluntary basis. However, the municipality pays ward committees because it recognises the work ward committees are doing in terms of being the eyes and ears of the municipality. According to most of the respondents in the focus groups, the stipend they receive from the municipality is not enough because it does not always enable ward committees to deal with emergencies within their respective wards, more specifically those emergencies that are related to municipal services.

According to the respondents, ward committees also receive administrative support from the office of the Speaker. Minutes of the previous meetings are printed from the office of the Speaker. Photocopies can also be made at that particular office. Often even transport and meals are provided when attending IDP and budget process meetings.

In general, the focus groups acknowledged the support they receive from municipality, more specifically from the office of the Speaker. The researcher can thus deduce that ward committees do receive substantial support especially from the office of the Speaker in making their work easier.

B7. What issues do ward committees deal with? (e.g. crime, sanitation, etc.)

- ***How do you decide on which issues to deal with first and why?***

B7: Response

According to the respondents in the four focus groups, ward committees comprise of various portfolios receiving equal attention, and wards do not necessarily deal with the same issues as they are diverse and address different challenges. Of the four focus groups, three focus groups highlighted housing as the issue most prioritised with the second issue being infrastructure in terms of roads. With respect to housing, the respondents were asked if they were aware that housing is a provincial priority and all respondents agreed that they did not know this. The respondents stated that it was the responsibility of the municipality to represent their housing needs to the provincial government. Respondents from the four focus groups all highlighted various issues that they as ward committees deal with. Of the various issues sewerage spillages, littering and youth unemployment were issues raised by the respondents. Issues outside of the ward committees' area of expertise such as crime also came out.

On accordance to Section 26 (1) of the Constitution, 1996 *everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing*. Thus, ward committees are deliberate on how the municipality housing department can best improved their access to adequate housing for the benefits of the people within the municipality at large.

Infrastructure maintenance is second to housing as a prominent issue that ward committees deal with.

From the responses provided by the respondents, it can be deduced that ward committees within their area of jurisdiction deal with various issues. Housing and infrastructure have been identified as the two challenging issues. Each portfolio in the ward committees is dealt with equally.

B8. In your view, do ward committee members make a meaningful contribution in the resolutions of council?

B8: Response

The majority of the respondents in the four focus groups agreed that many of the decisions made by Council do not always represent their views. An example was made relating to the Tlokwe and Ventersdorp amalgamation process to have both municipalities merged together. Respondents agreed that Council made the effort to have them involved, but still the decision to merge the two municipalities was taken despite many of the participants being against the decision. This led to one respondent stating that only 2% of their inputs are considered by Council. Ward committees, according to some of the respondents, are tools that are used in local government only when municipalities feel that ward committees can be useful. One respondent was quoted as saying:

“There are members who are brilliant in bringing up issues and it is these members the council targets in terms of utilising them and their inputs”.

From the responses provided, it can be deduced that not all members of the ward committees believed that they have made meaningful contributions to Council resolutions. Despite respondents agreeing that the municipality does include them in decision-making, they are only involved to fulfil the legislative mandate as per the example provided relating to the municipal merger. The functions and roles of ward committees were highlighted in chapter three, section 3.3.1 of this study.

B9. *How often do you meet as ward committees?*

B9: Response

Ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction meet monthly, meaning that they meet twelve times in a year. However, ward committees may hold emergency meetings should there be issues that require urgent attention from ward committee members.

The general consensus from respondents is that ward committee members meet monthly with emergency meetings also included. However, although effective functioning by means of regular meetings takes place, ward committees were unable to interpret issues correctly because of illiteracy and lack of preparatory reading as outlined above. Furthermore, some were not committed to the task of acquiring the necessary skills in order to understand/interpret Council matters correctly.

B10. *Does the chairperson (councillor) attend meetings regularly?*

B10: Response

Councillors from the four groups were applauded by the respondents for always being present during meetings.

In terms of the responses from all four focus groups, the researcher can deduce that chairpersons of ward committees were diligent in arranging and attending ward committee meetings.

B11. *Is there an agenda compiled for every meeting?*

B11: Response

All four focus groups agreed that there was always an agenda in meetings.

The researcher can attest to the responses from all four focus groups that was indeed an agenda compiled for every meeting. The relevant matters for discussion on the agenda were, however, in some instances difficult to interpret because ward committees do not always fully understand the functioning of a municipality.

B12. *Does the chairperson provide feedback (from Council) at every meeting on all issues discussed?*

B12: Response

Similar to the previous response, the respondents from the four focus groups agreed that councillors indeed provide feedback at every meeting regarding issues discussed. The councillors also call sectional meetings to brief community members on the progress made regarding community issues.

During the ward committee focus group interviews, the researcher was welcomed to be part of the ward committee meeting. Despite the councillors reporting back to ward committees, some ward committee members had no knowledge of the issues on the agenda. Councillors merely reported back to the ward committee members, with only two members active in terms of discussing issues with the councillor. It was evident that some of the members were not interested in or committed to being part of the ward committee. Some members arrived 30 minutes late at the meeting without having reported to the ward committee secretary or making any other arrangement to notify the councillor. The previous responses on illiteracy and lack of knowledge were evident during the meeting.

B13. *What challenges are ward committees faced with?*

B13: Response

The four focus groups agreed that a number of challenges were faced by all ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council area of jurisdiction. These are listed below in no particular order of importance as provided by respondents:

- Lack of resources in terms of where ward committees operate with reference to where meetings are held.
- Meetings are either held at someone else's backyard or garage. Ward committees are legislatively recognised structures and need a place to operate and where the community at large can keep in touch with ward committee members.
- The identification of ward committee members by certain officials in the municipality is also a challenge. When one goes to report a problem in one of the departments, one must first identify oneself, which can be very tiring.
- The municipality's inability to deliver on its promises in a challenge reflects badly on ward committees. The municipality requires ward committees to inform residents of any new developments to take place within their respective wards. Failure by the municipality to deliver on these

developments as communicated to the residents by ward committees reflects badly on ward committees as they are closest to residents and communities.

- Sometimes ward committee members would request senior municipal officials to come and address the community on a particular issue, but often the municipality would send a junior official not conversant with decision-making processes and procedures of the municipality.
- Ward committees meet monthly and forward their concerns and complaints to Council, but Council takes quite some time before addressing or attending to the concerns and complaints put forward by ward committees. Inability of the municipality to be responsive to concerns and complaints leads to lack of faith in ward committees by residents.
- Poor management by Public Participation Officials (PPO's) is also a big concern for ward committees. Reports are usually handed to the PPO's, but these reports are often not filed for archival purposes. Ward committee members cannot get paid without filing a report and this is a current problem yet to be addressed in the office of the Speaker. PPO's have a tendency not to be available for ward committee meetings.

In chapter one of this study, various challenges facing effective ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction were highlighted. However, it is significant to note is that some of these challenges are due to the lack of responsiveness by the municipality to concerns and complaints by ward committees and the inability to deliver on its promises. This ultimately puts ward committees under pressure from residents as they are viewed as ineffective.

B14. Mention significant successes achieved by means of the effective functioning of ward committees?

B14: Response

All four focus groups referred their own significant successes achieved by means of effective functioning of ward committees. The four focus groups listed the following as significant achievements:

- Street lights were installed in some wards, which helped in minimising crime to some extent.
- RDP houses, paved roads and sidewalks have also been built.

- Accessing ward committee members is now made simpler, which was previously not possible.
- Community members have been assisted in the provisioning of identity documents, especially the elderly.
- Toilets were built in some wards.
- Ward committee members assisted community members in completing IGG forms which are used to receive free electricity from the municipality.

In summary to this question, the researcher can deduce that although there were many challenges facing ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council, significant achievements were also achieved as outlined above. However, although there were significant achievements, the challenges facing ward committees seemed to overshadow the above-mentioned achievements.

General summary and interpretation of focus group questions, 1 - 14

As indicated, the purpose of the above fourteen questions posed to respondents in their capacity as members of ward committees was to investigate the effective functioning of these structures within the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction.

The results provided important information for the development of concrete suggestions and recommendations on how ward committees could operate more effectively within the boundaries of Tlokwe City Council, in order to deal with potential public participation challenges in the future.

Questions 1 and 2 were aimed at determining the role, purpose and necessity of ward committees and how this role was interpreted by respondents. Questions 3, 7 and 8 focused on the type of issues and relevant contribution made by ward committees while questions 4, 5 and 6 focused specifically on the knowledgeability, representativity and support received by the municipality in order to function effectively. Questions 9 to 12 paid attention to meeting procedures and operational functioning. Question 13 solicited from respondents their opinions regarding the challenges faced in operating effectively, while question 14 outlined the successes achieved by ward committees.

5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the research results, data analysis and findings. Firstly, the chapter provided biographical details of the respondents and secondly, the findings were presented in terms of the four identified themes. The coding process and thematic analysis of the participants' responses were important in providing answers to the research objectives, research questions and theoretical framework of this study.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews with senior officials involved in facilitating public participation in Tlokwe City Council as well as the focus group interviews with ward committee members indicated that there were indeed challenges obstructing the effective functioning of ward committees. Communication was a critical aspect to address as well as the lack of resources in order for ward committees to function more effectively.

The next and final chapter of this dissertation concludes by providing a summary of how the research objectives and research questions were achieved, as well as the recommendations aimed at improving the effective functioning of ward committees in Tlokwe City Council.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges facing effective functioning of ward committees. Ward committees can be regarded as a mechanism to promote local democracy in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction. In the previous chapter, the empirical research findings were presented to determine the challenges hampering effective functioning of ward committees. Furthermore, the purpose of the empirical chapter was also to determine whether ward committees' understood their participatory roles as outlined by relevant legislation and regulations (as discussed in chapter three of this dissertation).

The final chapter of this study provides a summary of the steps taken to achieve the research objectives in each of the six chapters of this dissertation. The recommendations made in this chapter are in line with the set research objectives, literature study, empirical investigations, and empirical findings. Furthermore, possible future research is suggested.

6.2 SYNTHESIS OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE SYUDY

Chapter one of the study provided a brief introduction and background on public participation as a new phenomenon in South Africa which was introduced after 1994 in order to streamline decision-making processes in government. The chapter focused on ward committees as a mechanism to enhance public participation. Ward committees were *inter alia* discussed as existing mechanism for public participation established through relevant legislation and regulation. The research topic of this study was further justified by analysing the significance of the study, clarifying the aims and objectives of the study and motivation of the problem statement. The problems statement of this study was to investigate: "challenges facing effective ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council and to recommend possible strategic recommendations that can be introduced to ensure the more effective functioning of ward committees in order to enhance public participation in decision-making".

The problem statement required the researcher to launch an investigation with the intention to assess the challenges facing effective functioning of ward committees in promoting local democracy in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction.

Chapter two of this study focused on the theoretical perspectives concerning local democracy, public participation and ward committees in South Africa. The theoretical literature investigated for purposes of attaining the objectives of the study provided a relevant framework against which the empirical chapter of this study was completed. The chapter furthermore provided an overview of the local government sphere in South Africa as well as conceptualisation of democracy, participatory democracy and local democracy.

Moreover, the chapter discussed the essentials of public participation in an effort to explore the significance thereof in relation to attaining the ideals of democracy at the grassroots level. Ward committees as primary mechanism to improve public participation were also discussed.

Chapter three of this study dealt with the legislative and regulatory framework guiding effective functioning of ward committees. An analysis was made in this chapter of the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks governing the functioning of ward committees.

Furthermore, the chapter presented an analysis of the current regulation or by-law used by the Tlokwe City Council to facilitate and govern the effective functioning of ward committees. The establishment of ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council was also highlighted in this chapter, including an outline of the role of the office of the Speaker of the Tlokwe City Council in terms of facilitating ward committees was provided.

Chapter four of this study gave a detailed account of the research methodology that was utilised in order to achieve the research objectives of this study. A qualitative research design was used by making use of data collection instruments which included semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. A literature review was undertaken and the study population and relevant sampling techniques were discussed.

Chapter five of this study presented the findings from the empirical research that was conducted among the research population which included four senior officials involved in the facilitation of public participation in Tlokwe City Council and four ward committee focus groups operating currently within relevant wards of the municipality.

Chapter six provides strategic recommendations based on the empirical findings on how to improve the overall effective ward committee functioning in Tlokwe City Council.

6.3 REALISATION OF THE ROs and CTS OF THE STUDY

The **first objective** of this study was to: *“Analyse theoretical perspectives concerning local democracy, public participation and the ward committee system in South Africa (SA)”*. This objective was achieved in chapter two of this study which gave a theoretical overview of local democracy, public participation and ward committees in South Africa.

The **second objective** of this study was to: *“Determine the legislative and regulatory framework required for effective functioning of ward committees”*. This objective was achieved in chapter three by providing an analysis of the significant and relevant legislative and regulatory framework guiding effective functioning of ward committees in South Africa.

The **third objective** of this study was to: *“Investigate challenges faced by ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council”*. This objective was achieved in chapters four and five of the dissertation. Chapter four clarified the research methodology including the appropriate research design, data collection and data analysis methodology utilised. The chapter confirmed why a qualitative design was most suitable for this study.

Chapter five presented the research results, data analysis and findings. Findings were presented in terms of relevant themes. Interviews were primarily used as research instruments to interview senior officials in the municipality as well as having focus group interviews with randomly selected ward committees with the municipality. Chapter five thus provided an empirical analysis of responses from the respondents.

The **fourth and last objective** of the study was to: *“Propose strategic recommendations for the effective functioning of ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council's area of responsibility”*. This objective was achieved in chapter six of the dissertation where constructive recommendations were made on how to improve effective functioning of ward committees. The recommendations are made based on the challenges that were identified by means of empirical research undertaken in chapter five of the dissertation.

The Central Theoretical Statements of this study included:

- CTS 1:** Municipalities need to develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance (Craythorne, 2003:264). This means that there needs to be a structure in place where proper representation from the community will take place within the Tlokwe City Council. Participatory governance in this regard would require that Council be transparent, responsive and accountable to the people, hence the importance of ward committees. **CTS 1 were addressed by means of a literature review in chapter 2 whereby local democracy, participatory governance and ward committee structures in SA were discussed.**
- CTS 2:** Ward committee members could facilitate community deliberation within their ward on community needs and priorities, and feed this information through to the municipal planning and budgeting process (Ngqele, 2010:4). Ward committees would not only serve as information distributors to Tlokwe City Council, but will also guarantee the dissemination of this in the respective wards. **CTS 2 were addressed in chapter 3 whereby an outline was provided regarding the legislative and regulatory framework guiding the effective functioning of ward committees in SA.**
- CTS 3:** Ward committees are important tools for participatory local democracy (Reddy & Sikhakhane, 2008:681). Ward committees, when functional and administered properly, can serve as an important participatory participation mechanism for Tlokwe City Council and local government in general. It is thus important for ward committees to function properly in order to can eradicate the abovementioned and identified challenges within Tlokwe City Council. **CTS 3 were addressed in chapter 5 and 6 whereby the challenges and findings with regard to effective functioning of ward committees in the Tlokwe City Concil's area of jurisdiction was investigated and confirmed.**

The title of this dissertation indicates that the challenges surrounding effective functioning of ward committees were to be investigated in order to propose strategic recommendations for more effective functioning of this structure of Council (see also

RO4 in chapter one of this dissertation). Effectiveness is therefore contextualised below for purposes of this study including providing relevant recommendations.

6.4 CONTEXTUALISING EFFECTIVE WARD COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING

According to Van der Walldt *et al.* (2014:5), municipalities are organisational units of local government with a hierarchical structure of groups of individuals created to achieve specific objectives (Thornhill, 2012:185-186). They (municipalities) consist of the political and administration of the municipality and the community (inhabitants) of the municipal area. According to Douglas (2016:1), an organisation is a group of individuals who join together to achieve a mutual goal. Ward committees comprise of various individuals belonging to different groups as per the composition of ward committees as discussed in section 2.5.2 (see chapter 2). Ward committees can thus be considered to be sub-structures functioning under a greater organisation which would be a municipality.

According to Zoogah *et al.* (2015:12), the effectiveness of organisations in achieving the set objectives depends on the institutional environment in which they operate. According to the dictionary definition, effectiveness means to produce desired or intended results (Oxford English Dictionary, 2006:456). However, the literature suggests that within Public Administration, effectiveness can be defined as the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved (Holtzhausen *in* Thornhill *et al.*, 2014:252). In this regard, it would imply that ward committees function effectively in order to ensure participatory governance and attaining the ideals of local democracy. For Lee and Whitford (2007:5), effectiveness in the field of public management and administration refers to “how well the government does what it is supposed to do, whether people in government are working hard and well, whether actions and procedures help achieve its mission”. Furthermore, Craythorne (2006:322) defines effectiveness in the context of municipal administration as “doing the right thing in the right way”, which, by its emphasis on the “right thing”, indicates a moral base, while the “right way” refers to how something is done. Douglas (2016:1) asserts that effectiveness is how well an organisation achieves its goals.

Considering the above definitions of effectiveness, an operational definition for purposes of this study can thus be formulated: **“Effectiveness for participatory**

governance involves effective administration, adequate resources and empowerment of the community in interpreting government documentation in order to contribute meaningfully to government processes”.

Ward committees, as discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.5) of this dissertation came into being as a mechanism to enhance public participation and local democracy. In order to fulfil this task they (ward committees) need to comply with the criteria that would measure its “effectiveness” as an organisational structure, in this case a structure for participatory governance of the Tlokwe City Council. In a study by Chaka (2013:158-161), it was found for example that for an audit committee to function effectively, it had to be managed administratively well, i.e. having supporting documentation, interpretation and adequate time to prepare for meetings; maintaining good relations with the local government; ensuring continuous learning programmes and applying self-evaluation strategies to determine whether goals and responsibilities were achieved.

From a theoretical point of view, Douglas (2016:2) suggests that effectiveness focuses on adaption, inertia, selection, and constraints. Adaption requires that an organisation adapt to its limitations in order to overcome them. Effective organisations are able to adapt and thrive within these limitations, while the less effective organisations cannot. The result is that organisations that cannot adapt to the limitations imposed upon them will not succeed, and often fail to realise a profit. Inertia entails the willingness of a group to adapt. Inherent within inertia are the motivations and traditions of an organisation. An organisation with strong, immobile, unchanging traditions will be less effective than an organisation that is malleable and willing to change its environment (Douglas, 2016:2).

Another factor within the notion of inertia is the knowledge base of the members of an organisation. If the members are not willing to learn new tactics and techniques as time goes by, or if they are not willing to learn new technologies, the growth in productivity will slow, leading to an ineffective group. Selection entails that the organisation that is best able to adapt to its limitations will be best suited for effective work. To maximise the potential of selection, an organisation must allow for and promote traits that permit the group the freedom to adapt and overcome challenges and limitations. Constraints are the limitations that an organisation faces. These constraints may be legal, moral or capability-related. These constraints, according to Douglas (2016:2) force the organisation to forgo options that may be viewed as acceptable to the organisation.

The primary argument provided by Douglas (2016) is that the proper selection of members of an organisation, *i.e.* those who are highly qualified, such as that they can adapt to challenges, and are empowered by their manager to do so, will maximise organisational effectiveness. Without the ability to effect any change, there can be no improvement to the organisation.

Effectiveness is also about teamwork. Key elements of highly effective teams include understanding the purpose of the team - roles and skills clarification, putting in place effective communication strategies, strong leadership and being transparent (Bannister *et al.*, 2013:184-185). Functionality is effective functioning which refers to the ability of ward committees to carry out its everyday functions (Masango *et al.*, 2013:98).

Recommendations are provided in the last and final section of this chapter with regard to the effectiveness of ward committee functioning within the boundaries of the Tlokwe City Council. These recommendations are provided in accordance with the empirical findings of chapter 5 (in other words, the responses by senior officials and ward committee focus groups with respect to the challenges faced by effective ward committee functioning). The empirical results revealed that the Office of the Speaker is doing its utmost best to improve functioning of ward committees in the municipality. Despite these efforts, ward committees in the municipality still face many challenges. The strategic recommendations for the study are presented considering the challenges that were identified by means of the empirical findings.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE WARD COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING IN TLOKWE CITY COUNCIL

The list of recommendations below is provided according to the most to least important determining factors.

Strategic recommendation 1: Addressing administrative support for ward committees

The results of the study revealed the type of support received by ward committees from council and Office of the Speaker. However, despite such support Public Participation Officials (PPOs) were highlighted as challenges by ward committee focus group respondents. PPO's are appointed by the Office of the Speaker to help facilitate

effective administrative support towards ward committee members in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction.

The office of the Speaker allocates no more than five wards to each PPO's. PPO's need to be available at ward committee meetings, make sure that there is an agenda during the meetings as this constitutes a critical element of the meeting, submit reports to the office of the Speaker including the filing of these reports for archival purposes. However, responses from the focus group respondents suggested that the PPO's were not fulfilling their administrative duties as reports are not filed. Ward committee members cannot get paid without the filing of reports.

In order to address the administrative loophole, it is hereby recommended that PPOs should be trained in rendering effective secretariat functions: compiling of agendas, the keeping of minutes, and liaison between Council and ward committee members, including recordkeeping. The importance of both human and financial resources allocated for the administration and support of ward committees were stressed in section 2.5.2 of this dissertation.

Strategic recommendation 2: A more inclusive composition of ward committees

Section 2.5.2 (see chapter two) of this dissertation highlights the composition of ward committees as set out in the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998. However, municipalities are tasked with the responsibility of making sure that this composition takes place as required by legislation. The Tlokwe City Council senior officials acknowledged that there are documents guiding the elections of ward committees.

Despite this, the study revealed that there was a lack of participation from the youth as required by legislation. Involving the youth could mean a lot of things for the municipality, such as:

- Having a clearer understanding of youth expectations and needs.
- Investing in future youth leadership and development of the youth.
- Creating a positive impression on how the municipality cares for future young leaders.
- Developing clearer priorities for resource allocations targeting the youth.
- Identifying opportunities in order to recognise and celebrate the achievements of youth involvement within the municipality.

It is recommended that the municipality should put financial resources in place towards funding a study that would investigate mechanisms and/or opportunities in order to ensure youth involvement in municipal affairs. Furthermore, in a similar study by Thabanchu (2011:79) it was also found that ward committees do not necessarily have an independent voice because they are chaired by ward councillors and is thus influenced by political agendas. The entire composition of ward committees should therefore be reviewed to represent the broader community which would allow the structure also to function independently.

Strategic recommendation 3: A cooperative relationship between ward committees and the local council

The outcomes of the study indicated that there are problems with regard to the relationship between ward committees and Council. This is evident in the responses provided by the respondents in the focus group. Respondents noted that some of the officials in the municipality are unable to identify ward committee members when having to report problems in one of the departments. Furthermore, the municipality is unable to live up to its promise and this impacts on ward committee functioning as they (ward committees) have to inform residents on any developments only to find out that the municipality is no longer going to deliver on the mandate given to ward committees.

Another point of concern raised was that senior officials in the municipality were reluctant to come and address the community and ward committees on vital issues. Instead, the municipality would often send junior staff members who tend to make promises that they are unable to keep. The community regards this as serious and considers it as merely lying to them.

Ward committees are bound by two forms of accountability. On the one hand, they have an institutional obligation to the municipality to enhance participatory democracy. More importantly, ward committees have an obligation to local communities to communicate concerns to Council and get answers on issues where questions of transparency and effective governance arise (DPLG, 2005:50); (see also section 2.3.3 of this dissertation).

Cooperative governance is important for advancing effective ward committee functioning in the municipality. This is not limited only to council and ward committees, but better relations, for example, a better working relationship between CBW's, PPO's,

ward committees and local government officials are also included here. Ward committees should endeavour to become familiar with the Community Based Workers (CBW's) and Public Participation Officials (PPO's) deployed in their area and meet with them in order to compare terms of reference including the kind of support CBW's may offer ward committees in order to be able to build better relations.

Tlokwe City Council should comply with the principles of cooperative governance as per Section 41 (1) (h) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 which states that there must be cooperation with all spheres of government, and all organs of state within each sphere should cooperate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by: fostering friendly relations, assisting and supporting one another, informing one another of and consulting with one another on matters of common interest, coordinating their actions and legislation within one another, adhering to agreed procedures, and avoiding legal proceedings against one another.

Strategic recommendation 4: Lack of continuous training and or empowerment of ward committees

One of the most imperative aspects of ward committees is to provide continuous training and or empowerment to the committee, this would *inter alia* involve induction programmes on how a municipal council functions, including financial and regulatory interpretation training. Without this, ward committees are unable to improve their knowledge, particularly in relation to the changes and developments in local government. It was discovered in this study that ward committees lack the necessary knowledge required for understanding local government legislation and Council by-laws, despite efforts by the office of the Speaker to provide training.

Most of the training directed towards ward committees are currently in the form of formal training by government or government-appointed service providers, and little capacitation happens through in-service training/briefing. For ward committees to function effectively in this regard, Council should support the ward committee members and must develop an on-going integrated training programme with the assistance of SALGA and other stakeholders to continuously provide training to ward committees. The municipality does not have the capacity to provide training to ward committees, but could join forces and cooperation with institutions of higher learning such as the North-West University which is located in town.

Contingency plans should be put in place to address the issue of ward committees not being able to interpret local government legislation and regulation. Although there is inductive training when ward committee members assume their positions, this has proven not to be effective as members need continuous training throughout, because local government is an overly legislated sphere of government and becomes difficult to interpret by laypeople. The aforementioned is also emphasised by Steytler (2008:518-519) arguing that the plethora of local government laws may be guilty of strangulating the sphere and thus preventing it from executing its constitutional mandate; as in this case ward committees are not sophisticated enough to interpret these laws.

Strategic recommendation 5: Improved self-evaluation of ward committees

Ward committees in South Africa were intended to create a bridge between communities, political and administrative structures of municipalities. Despite this, ward committees do not often function as intended and that instead of enhancing the environment of participatory governance they often function poorly. This is due to a number of reasons as outlined in this dissertation such as the fact that it does not report to anyone but is voluntarily; it is politicised in many ways and used as an extension of political parties; including that they (ward committees) are self-defensive in trying to protect their own interests. These matters pinpoint the importance of accountability as discussed in section 2.3.3 of this dissertation where it was *inter alia* outlined that local democracy centres on how municipalities are responsive towards the needs of the community by providing essential services; and how they facilitate public participation in the interest of local decision-making. Public participation is an important pillar for building and sustaining a democracy within any country. Public participation is also crucial for good governance as it enhances transparency, accountability and responsiveness to the needs of the local community.

Ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council should benchmark themselves against what other type of similar structures have achieved in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality region or even across South Africa. This would entail adopting best practices by, for example, doing a needs analysis of a particular ward, early detection of ward committee vacancies, and improving the process involved in filling these vacancies - including determining their own feedback mechanisms such as reporting back to the community on what they have asked the committee to do.

Strategic recommendation 6: Availability of infrastructural and financial resources

Upon conducting the focus group interviews, it was discovered by the researcher that all ward committees did not necessarily have access to a meeting venue. This was also confirmed in the responses from respondents that they had to schedule meetings round and about. This challenge has made ward committees inaccessible by residents. However, it was found in this study that Council through the office of the Speaker will be building offices for each ward with three offices to be built each year. However, effective ward committee functioning is important to enhance local democracy; therefore ward committees should be accessible to residents when necessary.

Respondents in the focus group highlighted the challenge with respect to the current stipend received from the municipality as part of their remuneration. However, respondents are of the opinion that the stipend is not sufficient and does not meet for the needs of the community as required.

The obvious reason for remunerating ward committee members is that many are drawn from indigent communities and are obligated to undertake public interest activities since their own livelihoods are not secure. The public service obligations flowing from ward committee membership not only limit their opportunity to pursue their normal means of sustaining themselves, but also impose incidental costs which are particularly burdensome to poor people.

The study found that Council was looking to increase the current stipend for ward committees from R750 to R1000. However, an increased stipend does not guarantee effective functioning of ward committees. Thus, it is recommended that Council should prioritise its budget in such a way that attention is given to the actual training and empowerment of ward committees.

Strategic recommendation 7: Effective communication strategy

An effective communication strategy is needed for more effective ward committee functioning in the Tlokwe City Council's area of responsibility. This would enhance communication between council, ward committees and the community. The leadership of the local municipality should be convinced of the importance of such a strategy which would be to provide a dialogue between internal and external role-players involved in citizen participation. The DPLG report (2005:51) confirms also that communication from

Ward Committee meetings to Council and vice versa needs to be clear by having proper procedures and formats for tabling reports, etc. This would ensure accountability.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this dissertation, the following recommendations for further research in terms of effective ward committee functioning are suggested below:

- Further research is required regarding the identification of an operational strategy to ensure the effective functioning of ward committees in the municipality.
- Research should also be undertaken on the relationship between CBW's, PPO's and ward committees in facilitating public participation.

The final conclusion of the dissertation is presented accordingly in order to evaluate whether the research objectives of this study have been achieved.

6.7 FINAL CONCLUSION

The study focused on the need for the effective functioning of ward committees within Tlokwe City Council as mechanism to promote local democracy. The researcher found that a great many challenges emerged that were hampering the effective functioning of ward committees in this municipality. These challenges have a bearing on the strengths and weaknesses of effective ward committee functioning in the Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction. Strategic recommendations were therefore provided in order to ensure that the municipality is able to deal with similar challenges.

Furthermore, the study determined that ward committees play an imperative role in being involved in the decision-making processes of the municipal council. These structures are responsible for bridging the communication gap between council and the communities that they represent, and for making sure that any issue from the community receives agenda status in Council. Ward committees are in a position to communicate the various interests and needs of the communities they represent, which makes them an important and vital structure to facilitate public participation and or promote local democracy.

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ANNEXURE A



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

Private Bag X6003, Potchefstroom
South Africa, 2520
Tel: (018) 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

School of Social and Government Studies
Tel: (018) 299 1629
Fax: (018) 299 4254
E-mail: Melvin.Diedericks@nwu.ac.za

14 September 2015

The Municipal Manager
Tlokwe City Council
Potchefstroom
2520

Dear Madam

RE: Request to use Tlokwe City Council in the North West Province as a unit of analysis in Master's Degree Research

The above matter refers.

Mr Sello Isaac Seitholo is pursuing research towards a full Masters Degree in Public Management and Governance at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University, and therefore requires permission to interview Senior Managers or their office managers including having focus group interviews with randomly selected ward committees.

The topic of Mr. Seitholo's research is "Challenges facing the effective functioning of ward committee as mechanism to promote local democracy in the Tlokwe City Councils are of jurisdiction". The research objectives of the study *Inter alia* include:

1

- To analyse theoretical perspectives concerning local democracy, public participation and the ward committee system in South Africa (SA);
- To determine the legislative and regulatory framework for the effective functioning of ward committees;
- To investigate challenges faced by ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council; and-
- To propose a strategy for more effective functioning of ward committees within the Tlokwe City Council's area of responsibility.

Permission is hereby requested to use Senior Managers or their office managers and randomly selected ward committees as a unit of analysis for the research. Completion of the semi-structured interviews should be as brief as possible and anonymity of participatory results and confidentiality are guaranteed.

If there are any further enquiries, please contact myself, as supervisor, at the above-mentioned contact details, or the researcher at the following numbers 076 458 2443 or e-mail: sello.seitholo@nwu.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Dr. M Diedericks
Study supervisor

Mr. S.I. Seitholo
Master's Researcher

I, S. E. Isaac Mokgethi (Municipal Manager) hereby grant/does not grant permission to Mr. S.I. Seitholo to conduct his research using certain senior managers and randomly selected ward committees in the Tlokwe City Council as a unit of analysis for his Master's Degree study.

Mrs Emily Mokgethi : Municipal Manager, Tlokwe City Council (NW)

2

ANNEXURE B

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE TLOKWE CITY COUNCIL

SENIOR OFFICIALS THEMES and QUESTIONS

Theme 1: Local Democracy

Q1. Democracy is an important concept in South Africa and the principles thereof need to be upheld by all spheres of government. Has Tlokwe City Council been able to uphold the principles of democracy in local government? Motivate how.

Q2. Explain how the *Batho Pele* principles are utilised in the achievement of local democracy in Tlokwe Local Municipality?

Q3. In your opinion, what are the challenges associated with effective local democracy in the local government sphere?

THEME 2: Public Participation

Q1. What comes to mind when you hear/think about the concept “Public Participation”?

Q2. How has public participation helped to enhance local democracy in Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction?

Q3. Is public participation a transparent way in which to involve the public in the IDP process as well as the municipal budgeting process?

Q4. Do you think the community of Tlokwe City Council understand public participation, i.e. their role and responsibilities?

Q5. Is there a need for training/retraining and skilling/reskilling of municipal officials to improve the level of public participation within the municipality?

Q6. Please mention/elucidate on the different kinds of mechanisms used to encourage public participation in TLM?

Q7. IGR Forums are structures to provide a place for discussion and consultation on areas requiring cooperation between government spheres. Is TLM partaking in such a forum and how has this helped the promotion of PP?

THEME 3: Ward Committee functioning

Q1. Ward Committees are the primary mechanisms to enhance public participation in Tlokwe City Council's area of jurisdiction. In your opinion, have ward committees been an asset or liability towards the municipality's community development? i.e. are they lacking, improving, good, or not good at all.

Q2. Are they (ward committees) representative of the diverse community, i.e. women, youth, disabled, etc.? How would you describe the composition of ward committees?

Q3. Are ward committees knowledgeable when it comes to local government legislation and council by-laws?

Q4. In your opinion, what are some of the challenges facing the effective functioning of ward committees in Tlokwe City Council?

Q5. Are you aware of any complaints from communities regarding the effective functioning and meaningful contribution of ward committees?

Q6. What support do ward committees receive from the Municipal Council and/or Office of the Speaker?

Q7. Where does council stand in terms of Ward Committees remuneration?

Q8. Is there a lack of professional participation in ward committees due to it functioning on a voluntary basis?

Q9. Have you seen any improvements in service delivery as a result of effective functioning of ward committees?

THEME 4: Leadership

Q1. In your opinion, do the residents of TLM trust the leadership of the municipality and are satisfied with how they are governed and involved in the affairs of the municipality?

Q2. What aspects of leadership are needed or required to promote public participation?

Q3. To what extent does political interference hamper the progress of ward committees?

ANNEXURE C

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following personal information is necessary for statistical purposes only as well as to summarise the conclusion of the study in a proper manner and to reflect the opinions of a diverse group of people involved in the effective functioning of ward committees within the municipal boundaries of the Tlokwe Local Municipality.

Please indicate with a cross (X) the following general questions in the appropriate box.

A1

Gender	Male	1	Female	2
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A2

Age	21 - 30	1	31 - 40	2	41 - 50	3	51 - 60	4	61 +	5
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A3

Highest Qualification	Grade 12	1	Diploma	2	B-degree	3	Postgraduate degree	4	Other	5
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A4

Experience in ward committees	0 -1 year	1	2 -5 yrs	2	6 - 10 yrs	3	11 -15 yrs	4	16 – 20 yrs	5	20 + yrs	6
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SECTION B: FOCUS GROUPS THEMES AND QUESTIONS

This section investigates the effective functioning of ward committees in Tlokwe Local Municipality. The purpose of the questions is to determine the extent to which you, as a member of a particular Ward Committee execute your responsibilities in order to ensure the promotion of local democracy.

Please provide succinct, to the point and where necessary detailed answers with regard to the below-listed questions.

PS: Please note that the questions may take around 1 hour to complete. Thank you once again for availing yourself in participating in this research!

WARD COMMITTEE (FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW) QUESTIONS

B1. Are you familiar with the functions and responsibilities of ward committees?

B2. Do you see the necessity of well-functioning ward committees within the municipality?

B3. Does the municipality and in particular the Council:

- Consider the inputs from ward committees?
- Involve ward committees in IDP -and budgeting processes?

B4. Are you as ward committee member knowledgeable with regard to local government legislation and council By-laws?

B5. Are ward committees representative and inclusive of the diverse community, e.g. youth, women, disabled, elderly, etc.

B6. What support do ward committees receive from the Municipal Council and/or Office of the Speaker?

B7. What issues do ward committees deal with? e.g. crime, sanitation etc.

- How do you decide on which issues to deal with first and why?

B8. In your view, do ward committee members make a meaningful contribution in the resolutions of council?

B9. How often do you meet as ward committees?

B10. Does the chairperson (councillor) attend meetings regularly?

B11. Is there an agenda compiled for every meeting?

B12. Does the chairperson provide feedback (from council) at every meeting on all issues discussed?

B13. What challenges are ward committees faced with?

B14. Mention significant successes achieved by means of the effective functioning of ward committees?

Declaration

*This is to declare that I, Annette L Combrink, accredited
language editor and translator of the South African
Translators' Institute, have language-edited the dissertation
by*

SI Seitholo (21859043

with the title

Challenges facing the effective functioning of ward committees as
mechanism to promote local democracy in the Tlokwe City Council's
area of jurisdiction



Prof Annette L Combrink

Accredited translator and language editor

South African Translators' Institute

Membership No. 1000356

Date: 3 November 2016