

**A conceptual public participation framework for ward
committees to promote local government democracy**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, B Muronda, declare that the research on “A conceptual public participation framework for ward committees to promote local government democracy” is my own work. Sources used in this study have been acknowledged by being referenced or quoted.

Signed:.....

Date.....

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“None but ourselves can free our minds” Bob Marley.

In no particular order, I take this moment to express my profound gratitude to the people who made this study possible.

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ABSTRACT

Public participation in government affairs can be traced back to pre-modern times (Fayemi, 2009:3, Campbell 2008:5). In present-day South Africa, public participation in government affairs is a principle that is provided for in the Constitution, 1996. This study develops a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees. The framework will assist ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality to effectively promote local democracy through enhanced public participation. This framework is developed in this study based on empirical research as well as a literature review. The literature review explored the statutory prescripts of public participation and the regulatory framework for ward committees. These sought to place public participation at the centre of municipal planning and local community development. The empirical aspect of this study was conducted in the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. Using a qualitative research methodology, interviews were conducted with eight municipal officials that are responsible for public participation in the municipality. Furthermore, sixty-six questionnaires were distributed to six ward committees that make up the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality.

The findings from the empirical study indicate that ward committees in the Ventersdorp region are faced with numerous challenges. In this regard, the study came up with recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of ward committees, anchored by a public participation framework, in the Ventersdorp region.

Key words: public participation, ward committees, conceptual framework, Northwest 405 Municipality, municipal affairs, democracy, local government, local democracy.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCT	City of Cape Town
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
CTS	Central Theoretical Statements
DLG	Developmental Local Government
DPLG	Department of Provincial and Local Government
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
MM	Municipal Manager
MFMA	Local Government: Municipal Financial Management Act, 56 of 2003
MSA	Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998
MSA	Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000
MOs	Municipal Officials
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NW405M	North-West 405 Municipality
PP	public participation
NWU	North West University
SA	South Africa
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
TCC	Tlokwe City Council
UM	Umuziwabantu Municipality

VLM	Ventersdorp Local Municipality
WPLG	White Paper on Local Government, 1998
WCs	Ward Committees

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explores the role of ward committees (WCs) in promoting public participation (PP) in North-West 405 Municipality (herein referred to as NW405M). The study demonstrates that public participation is an essential requirement in the sphere of local government because it promotes democratic processes and ensures effective cooperative governance and provisioning of basic services to the public.

This chapter provides the background and orientation of the study and the problem statement. In addition, the central theoretical statements (CTS), the research questions and objectives of the study as well as the research methodology are also provided. The chapter concludes by outlining the preliminary chapter layout.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

Public participation is a vital component of democracy (Tau, 2013:154), it involves stakeholders at all the levels of society (Diedericks, 2013:80). The importance of public engagement, public consultation and public participation (Williamson, 2014:4) specifically in local government affairs in a democratic state cannot be over-emphasised. Nzimakwe and Reddy (2008:667) state that public participation is 'an integral part of local democracy'. Section 2.4 of this study demonstrates that local democracy is referred to as the democratisation of the sphere of local government. Boudreau (2003:794) suggests that local democracy entails 'values related to safety, tolerance, political engagement, recognition and freedom'. In South Africa, Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and ward forums are some of the platforms that promote democracy in local municipalities (Kersting, 2012:7). Similarly, Reddy (2010:71) opines that public participation is an important aspect of local democracy. Thus, in South Africa, public participation in local government ensures that government is abreast with the needs, challenges and aspirations of the people, especially those at the grassroots who, prior to 1994 were seldom afforded the opportunity to participate in government affairs. In recent decades, public participation has become an essential aspect of democratic societies (Morebodi,

2015:14). However, to fully understand contemporary public participation in South Africa (SA) it is imperative to look at its history or lack thereof.

Before 1994, South Africa was characterised by the marginalisation of persons of colour from the cultural groups which included Blacks, Coloureds and Indians. Apart from being grounded on the idea of separating citizens on racial grounds, the apartheid system was sustained by legislation aimed at safeguarding and strengthening white people's dominance over non-white races (Goslin & Kluka, 2015:31). Mulaudzi and Liebenberg (2013:142) assert that 'black people were not allowed to participate in the decision-making processes that affected their locality'. Morebodi (2015:15) indicates that during apartheid, the government did not inform and consult the people, as such, there was lack of public accountability, transparency and widespread disregard of human rights. Thus under apartheid there was no public participation in formulation and implementation of local government policies. For instance, Blacks (who constituted the bulk of the South African population) were denied the right to vote or to contribute in the making of policies that had a bearing on their day-to-day livelihoods (Masango 2002:52). As a result, owing to the discriminatory policies prevailing at that time, public participation and local democracy were never achieved. Nyalunga (2006:undated) indicates that 'the previous government created race-based municipalities to facilitate and regulate the suppression of participation by Black, Indian and Coloured communities'.

In the period after 1990, the apartheid government under the leadership of former president F.W. de Klerk, adopted a deliberate stance of doing away with discriminatory policies by releasing Nelson Mandela and it was followed by the CODESSA talks which set SA on a road to democracy (Jolobe, 2014:1,2). The eventual enactment of the Constitution in 1996 affirmed South Africa as a constitutional democracy. The new government had the task of establishing a system of participatory governance as provided for in the Constitution, 1996. To this end, present day South Africa is a constitutional democracy that promotes participatory democracy. Participatory democracy guarantees direct citizen participation in government affairs (Hilmer, 2010:43). In an effort to promote participatory democracy, ward committees were introduced to serve as a link

between communities and local municipalities. Section 72 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 states that the objective of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. As a result, ward committees play an important role of promoting participatory democracy in South Africa.

Wang and Wan Wart (2007:266) emphasise that involving the public in government affairs leads to improved local governance. The White Paper on Local Government, 1998 maintains that building local democracy is a central role of local government, hence municipalities should develop strategies and mechanisms to continuously engage with citizens, business and community groups. Accordingly, in pursuit of participatory democracy and municipal development, ward committees were established in Northwest 405 Municipality as platforms of the community in municipal affairs. Therefore, public participation is intertwined with good governance, local democracy and developmental local government. Developmental local government is government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives (White Paper on Local Government, 1998). It can be deduced that developmental local government encourages municipalities and communities to work together for the development of their locality.

In a nutshell, participatory democracy in present day SA is a conscious move meant to counter the separatism that existed during apartheid (Ababio, 2007:615). Bearing in mind the importance of public participation in the development of local municipalities, the study explores the role of ward committees in promoting public participation as a vehicle for enhancing local democracy in North-West 405 Municipality.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Northwest 405 Municipality (NW405M) is one of the three local municipalities in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District; it is situated in the eastern part of the North West province. Northwest 405 Municipality is a newly established municipality that came into being after the recent local government elections that were held on the 3rd of August 2016

(Municipal Demarcation Board 2015). It is a product of the former Ventersdorp Local Municipality (VLM) and the former Tlokwe City Council (TCC). Collectively, the new municipality now covers an area 6 398 km² with a population of approximately 219 464 people (Tlokwe City Council IDP, 2015; Ventersdorp Local Municipality IDP, 2015).

This study submits that it is essential for municipalities to find ways of engaging the community in municipal decision-making. Davids and Maphunyane (2005:60) suggest that local government promotes local development by ensuring that local communities are engaged in the affairs of their local municipality. As stated in section 1.2 ward committees have been identified as a way of achieving effective public participation. However, effective functioning of ward committees relies on meaningful cooperation among all stakeholders in local government namely, councillors, ward committees and the local municipality. Due to mounting administrative challenges that culminated in numerous service delivery strikes (Taung Daily News, 2015), the provincial government has set up a task-force to investigate the happenings at the former VLM. During a meeting convened by a Select Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs the following views were highlighted:

- South African National Civic Organisation and Ward Committee members complained that public participation in former VLM is dormant because some councillors are not holding meetings with their wards.
- Committee members bemoaned that 'public participation was not receiving the attention it deserves' (Parliament of South Africa).

Information indicated above points to a dysfunctional state of affairs in as far as public participation is concerned. In this regard, this study aims to find ways through which local democracy can be promoted by developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees in the former Ventersdorp Local Municipality herein referred to as the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. Therefore, the Ventersdorp region of NW405M is the locus of this study. SA Breaking News (Online) indicates that in terms of section 21 of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, 27 of 1998, the Municipal Demarcation Board amalgamated VLM and TCC (Municipal Demarcation Board 2015). The study

is aware that Northwest 405 Municipality; a recently amalgamated municipality, is a product of the former Ventersdorp Local Municipality and the former Tlokwe City Council. However, data collection and empirical findings will be drawn from the area that constituted the former VLM. According to the Municipal Demarcation Board, with effect from 3 August 2016 the two municipalities merged into one.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Considering the above orientation and problem statement, the focus is now on identifying research questions that would aid in addressing the problem statement. The research questions include:

- What does public participation and local democracy according to the literature entail?
- What are the legislative and regulatory requirements seeking to promote more effective public participation of ward committees in SA?
- What do the roles and functions of ward committees in promoting public participation in Northwest 405 Municipality entail?
- What are the challenges faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in NW405M?
- How could a conceptual framework for public participation enhance the effective functioning of ward committees in Northwest 405 Municipality?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Considering the above research questions, the objectives of the study include:

- To investigate the literature pertaining to public participation and local democracy.
- To analyse the statutory and regulatory requirements that promote public participation and the effective functioning of ward committees in SA and Northwest 405 Municipality in particular.
- To analyse the role and functions of ward committees in promoting local democracy within Northwest 405 Municipality.
- To investigate the challenges faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in Northwest 405 Municipality.

- To develop a conceptual public participation framework for more effective and efficient functioning of ward committees in order to achieve the ideals of local democracy.

1.6 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENTS

The following preliminary Central Theoretical Statements (CTS) are applicable to the study:

- The object of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government (section 152 of the Constitution, 1996).
- The role of ward committees is to enhance participatory democracy in local government by making recommendations to the ward councillor on matters affecting the ward; serving as an official specialised participatory structure and a mobilising agent for community action and creating a formal unbiased communication channel and cooperative partnerships between the community and the municipality (The Department of Provincial and Local Government *in* Venter, 2014 now known as Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs).
- Public participation is the cornerstone of democracy and therefore, it should always be taken into account by political office bearers and public officials in a democratic state (Masango, 2001:131).
- Public participation-the 'cornerstone of good governance'-is fundamental in order to sustain democracy and promote good governance. If public participation is widespread, it will help keep the public functionaries accountable to the people, and will prevent politicians and public officials from making policies which are damaging to the general welfare of society (Ngcamu, 2014:146).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This section discusses the research methodology and design that was used in the study. Research methodology relates to the manner in which research data is collected, analysed and interpreted with the aim of achieving the objectives of a study. It is the overall logic behind the techniques adopted for the study (Welman,

Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:2). Grix (2001:29) states that research methods are techniques used to collate and analyse data. Research methodology refers to the methods, techniques and procedures that will be employed in the process of implementing a research plan (Welman & Kruger, 1999:39). The above quoted authors demonstrate that research methodology refers to ways through which a researcher conducts the study. This study adopted a qualitative research approach. A qualitative approach was influenced by the nature of data that was sought after in this study. As such, the researcher sought the opinions, beliefs and feelings of the respondents about ward committees and public participation in North-West 405 Municipality. Furthermore, qualitative means of data analysis were used. Neuman (2007:7) states that quantitative or empirical analytical research methods relates to data being expressed as numbers, whereas the qualitative method considers data in terms of words, pictures, or objectives.

1.7.1 Research design

Research design deals with the aims, uses, purposes, intentions and plans within the practical constraints of location, time and money (Hakim 1989:1). There are two approaches to research design, namely quantitative and qualitative approaches (Mouton & Marais, 1992:155). Kumar (2005:83) maintains that a research design is 'a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions and problems'. The table below summarises the various research designs employed by researchers in social sciences.

Exploratory research	1. 'Research into an area that has not been studied and in which a researcher wants to develop initial ideas and a more focused research question' (Neuman cited in Struwig & Stead, 2011:7). 2. Involves conducting research in an area that has not been adequately studied before and makes use of qualitative research methods (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013:60). 3. Likely to use case studies and 'secondary sources of information' to meet the objectives of the study (Struwig & Stead, 2011:7).
Descriptive research	1. Aimed at describing a phenomenon, for example customer satisfaction across various age groups, sex or level of income. 2. It is also used to test factual hypotheses or statements that do not relate two or more variables but express facts about the world' Bless et al. (2013:61). 3. Uses case studies and or statistical methods to collect data.
Explanatory research	1. Seeks to explain the relationship between variables; offers an explanation for such a variation. 2. A researcher studies at least two variable with the aim of drawing conclusions about the casual relationship between the two

Table 1: Research design approaches. Adapted from Struwig and Stead (2011:7-10) and Bless *et al.* (2013:60-62)

The research design assumes a qualitative outlook. Accordingly, literature review, document analysis, interviews and questionnaires were used. A qualitative research design gives a researcher more flexibility compared to a quantitative one (Bless *et al.*, 2013:131). In summary, research design is the entire plan of the study that answers the 'why' and 'how' questions of the study (Babbie, 2014:93).

1.8 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

A population consists of people or objects from which a researcher seeks to draw conclusions (Babbie, 2014:119). Bless *et al.* (2013:162) view population as 'the entire set of objects or people that is the focus of the research project and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics'. The target population of the study consisted of ward committees and municipal officials (MOs) in Northwest 405 Municipality. As stated in section 1.3, the locus of the study was the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. The Ventersdorp region is made up of six wards. The study collected data from all the six wards that make up the Ventersdorp region of the Northwest 405 Municipality. Each ward committee was made up of ten ward committee members and one ward councillor, bringing the population to sixty-six. The researcher also included eight MOs in the sample of the study. As such, the entire target population of the study was seventy-four. Henn,

Weinstein and Foard (2006:128) indicate that, owing to time and the cost involved, it is unusual for a researcher to question all of the people in a research study. Knupfer and McLellan (1996:1999) points out that populations do not occur naturally but rather they are defined by either the researcher or the nature of the study. Thus, the population of a particular study is not always synonymous with the conventional notion of a population of persons in a state or city. It is not unusual for a researcher to select a portion of the entire population from which to draw conclusions. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to target a specific segment of the population. The next section discusses the sampling technique employed in this study.

1.8.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which participants are selected on the basis of their knowledge on the subject (Babbie, 2014:510). Apart from the ward committees mentioned above, the researcher also gathered information from representatives of the Office of the Speaker, the Municipal Manager (MM), the offices of the Mayor and the chief whip. The above sample was selected purposely because they are involved in policy-making and governance of wards and public participation in general. In section 59, the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, submits that the Office of the Speaker coordinates and oversees public participation matters. Owing to the nature of its duties, the Office of the Mayor also extensively engages with the community. In addition, the MM oversees the activities of the municipality, as such, the MM also oversees and manages public participation in the municipality. The abovementioned offices and officials, in one way or the other, deal with public participation at municipal level. Therefore, using purposive sampling a sample of MOs was selected because of their expertise and involvement with the public. Purposive sampling allows researchers to use their ingenuity to obtain a representative sample from the population (Huysamen, 2001:44).

1.8.2 A case study approach

Northwest 405 Municipality was used as a case study for this research. A case study research allows a researcher to investigate a specific case (Goddard & Melville,

2001:9). A case study approach offered the researcher an opportunity to study ward committees in their day to day environments and, gather primary information about the real-life experiences of ward committee members for analysis. A case study depicts a slice of life, since it is a written record of an actual incident that takes place in real life (Wessels, 2007:248). Thus, a case study allowed the researcher to focus on ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M and to analyse their role in promoting public participation. The researcher physically visited the municipality and conducted interviews with MOs who are engaged with public participation and ward committees. Questionnaires were distributed to ward committee members in order to gather their views and perspective and also their roles and challenges in discharging their duties.

1.9 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection instruments in a qualitative research design refer to the tools a researcher will use in collecting data. Bless *et al.* (2013:189) point out that there are numerous ways through which a researcher can collect data, the common ones being focus groups, interviews and questionnaires. In this study, literature review, semi structured interviews and semi structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The data collection methods are discussed below:

1.9.1 Literature study/review

Literature review gives the researcher knowledge of the current theories, and it also introduces the researcher to what other researchers have studied on the subject. Bless *et al.* (2013:20) states that literature review helps the researcher to define key concepts and to identify the key variables that are found in the study. To gain an understanding of the theories of public participation and ward committees, a review of the relevant literature was carried out. The researcher used books, legislation, journals, reports and other relevant resources. Books were accessed from North-West University Library whilst Acts, journals, articles and other forms of digital information were accessed from the internet and government websites. An in-depth literature review was carried out in chapters two and three of this study.

1.9.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a written survey -which consists of open-ended questions, close-ended questions or a combination of both- used as an instrument of gathering information (Mackey & Gass, 2005:364). Questionnaires contain a list of questions to be administered to individuals who take part in a study. Sixty-six questionnaires were disseminated to sixty ward committee members and six ward councillors from six wards in the former Ventersdorp Local Municipality. Questionnaires enable researchers to obtain information from a relatively wide audience in less time compared to interviews (Babbie, 2014:510). Constructing a questionnaire is quite a challenging task because researchers are inundated with questions they feel will elicit enough information useful in fulfilling the research objectives. On the other hand, a questionnaire should be succinct and easy to understand lest the participants will find it arduous and time-consuming to complete. Therefore, a brief questionnaire aimed at addressing the objectives of the study was constructed. Below, Neuman (2014, 322-325) lists some guidelines of constructing an ideal questionnaire:

- Avoid unclear language such as jargon, acronyms, abbreviations and slang.
- Desist from emotional language, vagueness and ambiguity.
- Desist from leading and double-barreled questions.
- Avoid questions that are beyond a respondent's capabilities.

The researcher was guided by the above guidelines in preparing questionnaires that were distributed to ward committee members and ward councilors in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M. The process of designing the questionnaire is discussed in the next section.

1.9.2.1 Designing a questionnaire in this study

The questionnaire introduced respondents to the aims of the study. The researcher sought consent from the respondents and vowed to conduct the research in an ethical manner. Ward committee members are not selected on the basis of their academic merit. Thus, it is not uncommon to have ward committee members who are not academically empowered. Therefore, the questionnaire was constructed using simple English for the benefit of respondents to whom English is not the first language. In addition, the researcher came up with a mixture of close-ended and

open-ended questions so as to elicit optimal information from an average respondent. Most of the questions were close-ended, while, fewer questions were open-ended. Close-ended questions required the respondent to mark with an (x) on the appropriate answer. These were 'yes or 'no' questions. This approach was employed because it was easy for respondents to understand and respond. To gather enough data, the questionnaire also contained open-ended questions. Babbie (2014:509) states that open-ended questions are questions that allow the respondent to provide his or her own answers. Open-ended questions were used because they allowed respondents to express themselves in their own words. This study perceived open-ended questions as a rich source of information that provided a researcher with information that he may not have anticipated. To ensure that the questionnaire is orderly, most of the close-ended questionnaires were clustered together into a table.

1.9.3 Interviews

Generally speaking, an interview is a tool used by researchers to collect data from research participants (Bless *et al* 2013:392). In this study, semi-structured, face to face interviews were designed to gather information that enabled the researcher to address the research problem. Interviews give an insight into the feelings, thoughts and attitudes (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2013:52) of research participants. Thus, they afforded the researcher a chance to interact with the MOs about public participation and ward committees in Northwest 405 Municipality. The interviews were conducted with MOs stated in this section of the study. Nieuwenhuis (2012:87) indicates that there are three types of interviews namely, open-ended interviews, semi-structured interviews and structured interviews.

- A **structured interview** contains predetermined questions from which an interviewer is not allowed to deviate.
- **Semi-structured interviews** contain a set of predetermined questions however an interview is allowed to probe and seek clarification. Thus semi-structured questionnaires allow the researcher to explore the responses provided by the participant by posing supplementary questions.
- In an **open-ended interview** there are no questions prepared in advance, the researcher poses questions to the participant with the aim of exploring his/her views attitudes and beliefs about the phenomena under scrutiny.

Semi-structured interviews were used because they provided the interviewer an opportunity to probe and they also allowed the interviewer to ask follow up questions to seek clarity. Interviews are time-consuming and it is a challenge to find participants who can spare the time. As such, the researcher conducted eight face-to-face interviews with MOs from NW405M.

1.9.3.1 Designing an interview schedule for NW405M municipal officials

The semi-structured interview began by introducing the respondent to the aims of the study. The researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary, furthermore, it was emphasized that all ethical protocols shall be observed. The interviews contained 23 questions that were divided into five sections. MOs are professionals who were hired based on ability. The researcher expected the respondents to possess vast knowledge about public participation and ward committees. As professionals, they were bound to be conversant with the English language. Thus, the construction of the interview schedule was not limited by the need to keep it simple and comprehensible by an average respondent.

1.10 RESEARCH ETHICS

'Ethical behaviour helps protect individuals, communities and environments, and offers the potential to increase the sum of good in the world' (Israel & Hay, 2006:12). The researcher has an obligation to respect the basic human rights of participants who take part in the study. Huysamen (2001:178) states that research participants should be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. In the course of this study, the researcher adhered to all known ethical protocols. Respondents participated on their own will. Participating in a research project should be voluntary (Neuman, 2003:124), therefore, participants were not coerced into taking part in this study. In compliance with research ethics, the researcher ensured that no harm befell the participants. The participants were informed that it is within their discretion to discontinue taking part in the research whenever they felt uncomfortable. In compliance with North West University (NWU) procedures, the study received ethical clearance from the NWU Research and Ethics Committee.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study contributes to the body of knowledge on effective functioning of ward committees and the role of ward committees in promoting public participation in local municipalities. Public participation has gained prominence since the dawn of democratic governance in South Africa in 1994. This study highlights the challenges faced by ward committees and provides recommendations aimed at improving public participation through more effective ward committee functioning. The key contribution was the development of a conceptual framework for public participation in order to promote local democracy. Although this was a case study, information from this study would be useful not only to Northwest 405 Municipality but also to other municipalities across South Africa that can use it as a learning curve.

1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations negatively affect the empirical findings of any study. For example, resources such as time, finance and other operational arrangements negatively affected the study. Due to limited funds, time and logistical constraints the focus of the study was limited to only six wards in the Ventersdorp region.

1.13 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The layout of chapters for this study is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction, orientation and problem statement of the study

This chapter introduces the topic. It contained the background and orientation of the study, the research problem and the research objectives. In addition, it discussed the research methodology and the research design used in the study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical overview of public participation

Chapter two investigated the theoretical framework of public participation. Thus, the various theories of public participation were discussed. The chapter also dealt with the methods and the benefits of public participation. Ward committees were identified as one of the methods of public participation in local municipalities.

Chapter 3: Legislative and regulatory framework for more effective ward committee functioning

Chapter three dealt with the statutory and regulatory framework of public participation and ward committees. Various statutory instruments of public participation and the regulatory framework of ward committees were discussed.

Chapter 4: The theoretical foundations of a conceptual framework for public participation

This chapter discussed the characteristics of a conceptual public participation framework. The chapter also outlined the steps of developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees in Northwest 405 Municipality.

Chapter 5: Empirical findings: Challenges regarding the role of ward committees in promoting public participation in Northwest 405 Municipality (the previous Ventersdorp Local Municipality amalgamated into Tlokwe City Council)

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study. In this chapter, data gathered from the sample was presented and analysed.

Chapter 6: Towards a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees: summary and recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, this chapter summarises the study. Secondly, a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees is presented. Lastly, recommendations of the study and recommendations for future research were discussed. The chapter concludes with the final conclusion of the study.

1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter one covered the basic introductory aspects of this study. In this regard, this chapter provided the introduction and background of the study. The introduction and the background of the study were aimed at introducing the phenomenon of public participation in South Africa. As such, the origins and statutory tools of public participation were discussed.

Chapter one also provided the problem statement of this study. The problem statement provided an outline of Northwest 405 Municipality and a glimpse into the challenges faced by ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of the municipality. It was indicated that NW405M is a recently formed municipality, a product of the former VLM and former TLM. The researcher emphasised that this study will be limited to six ward committees that made up the former Ventersdorp Local Municipality.

In order to gather data to fulfil the objectives of this study, the researcher employed qualitative methods of collecting and gathering data. This chapter discussed and explained the research design and methodology utilised in this study. In addition to the information gathered through literature review, interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents who took part in this study. Lastly, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study and the layout of chapters in this study were outlined.

The next chapter delves into the theoretical perspectives of public participation. In essence, chapter two discusses the various theories and perspectives of public participation. In this regard, various theories are discussed; in addition, *the continuum of public participation*, the *citizen participation strategies* and the *ladder of citizen participation* are also discussed. Furthermore, in chapter two, this study submits that ward committees are one of the key instruments that promote public participation, hence local democracy, in South African municipalities. In a nutshell, the aim of the next chapter is to provide a solid theoretical basis of the phenomenon under study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced, and stated the research questions and the objectives of, this study. In pursuit of the first research objective, this chapter reviews the relevant literature of public participation.

In a democratic society, ordinary members have an opportunity to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. The Constitution, 1996 encourages community involvement in municipal matters. Louw (1994:98) states that active citizen involvement is the cornerstone of democracy. As such, citizens in South Africa have the right to participate in government affairs because government activities and policies have a bearing on the lives and well-being of the citizens. This chapter defines public participation from a democracy standpoint, furthermore, it provides an exposition of democracy. Lastly, the methods and the benefits of public participation are to be will be discussed.

2.2 THE HISTORY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This section focuses on the origins and the importance of public participation. In addition, a brief exposition of public administration and how public participation relates to it will be discussed.

As hinted in section 1.6 of this dissertation, democracy entails citizen involvement in government affairs. Public participation is an enabling element of democracy because through it citizens are involved in government affairs (Tanaka, 2007:140). The history of public participation is characterised by exclusion because, from the birth of democracy in ancient Greece not all citizens were involved in government decision-making. Decision-making was a privilege enjoyed only by political representatives, citizens' influence was largely minimal. Since ancient Greece, democracy has evolved from its exclusionary past. Modern democracy is characterised by significant guarantees of citizen involvement in government affairs. Decision-makers and elected representatives are no longer the sole decision-makers because citizens are now able to influence the direction of public decisions (Lane,

2005:283). Consequently, public participation is an enabling element of democracy which bridges the gap between direct and representative democracy. In South Africa, public involvement in political matters was galvanised by the protest movements that rose against apartheid up until the early 1990s. As previously stated in section 1.2, prior to 1994 citizens had little influence in policy-making and government decision-making. However, after the 1994 elections the new government embraced democratic governance and extended the right to participate in government affairs to the citizens. Subsequently, public participation was immortalised by the Constitution, 1996 which submits that government policies should reflect 'the will of the people'. As a result, citizen participation- as an aspect of democracy- is now a common feature in the making and implementation of public policies (Lane, 2005:283).

2.2.1 The importance of public participation

Public participation in local government has been identified as an important element for local development because it enables local planners and decision-makers to identify community needs. It enables local government officials to prioritise local development initiatives in their order of urgency. Camay and Gordon (2004:249) state that community participation is recognised globally as an important constituent of successful development. Participation in government matters keeps the public abreast with the latest developments happening in their municipality. Furthermore, it is an avenue for active civil engagement in government affairs. Public participation promotes a robust civil society because it provides community members and other local based stakeholders an opportunity to be engaged in civil society matters and activism aimed at community development (Chaney, 2016:282). Public participation must be a continuous exercise engrained in local governance. As such, public officials must desist from engaging the community only when it suits their ends but rather, they must cultivate a culture of community engagement in all aspects of local governance because participation goes beyond a one-time meeting between municipal officials and members of the community (Chikerema, 2013:87). Thus, public participation is a continuous process of engaging community members in planning, implementing and monitoring projects that improve the well-being of the community (Mubangizi, 2010:158).

Camay and Gordon (2004:250-251) emphasise the importance of public participation by stating the following:

- It gives the public a platform to air their preferences to decision-makers such as administrators and political representatives.
- Public participation legitimises policy decisions. If the public was involved in the making of a policy they are likely to support it because they know it incorporated their views.
- It is a platform that can be used by under-represented and disadvantaged groups in society that are often overlooked by decision-makers for example the youth, the old and the physically challenged
- It is an instrument used by politicians to gather information about community problems and needs from the grassroots.

From the above, it can be deduced that participation goes beyond mere rubber stamping of premeditated decisions. It is a process that includes the people from the beginning when projects are initiated, to the conception stage and ultimately the implementation of development programmes. Furthermore, community engagement in local development initiatives invokes a sense of ownership and local pride in the local community. Cele (2015:22) remarks that 'public participation helps in building informed and responsible citizens who have a sense of ownership of all amenities and services provided for them'. It positively influences the outcomes of projects being undertaken because the community is likely to support such developments (Tsenoli, 1994:33) as they view themselves as part of local development. Therefore, public participation is a crucial element in the local government sphere, it should be continuously carried out for the benefit of the local authority and the community.

The next section demonstrates that public administration, among many other functions, is concerned with ensuring the effective and efficient management of human and material resources in the public sector. Accordingly, citizens' welfare is a paramount concern of government. Through public participation government, in this case local government, seeks to have an up-to-date understanding of the desires, wishes and challenges of the citizens. Section 2.2.3 demonstrates that public participation and public (management) administration cannot be alienated. However,

before that can be achieved, the next section briefly summarises 'public administration' as an academic discipline and also as a public sector practice.

2.2.2 A brief exposition of public administration

Public administration is a blend of theory and practice that emanates from the generic concept of administration. Theoretically, Public Administration refers to the study of the discipline whereas, in practice it relates to the activities and practice of administration in public sector organisations by civil servants and bureaucrats. A number of definitions have been provided for "public administration". Theletsane (2013:175) submits that there is no uniform definition of the term. However, Theletsane (2013:175) states that it refers to 'the structuring, staffing, financing and control of the public sector and the formulation, implementation and reviewing of policy'. The practice of public administration is as old as mankind, though largely undocumented and relatively unsophisticated, ancient civilisations such as the Roman Empire, African kingdoms and Asian monarchs practiced some form of public administration. Basheka (2012:29) asserts that traces of public administration were present as early as 1451BC, the aforementioned author identifies Moses' delegation of authority to the twelve tribes of Israel along hierarchical lines as a clear indication of the existence of public administration in ancient times.

Public administration falls under the generic discipline of administration. While administration is a trans-disciplinary concept found in numerous institutional situations such as government departments and business organisations, public administration is confined to public sector institutions where the goal is to govern and manage public resources in pursuit of political goals. Public administration is unique because of its relationship with government functions, as such it is regarded as a significant part of government that is instrumental in formulating and meeting government goals (Denhardt, 2000:551). Government institutions differ from their private counterparts because unlike the latter they are not solely motivated by profit, instead they are preoccupied with the general welfare of citizens. As such, the public is interested in how government institutions are run. Hence, legislation and regulations governing the conduct of staff in the public sector ensures that government workers do not neglect their mandate. Having provided a succinct

exposition of public administration, the next section dwells on the link between public participation and public administration.

2.2.3 Linking public participation and public administration

Public administration promotes the effective, efficient and economical management of public institutions to enable them to achieve the goals of government. Kaufman in Ntonzima and Ferreira (2015:381) indicates that effectiveness in goal-achievement, competence in the performance of public enterprises and constitutionalism sums up the primary goals of public administration. Therefore, public administration is a goal-oriented exercise that promotes good governance in the public sector. Good governance ensures that public officials and public institutions adhere to their constitutional mandate of ensuring better living standards for all citizens (Johnston, 2002:1). Kofi Annan in (Weiss, 2000:797) indicates that good governance entails strengthening democracy, capacity, rule of law and transparency in public administration. Hyden (cited by Camay & Gordon, 2004:19) identifies 'citizen influence and oversight' as a prerequisite for good governance. In this context, citizen influence and oversight refer to ways through which ordinary people can contribute towards public policies. Deductively, public participation plays an important role in strengthening democracy. Public participation -as one of the elements of good governance- promotes efficiency and accountability in the public sector. As such, public participation cannot be separated from the practice of public administration.

Public sector institutions, hence public administration, do not operate in isolation. They are influenced by the environment from which they operate. In any government environment, political dynamics are always at play mainly because democratic governments get their mandate to govern from the citizens. Citizens are keen on ensuring that government fulfils its mandate, thus the environment citizens have an impact on public sector organisations. At the heart of government is the need to improve the general welfare of citizens. Cloete (2008:95) remarks that one of the functions of government is to promote citizens' growth and development. Public officials should be cognisant of the needs of the community whose needs they seek to satisfy. In this regard, public participation is important to the theory and practice of

public administration because it is an avenue that highlights the challenges faced by citizens. Through public participation, government and academics can evaluate public policies and development agendas and how they impact on the communities to whom they are designed for. Government policies and legislation must be responsive to the aspirations of the citizens. The role of the public in public management has long been a matter of debate, controversy and experimentation (King, Feltey & Susel, 1998:317). From the above exposition of public participation and public administration, it is evident that public participation and public administration cannot be separated. This study is premised on the presumption that public participation in government affairs is a crucial element of democracy. The next section conceptualises democracy by identifying the different types of democracy.

2.3 CONCEPTUALISING DEMOCRACY

Public participation is the result of democratic processes that are being followed in a country in order to obtain the buy-in of citizens in the affairs of government. It is therefore important as a point of departure, to provide an overview of what democracy means for purposes of this study. Democracy first emerged in ancient Greece, as such ancient Greece is regarded as the origin of democracy (Fayemi, 2009:3). *Demos* referred to 'people' whilst *kratos* stood for 'rule', 'strength' and 'power' (Campbell 2008:5) in ancient Greek. Similarly, Luckham, Goetz and Kaldor (2003:15) suggest that democracy was derived from a classical Greek term that translates to 'rule by the people'. Hyland (1995:37) indicates that it was derived from an ancient Greek term *demokratia* which meant popular government. Weale (2007:18) states that democracy allows direct citizen involvement in public policy making. As such, a democratic order safeguards the interests of the citizens by giving them the authority to determine who represents them. Through their representatives, citizens influence government policies because representatives are elected according to their ability to represent the interests of the constituencies. Democracy allows citizens to influence the decisions of the government by taking part in decision-making because government policies have a bearing on the well-being of the citizens. Patrick (2006:6) affirms that democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people. A democratic state is one that values and is sustained by the wishes of the people because government is at the people's service. In this regard, public participation is key because it provides an avenue for

citizens to register their interests. Democracy cannot exist if opportunities are not availed for citizens to participate in government affairs (Waldron, 2002:52). Measures must be established to ensure that no citizens are excluded from not participating in government affairs because government decisions affect all and sundry. Tshishonga and Mbambo (2008:768) indicate that democracy is a form of direct citizen power. This study shares this sentiment and recognises that public participation is an element of democracy. Modern democracy has significantly evolved since its birth in ancient Greece. Today there is a multiplicity of types of democracies globally. Due to the nature and scope of this study, it will only discuss local democracy which is presented in the next section. The three main types of democracy in preparation for the conceptualisation of local democracy, will be discussed.

2.3.1 Types of democracy

Democracy is broadly categorised into representative, participatory and direct democracy. Lutz (2006:45) argues that categorisation of democracies is largely theoretical because it is based on 'unrealistic assumptions about how direct democracy works'. This is subsequently discussed.

- **Representative democracy:** Representative democracy is a democratic order where citizens elect representatives who will represent their interests. Representative democracy allows individuals drawn from the population to represent the interests of their constituencies (Verba, 1999:238). A classic example of representative democracy is people electing members of Parliament who represent them in Parliament. Klein, Kiranda and Bafaki (2011:4) indicate that representative democracy is the most common type of democracy in modern governments because it enables individuals to elect political leaders who formulate laws and make political decisions on behalf of the citizens. Taken literally, representative democracy is premised on a select group of individuals representing society at large through popular will. It involves citizen participation in political processes albeit through elected representatives (Besley & Coate, 1997:106). Delegation of citizen power to political representatives does not mean citizen's authority is undermined. On the contrary public participation is guaranteed under a representative democracy because through public will representatives are given the mandate

to represent the constituency. Patrick (2006:32) identifies the people as the source of power in a representative democracy because it is the people who elect leaders to represent them in political processes.

- **Direct democracy:** Direct democracy enables citizens to participate in political processes of government such as public policies and political decision-making processes. Carswell (2002:55) indicates that direct democracy ensures people-centered democracy by making 'the governing subservient to the governed'. As such citizens have significant influence on the decision-making apparatus of government therefore direct democracy is the transference of responsibility of running public affairs from national government to local citizens (Carswell, 2002:35). Hence, democracy brings political and administrative authority to the people. Eisinger cited in (Fatke & Freitag, 2012:238) indicates that direct democracy promotes transparency in the political decision-making process because citizens are involved in the exercise. Direct democracy is an uninterrupted exercise of authority by the people with the aim of influencing government decisions by utilising various mechanisms established to allow citizens to participate in government affairs.
- **Participatory democracy:** The need for a more participatory approach of democracy that enables citizens to be closely engaged in political affairs of government necessitated the emergence of participatory democracy. Setala (2009:151) declares that 'citizens' direct participation in politics would involve enormous practical problems in the modern context. Smit and Oosthuizen (2011:60) indicate that it enables citizens to participate in decision-making procedures of public institutions. Participatory democracy is instrumental in promoting accountability in government because citizens are aware of government programs and policies and how they should be achieved. As such, elected representatives and public officials must always work towards the attainment of government's objectives.

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that democracy promotes the involvement of citizens in government decision-making. In real life situations, the three types of democracy rarely operate in isolation. It is not uncommon to have

elements of all the three types of democracy present in one state. The next section focuses on the nature of democratic governance in South Africa and how it impacts on public participation.

2.3.2 Democratic governance in South Africa

South Africa is a democratic country which is governed in line with its Constitution, 1996. Therefore, it is a constitutional democracy (Smit & Oosthuizen, 2011:55). A constitutional democracy is a state that recognises the supremacy of the constitution and legislation that emanates from it. Generally speaking, a constitutional democracy is a democratic state that is governed through adherence to the constitution. Du Pisani (2010:9) states that 'constitutional democracy' refers to a democratic state whereby the constitution is the supreme law that binds all the institutions, political or otherwise. It is a system of government that is built on the principle of the 'rule of law'. A constitutional democracy stands in contrast to authoritarian and totalitarian regimes that have no regard for rule of law (Rosenfeld, 2001:1310). Democratic governance in South Africa refers to government's adherence to democratic principles as pronounced by the Constitution, 1996. Reddy (2010:67) remarks that South Africa became a democratic state in 1994 when voting rights were extended to all citizens of South Africa regardless of race. Globally, South Africa is lauded as a success story of democracy (Kotze, 2004:23) because it metamorphosed from an authoritarian state to one that is democratically governed and upholds the rule of law. Before 1994 there were no democratic structures that allowed all South Africans to participate in electing political representatives in the three spheres of government (Van der Waldt, 2014:20). Currently all citizens enjoy an array of human, voting and property rights coupled with government's commitment to promote participatory democracy. Citizens have an opportunity to participate in government affairs because the Constitution, 1996 mandates the government to devolve democracy to the three spheres of government so as to allow citizens to participate in political affairs and public decision-making. The ambit of this study is limited to public participation in local municipalities. In South Africa, municipalities are located in the local sphere of government, the next section will provide a contextualisation of local democracy.

2.4 CONTEXTUALISING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

The devolution of political and administrative autonomy to the local level of government plays a crucial role in the democratisation process of a country. This is especially true in the case of emerging democracies that are still building and strengthening their growing democracies on all levels of society and government. Local democracy is as much important as is regional and national democracy. Local democracy unlocks opportunities for public participation in government affairs mainly because through local government, government authority is brought closer to the communities. Local democracy is the extension of democracy to the low levels of government; it refers to democracy at local government level. Ribot (2008:1) suggests that it is a process that holds local leaders accountable and responsive to the needs of the community. Reddy (1999:9) indicates that local democracy enables local citizens to participate in influencing local policies and elect representatives eligible to govern them. Local democracy exists where there is significant devolution of political, legislative and administrative authority to the local government sphere. Accordingly national governments across the world have resorted to extending government authority to public institutions located at the local levels of society. Local democracy, referred to as grassroots democracy (Tshishonga & Mbabambo, 2008:768) ensures that local people are empowered by participating in government matters that impact on their livelihoods. Local government institutions such as local and district municipalities are legally and politically equipped (by section 40, 41, 151 and 152 of the Constitution, 1996) to manage their affairs without undue influence from the top echelons of government such as the national sphere of government which traditionally held government authority. Brynard (1996:138) asserts that local government is synonymous with local democracy. Local democracy affords ordinary people opportunities to be part of local government processes such as development planning. Local democracy cannot be alienated from public participation because through participation ordinary citizens are afforded an opportunity to participate in government matters. As such, the point of departure of this study is that public participation and local democracy are intertwined and thus complimentary.

In South Africa local democracy refers to the existence of democracy in the sphere of local government. The devolution and composition of government into the three distinct and interdependent spheres (as expounded in section 40 of the Constitution,

1996) brought government closer to the people. This resulted in significant community engagement in government political affairs through local municipalities, councillors and structures such as ward committees. Devolution of government autonomy promotes local democracy by encouraging community engagement in local municipalities. Municipalities play an important role in the democratisation of the sphere of local government and enhancing local democracy. Citizen engagement in government affairs is relatively easy to carry out at local level because local government institutions are located amidst the communities they serve.

The local government sphere is vital for democracy because it enables local people to participate in government matters that affect their well-being (Reddy, 1999:13). Public participation is the cornerstone of local democracy, this makes it imperative for local municipalities to continuously find ways to promote community engagement in municipal matters. To this end the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 directs local municipalities to establish ward committees to enhance local democracy. The legislative and policy framework of ward committees will be provided in Chapter 3. Ward committees are community-based structures that bridge the gap between members of the community and the local municipality. They promote local democracy by bridging the communication gap between the community and the municipality (Naidu, 2011:2) by giving the community a platform to interact with public officials. By so doing they are a tool that extends local democracy beyond elected representatives (Thornhill, 2008:503) by ensuring extensive community participation in municipal policy-making particularly through IDP (Naidu, 2011:2).

In summary, democracy at play in the lower levels of government is called local democracy. In South Africa it is enhanced by institutional provisions such as ward committees because they promote maximum public participation in municipal matters. As such ward committees and public participation are local mechanisms that foster local democracy in the local government sphere. The study recognises the importance of public participation in strengthening democracy, hence local democracy. Public participation is also instrumental in the sustainability and promotion of local democracy. As such, the next section of this study will investigate the relationship between public participation and local democracy.

2.4.1 Linking public participation and local democracy

The conceptualisation of local democracy reveals that public participation is part and parcel of strengthening and perpetuating a democratic dispensation. Public participation is an important element of local democracy because through participation local communities have access to local planners and decision-makers. This is important because local communities have first-hand experiences that can influence the nature of municipal policies. As such community members are a reliable source of information that municipalities can utilise in the formulation of development policies. Reddy and Maharaj (*in* Saito, 2008:201) maintain that public participation is critical to the attainment of local democracy because it ensures that local government fulfils its developmental obligations. As such it is a component of local democracy (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:667). Local government legislation directs municipalities to engage communities in municipal affairs. As such it can be deduced that community members have a right to be part of the democratic processes in their locality. Ward committees are one of the readily accessible mechanisms that enable local communities to participate in municipal affairs. Similarly Castillo (2013:5) indicates that public participation impacts positively on local democracy. Mafunisa and Xaba (2008:453) proclaim that it is the people's right to be part of their government's democratic processes. Active public participation assists the growth of local democracy in as much as it fulfils legal imperatives. The growth of local democracy is important in South African municipalities owing to the unequal nature of development across the country. Through local democracy a huge chunk of local communities across the country have an opportunity to have their challenges heard. Thus local democracy is an avenue through which all the citizens, especially the marginalised ones, can seek redress and better their living circumstances by contributing to development policies. Public participation is important to sustain a democratic dispensation, in the absence of public participation a government cannot be considered democratic (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:671).

Camay and Gordon (2004:17) state that 'sound governance is participatory, transparent and accountable'; it relies on direct and continued participation by the public in formulating and implementing government policies. Quinot (2009:397) avers that participatory democracy introduces aspects of direct democracy into modern

societies at the same time retaining citizens' prerogative to participate in decision-making activities that have a bearing on their daily lives. Community influence exerted through public participation contributes towards sound management practices in local public institutions. This is because continuous public engagement in public affairs encourages public officials to focus on their mandate which is satisfying the needs of the community and raising the general standard of living of the community. Community Based Organisations (CBOs), ward committees and civil society organisations are some of the structures through which local democracy can be effectively promoted. Chapter 4 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 identifies ways through which orderly community participation can be implemented.

Direct participation in local government affairs gives local people a stake in the decision-making processes of local government. Local democracy puts the community at the epicentre of local democratic processes. Local democracy fills the gaps left behind by elected political representatives. In this case local democracy complements representative democracy. Direct public participation in local government takes place alongside institutions of representative democracy thus the two should not be separated or viewed in isolation because they are complimentary strategies aimed at achieving maximum and extensive community involvement in local government affairs. Having outlined the relationship between democracy and public participation especially at the local level the succeeding section of the study will unpack the phenomenon of public participation by discussing the theoretical foundations of public participation. Consequently, theories and models that deal with the phenomenon will be discussed.

2.5 THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Theories and models are important because they assist researchers to understand the phenomenon under study. Our modern construct of the word 'theory' was derived from the ancient Greek word *theoria* which meant contemplation. Potur and Kayihan (2011:119) state that the term *theoria* dates back to the times of ancient philosophers such as Aristotle. *Theoria* was devoted to investigating reality. In other words *theoria* was perceived as an empirical exercise that seeks to promote human understanding through experiences. *Theoria* carried a shallow connotation when

compared to the contemporary understanding of the term because in modern times it refers to a scientific construct or model (Harrington, 2005:2). A theory is an explanatory tool used to comprehend, predict and explain a phenomenon that one would normally have difficulties in understanding (Gilbert, 2015:28-30). To interrogate the philosophy of public participation, three theories namely the social theory, the democratic theory and the public choice theory have been identified. Furthermore the 'ladder of citizen participation, the continuum of public participation and the strategies of citizen participation will be provided to complement the aforementioned theories. The following section is a presentation of various theories, models on public participation.

- I. ***The Social Theory:*** It is the 'study of scientific ways of thinking about social life' (Harrington, 2005:1). The social theory encompasses a wide range of social aspects such as how societies initiate change and adapt to their surroundings. It seeks to scientifically describe, explain and analyse aspects of social behaviour such as social structures, power, class, revolutions amongst many other problems encountered by society. The theory is important to this study because it enhances our understanding of ordinary human interaction in various contexts and how such interactions affect society. It enriches our understanding of social group dynamics, social interactions and how ordinary people interactions shape social cognition and activism. In times of popular discontent interaction between ordinary citizens is important because it is the basis of community power which leads to societal change when exerted on authorities such as public sector institutions. Social theory emanates from every day-life interaction between ordinary people in the form of discussions and conversations. Harrington (2005:6) believes that such interactions are the basis of social movements, political parties and mass actions such as strikes and revolutions. In the domain of public administration the theory helps us to understand the roots of social participation in contentious issues and activism in political affairs. Social theory is 'the organic extension of social debates in which every ordinary person has a say and a capacity to contribute' (Harrington, 2005:6). In the South African local government context where there is community discontent on the nature of municipal

services as witnessed by the prevalence of service delivery strikes (Netswera & Kgalane, 2014:261), the social theory enhances our understanding of the root causes of such actions and how they impact on communities. The social theory is applicable to the study of public participation through ward committees because apart from understanding social dynamics it helps to explain participation through the ward committees as a representative group of the community.

- II. *The Public Choice Theory:*** The public choice theory was adapted from the field of economics focusing on taxation and public spending. The public choice theory seeks to understand human behaviour by using approaches traditionally applied in economic sciences. The public choice theory is a positivist theory which submits that people's decision-making is motivated by personal interest and personal gain (Hill, 1999:1). It states that individuals are unlikely to concern themselves in activities that do not benefit them directly. Felkins (1997) indicates that politicians, bureaucrats and other public officials are motivated by self-interests. As such they are likely to formulate and implement policies that benefit them directly, be it financially or to elevate their careers. James Buchanan quoted by Shugart (2008) describes public choice as 'politics without romance' because it displaces the conventionally held perception that 'participants in the political sphere aspire to promote common good'. Felkins (1997) indicates public choice theorists submit that citizens can exert their influence on the government thereby curtailing the excesses of public officials through constitutionalism. Public participation in the affairs of governments is one of the fundamental values enshrined in most modern constitutions. South Africa is not an exception in this regard.

The public choice theory highlights the self-centredness impulse of people in decision-making. The same principles hold in the arena of politics and governance therefore effective mechanisms must be put in place to deter ultimate political authority to reside in the hands of few politicians, bureaucrats and civil servants. According to Shaw (1993), one of the primary foundations of the public choice theory is voters' apathy to

effectively monitor government. Voter apathy and lacklustre interest in political affairs is against the goal of democracy which states that citizens are the ultimate source of government authority. According to Merrifield (1993:657) voter apathy refers to a low voter turn-out compared to the number of eligible voters. In summary the public choice theory is an economics concept that was adopted to describe and explain political realities and how they impact on the nature of public decisions (Blankart & Koester, 2006:171). It is relevant in the field of public administration because it highlights why it is necessary to promote participatory democracy as a way of curtailing the excesses of representative democracy. By highlighting the selfish nature of some public officials the public choice theory encourages the establishment of effective systems of public involvement in the decision-making processes of government.

III. The Democratic Theory: The primary preoccupation of the democratic theory is to find meaning and define democracy and its related concepts. The democratic theory emphasises on popular sovereignty whereby the exercise of political authority is legitimate only when it is justifiable by and to the people on whom it is exercised (Abizadeh, 2008:41). It emanates from the field of political theory. It is a concept that can be traced to ancient Greece where democracy first emerged. It has long been accepted that democracy entails a measure of self-rule, the democratic theory stems from the philosophy of democracy and democratic governance. According to Fung (2007:443-444) the democratic theory maintains that democracy is made up of the following components (i) institutions, free and fair elections, civil and political liberties, civic associations and referenda, (ii) a democratic government is one that is prepared to listen and accommodate the views of all citizens without reproach. The democratic order proposes that the people must be actively involved in government affairs. As such governments are perceived as people-oriented entities where the aspirations and interests of the people are accommodated as a matter of principle. Within the dense body of knowledge of democracy arises questions about the application of democracy. The questions arise: who are the people? What role do they play in the government?

Political equality is a fundamental value of the democratic theory; it dictates that citizens have the right to participate in the affairs of government as equal partners without fear, favour or prejudice. Citizens are allowed to vote and engage in any programmes that enable them to influence the policies adopted by the government (Miller, 2009:204). The democratic theory enhances our understanding of the principles of democracy and how those principles are at play in a democratic society. With regards to public participation, the democratic theory is relevant because through the theory public administration scholars can identify how to efficiently harness public participation in a democratic dispensation with the aim of promoting local democracy in the local government sphere.

2.5.1 Citizen participation strategies

The *Citizen Participation Strategies* (herein referred to as strategies) published in 1968 are a brainchild of Edmund, M Burke. The strategies, illustrated in figure 1, provide an insight into the various ways through which citizens are involved in decision-making. The strategies investigate the effectiveness of various methods of citizen participation in decision-making. Burke (1968:287) highlights the potential clashes between participatory democracy and professional expertise by stating that planners and decision-makers are often reluctant to include citizens in the decision-making processes because they reckon that citizens do not possess the requisite expertise required to enable them to be useful. The five strategies of citizen participation are highlighted below in the presentation of the figure of the five

strategies of citizen participation.

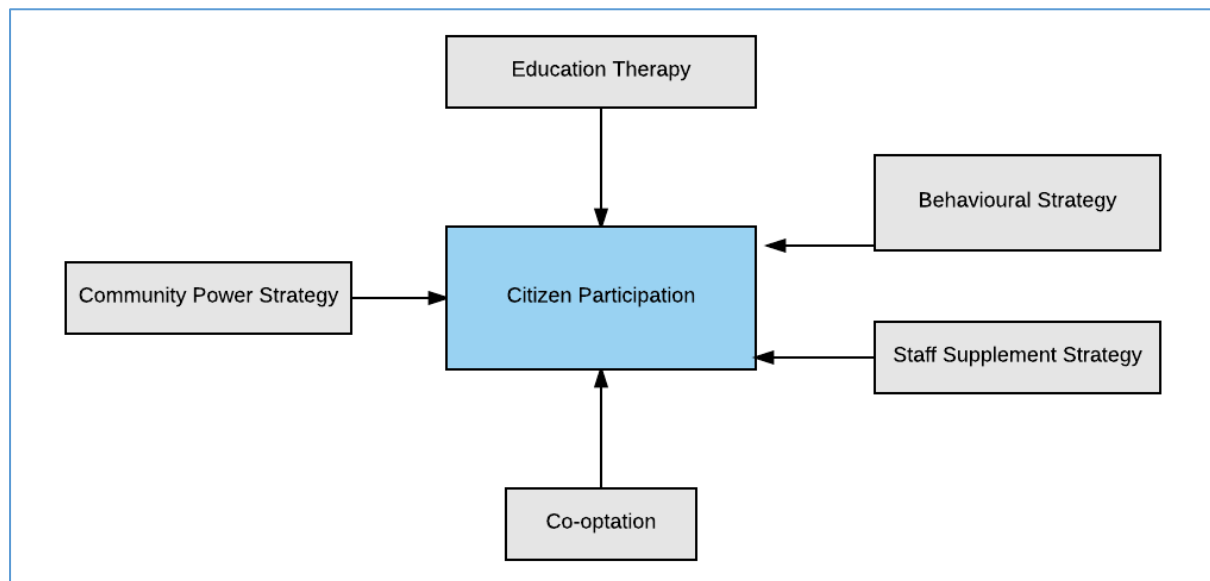


Figure 1. An illustration of Burke's (1968) five strategies of citizen participation

Source: Burke (1968)

- (i) **Education-therapy strategy:** This strategy focuses on the improvement of participants as opposed to achieving a specific task. As such the strategy involves educating and training participants to equip them with skills required to solve community problems. The internship of community members is aimed at strengthening local government, promoting development and instilling a sense of community identification. Furthermore it is instrumental in developing self-confidence and self-reliance in the community (Burke, 1968:288). The education-therapy strategy disseminates information and knowledge to the participants with the objective of equipping participants with skills that are necessary for future problem-solving.
- (ii) **Behavioural change strategy:** The behavioural strategy seeks to influence individual behaviour through group membership. It is believed that individuals are likely to conform to group practices and group thinking when they are members of a certain group. Burke (1968:289) believes group participation is a major force for changing group behaviour. This strategy accentuates the importance of individual behaviour in group environment thus the main focus of this strategy is to effect community

change by focusing on individuals and influential representatives in society. Two major premises underlie the behavioural strategy. First, it is easier to change individual behaviour in a group setting than to do so separately. Secondly, individuals and groups resist decisions imposed on them. Individuals and groups are likely to accept decisions if they were involved in their decision-making process. The second premise of the behavioural strategy resonates with community members in the local government sphere where they are likely to embrace decisions and projects that they were involved in as compared to those thrust on them. Ward committees act as groups that represent the community therefore it is important to understand the relationship dynamics of groups such as ward committees because they have an influence on the community. Burke (1968:290) affirms that it is impractical to include everyone for example, groups can be used to represent the community at large. Groupings such as ward committees are instrumental in representing the community.

- (iii) **Staff supplement strategy:** Staff supplement identifies voluntarism as an element of citizen participation. Burke (1968:290) mentions that hospitals, youth movements, scouts and fundraising agencies are examples of organisations that rely on voluntarism to achieve their organisational goals. By recruiting into the organisations, citizens participate through volunteering. An organisation's staff is equipped with the necessary human resources management skills so as to manage volunteers to attain organisational goals. The staff supplement strategy hardly involves most of the citizens in planning and decision-making because only a few are involved in planning, the rest will be following instructions from the organisations' regular staff.
- (iv) **Co-optation:** Co-optation is a citizen participation strategy whereby individuals who are likely to obstruct an organisation's goal are co-opted into the organisation as an appeasement measure (Burke, 1968:291). In this case citizens are not viewed as partners instead they are viewed as potential elements of obstruction and frustration so organisations co-opt

them as a pre-emptive tactic. Organisations identify potential threats in the environment that can negatively affect the attainment of organisational goals in the immediate or near future. The threats are then absorbed into the organisation as a way of neutralising them. The significance of this strategy is that it shows that participation is not always two-way, neither is it always a bottom to top exchange of information. In some instances organisations are motivated by their own interests and are prepared to achieve their goals even through latent treachery.

- (v) ***Community power strategies:*** Community power relates to the collective power held by the community which can be used to pressure organisations or government. In this case power emanates from a number of people coming together and using their influence for a common cause. Burke (1968:292) indicates that citizens can collectively effect change by confronting the traditional systems of authority such as local government institutions or public sector organisations. Examples of community power include boycotts, demonstrations, picketing and strikes. In summary, community power strategy is a cohesive strategy whereby disgruntled individuals team up to accrue sizeable numbers which are used to put pressure on powerful institutions to encourage them to negotiate or consider their conditions.

2.5.2 The ladder of citizen participation

Sherry Arnstein, in 1969, published 'a ladder of citizen participation'. It shows citizen participation in decision-making processes ranging from low to high as one goes up the ladder as illustrated in figure 2. It was conceived in America, however it is relevant in non-American environments and cannot be underestimated as it helps us to understand, describe and analyse the dynamics of citizen participation in decision-making. Arnstein (1969:216) regarded participation by the governed in the affairs of government as the 'cornerstone of democracy' which should ultimately lead to citizen power. Participation is a mechanism through which 'have-nots' are involved in decision-making. Have-nots are individuals or groups of individuals who are normally left out of the decision-making process, consequently these are the marginalised and poor, for example blacks, Native Americans and immigrants (Arnstein, 1969:216). By

likening citizen participation to citizen power, Arnstein (1969:216) highlights the important role of citizen participation as she believed that citizens are empowered by participating in decision-making processes (Connor, 1988:249). Limited or lack of participation results in the emasculation of the poor because it is an avenue of raising awareness about their deprivation.

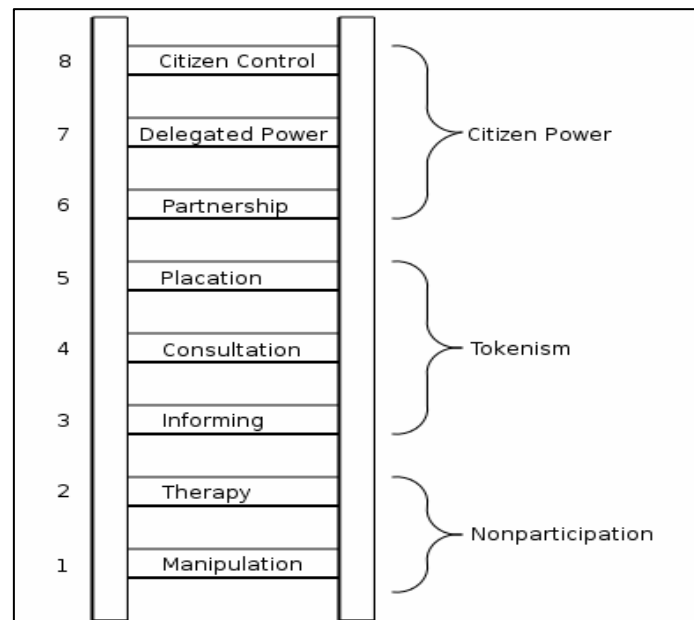


Figure 2. The ladder of citizen participation

Adapted from Arnstein, 1969

- (i) **Non participation:** This stage makes up the bottom rungs of the ladder and it consists of two rungs namely (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy. Arnstein (1969:218) asserts that at the “manipulation” stage participation is only done to fulfil the objectives of the authorities, consequently, it does not benefit the participants. The aforementioned rungs represent the lowest form of participation. There is little meaningful citizen participation because it serves to “educate” or “cure” the participants.
- (ii) **Tokenism:** It consists of three rungs, the first is (3) Informing, the second is (4) Consultation and the third is (5) Placation. Participants are given the opportunity to contribute however, they lack the authority to ensure that their contributions are considered. Citizen participation at this level lacks the necessary muscle needed to change the status quo. The fifth rung, (5) Placation, is merely a higher level tokenism because at this level citizens

are allowed to advise those in authority however those in authority make final decisions with or without regarding citizens' advice.

- (iii) **Citizen power:** Consisting of three rungs, it is the highest level of citizen participation where citizens have increasing degrees of decision-making powers. At this stage citizens can be in (6) Partnership which will enable them to negotiate and engage with traditional power holders. At the second top of the ladder (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizens Control, citizens are part of the decision-making apparatus and they retain the majority decision-making authority. Citizens have control of the decision-making apparatus and they influence the decisions made (Arnstein, 1969:221). This stage represents citizen's total emancipation of the decision-making process. As a consequence, they directly influence public policies because they are part of the decision-making apparatus.

2.5.3 The continuum of public participation

The continuum of public participation is a typology that contains four stages and examples of public participation ranging from nominal participation to full participation (Krishnaswamy, 2009: 246). A typology refers to a tool that helps researchers to test an assertion (Newman, Ridenour, Newman & DeMarco, 2003:167). The above mentioned authors caution against the notion of likening a typology to a rigid framework or model because models and frameworks tend to have limits. In other words they are 'boxed' concepts. Typologies are usually in a diagrammatic form that lays out the various aspects of the subject under study and how they interact.

By conceiving public participation in four simple stages, the continuum of participation is relevant to the philosophy of public participation because it enables participants to gauge their extent of participation and how it impacts on decision-making. As depicted in figure 3 below, the continuum shows that the extent of public participation increases as one goes through the stages.

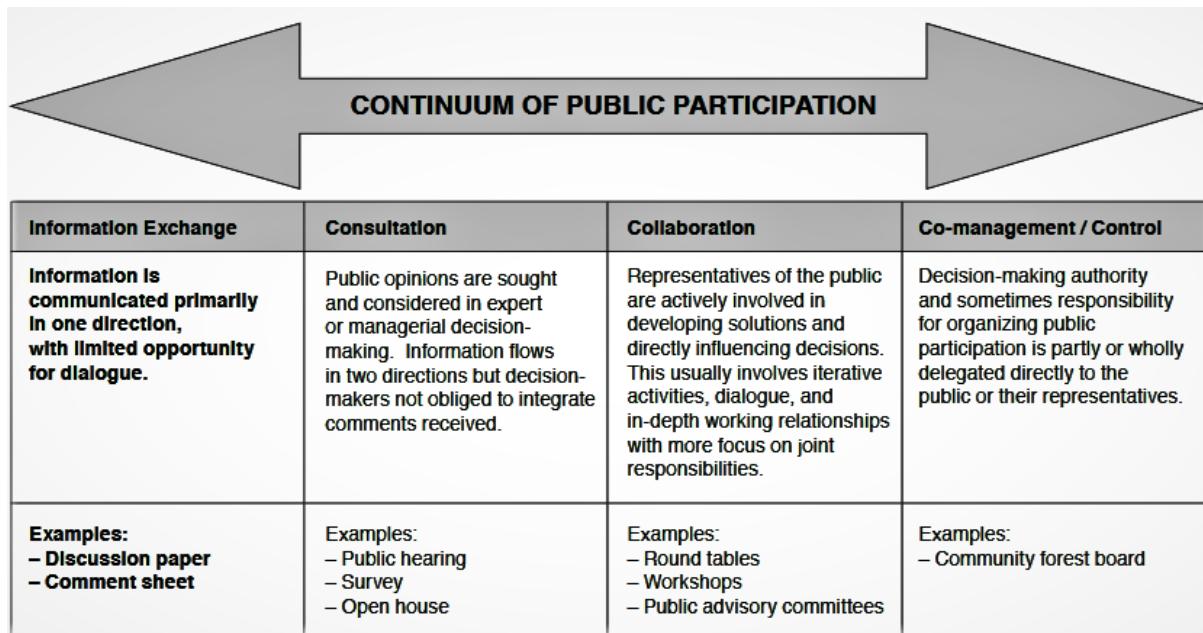


Figure 3. The continuum of public participation

Adapted from Krishnaswamy, 2009

- Information exchange:** Information exchange is presented as the initial stage of public participation. Questionnaires administered to the public are the standard tool of information exchange. Members of the public are requested to complete the questionnaires appropriately as a way of providing information. Despite being an efficient method of gathering community views its main drawback is that community members do not have an opportunity to have a face to face dialogue with the planners and decision-makers. Furthermore it is one-sided and does not provide channels for feedback.
- Consultation:** Consultation allows the public to contribute in decision-making. It allows for two-directional flow of information between the people and the authorities, however authorities are not obliged to consider the views of the public. There are no guarantees that public input will influence decision-making because authorities can involve the public as a mere gesture without any commitment to include the views elicited from the people. The involvement of the public is of minimal significance because their contributions are disregarded.

- **Collaboration:** Collaboration actively involves public representatives in decision-making. The representatives of the public have an opportunity to directly influence the decisions taken or policies formulated. The only disadvantage is that the public is represented through representatives however this drawback is ameliorated by the notion that representatives carry the public's mandate.
- **Co-management/control:** The final stage of the continuum of public participation is co-management/ control. As the title pre-emptively it denotes public control of the decision-making process. At this stage the public has a greater extent of control of the decision-making apparatus either through delegation or co-management. The public has direct access to decision-making therefore they actively influence the decisions made. This is the peak of public participation because the public is actively involved and can influence the direction of the decisions made. What is almost important is that they control the decision-making process.

In many ways the continuum of public participation resembles Arnstein's '*Ladder of citizen participation*' because it shows that the extent of participation increases as one proceeds through the stage. Furthermore it shows that public participation in its infant stages is nothing more than top-down interaction because there are no incentives for authorities to consider the contributions of the participants; consequently participants have no influence on the final decisions or policies made in this regard. The relevance of this model is that it highlights that effective public participation involves a two-way flow of information as opposed to a one directional flow of information especially from top to down.

The aforementioned theories and models are vital in the conceptualisation of public participation because they provide a philosophical understanding of the nature of public participation and how participation impacts on public policies. However theories alone will not suffice to unpack the phenomenon of public participation in the South African local government sphere. As such, the succeeding section attempts to define public participation by acknowledging the views of contemporary scholars.

2.6 CONCEPTUALISING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As was demonstrated above, public participation as an element of local democracy plays a vital role in the democratisation of a country. In simple terms, public participation involves consulting citizens in the affairs and decision-making of government. This section will explore public participation in the South African local government sphere.

2.6.1 The building blocks of public participation

Public participation as a concept is essentially made up of two elements namely the public and participation. This section of the study attempts to unbundle public participation by discussing the sole elements of public participation in isolation.

- **Public:** According to Van der Waldt (2014: 3) local government consists of particular areas where residents live. As such the 'public' or 'people' are an important constituent of local government. According to Van der Waldt (2014:27), from a local government standpoint, 'community' refers to citizens that live under the jurisdiction of a particular municipality. The community also consists of taxpayers association, NGOs and CBOs, the business community and youth and women's organisations. For purposes of this study 'public', 'citizen' and 'community members' will be used interchangeably. Ababio (2004) affirms the synonymity of the terms 'community participation' and 'public participation'. The community consists of people, businesses, community organisations and any other organisations that are in the area that falls under the jurisdiction of the municipality (Mokale & Scheepers, 2006:4). Citizens are persons who reside in a particular area and are governed by rules and laws promulgated by an authority of that area (Camay & Gordon, 2004:10). In this study, the term 'public' will be used to refer to the residents residing in the areas under the jurisdiction of the Ventersdorp region of NW405M who have a democratic duty to engage in municipal affairs and are recipients of a government service that they, subject to the fulfilment of their obligations as citizens and rate-payers, are entitled to.
- **Participation:** Skidmore, Bound and Lownsborough (2006:vii) describe participation as the 'formal involvement of citizens in decision-making bodies or structures'. It refers to the relationship between government institutions and

the people they serve. Accordingly, participation is when the local community identifies their needs and commit themselves to finding local means of addressing their needs (Mubangizi, 2010:153). Mokale and Scheepers (2006:23) point out that 'people are part of local government'. Participation is an indispensable element of democracy and good governance because it promotes transparency, accountability and the prioritisation of pressing needs in the delivery of public services (Mavee, 2014:202). As such participation enables the people's voice to be heard in local government affairs by utilising the structures of local democracy such as public meetings, *izimbizo* and ward committees. Having expounded the fundamental elements of public participation, the following section of the study defines the phenomenon of public participation at length.

2.6.2 Defining public participation

Nzimakwe (2012:139) states that 'public participation is a key tool in formulating policies and programmes that govern the country'. In addition, Madumo (2014:130) remarks that public participation, 'as an important feature of democracy', is an important implement of governance which when utilised results in optimum service delivery to the community. Brynard (1996:41) defines public participation as a process that brings individuals or groups of individuals who were previously excluded from the decision making process together with individuals who previously were the sole participants in the decision-making process. Brynard's understanding of public participation resonates with the prevailing situation in South Africa where public participation opportunities are now extended to members of society who were previously excluded from taking part in the decision-making processes of government. Public participation ensures that the 'will of the people is done' by giving decision-makers an insight into the people's preferences about public policies and public projects, furthermore, it improves the quality of public life because it incorporates the knowledge of the public in the decision-making process (Innes & Booher, 2000:6). As such local people are bound to have better knowledge about their locality as compared to public officials who might not be natives of that area. Napier (2008:163) defines public participation as a reciprocal interchange of information between citizens and the decision-makers. Locals' intimate knowledge of their surroundings plays an important role in the formulation of local policies, projects

or plans. The inclusion of local people in public affairs unlocks local resources such as expertise and creativity and energy from the local people. These resources can be pooled together for the benefit of the local area (Mubangizi, 2010:162). In the same vein, Maxegwana, Theron and Draai (2015:77) suggest that participation in local government affairs enables the community to influence and control local economic initiatives.

André, Enserink, Connor and Croal (2006:1) indicate that public participation is the involvement of concerned individuals and groups in a decision-making process. Similarly, De Visser (2005:39) states that it is a continuous process of dialogue, debate and communication between the local municipality and the local community. Public participation brings together community members and decision-makers to deliberate on matters that have a bearing, immediate or otherwise, on the community members' livelihoods. Naidu (2008:86) states that active public participation requires legitimate devolution of decision-making power to the grassroots communities. For public participation to be effective decision-making authority should be decentralised to the local levels of government to enable local communities to participate in government affairs. To this effect local government in South Africa is recognised as a sphere in its own right with devolved political and administrative authority to manage its affairs. The next section contains the various methods through which members of the public can participate in the decision making processes of government.

2.7 METHODS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation refers to various methods intended to consult, inform and involve the public to allow them to have an input in decision and policy-making (Smith in Rowe, 2000:3). The method of public input is an important aspect of public participation because it determines the effectiveness of the process, hence its failure or success. As such a variety of public participation methods exist that seek to involve the public in decision-making processes (Rowe, 2000:3). Below are some of the common methods of public participation.

- *Public hearings:* Public hearings are one of the common methods of acquiring public input in public decision making (Silveira, Shaffer & Behr, 1993:4). Public hearings are open to all members of the public and they are convened

to discuss issues of particular interest. Public hearings give the public an opportunity to discuss issues that impact on their well-being with local leaders such as municipal officials, government representatives and local politicians. As such they are an important part of public participation because they facilitate instant interaction between the governed and the governors.

- *Surveys*: A survey is a method of public participation most frequently used to gather public views (Johnson & Meiller in Silveira *et al.* 1993:4). A survey is used to gather information from a group of participants for example when feedback on a particular service is required. Though very useful and effective, one of the limitations of a survey is that it can only be administered to a limited number of people (Scheuren, 2004:9). Furthermore surveys do not give the public a chance to get feedback. Nonetheless surveys are a method through which public participation can be achieved.
- *Nominal groups*: Nominal groups are also another method of public involvement in decision-making exercises. Nominal groups are made up of small groups usually ranging from 8-12 people (Silveira *et al.*, 1993:6). They are widely used for problem identification, decision-making and finding solutions. The main goal of this technique is to enable the participants to identify existing challenges and also proffer solutions to the identified or existing problems.
- *Focus groups*: Focus groups are a qualitative research tool that uncovers information on why certain perceptions are held; they reveal the feelings and opinions of participants (Silveira *et al.*, 1993:7). A focus group is a dependable method of public participation because participants are given time to highlight how they feel about certain issues. Scheuren, (2004:32) indicates that focus groups are a reciprocal method of public participation because information is passed back and forth from the group participants and the interviewer.
- *Elections*: Elections are another method of citizens involvement in decision-making (Netswera 2012:75). Elections held at regular intervals enable citizens

to elect individuals who will represent them. Elections are considered a method of public participation because it is assumed that elected representatives are elected on the basis of their ability to represent the wishes of the people. Elected representatives are the mouth piece of their constituencies. Fear of recall or ouster in the next elections motivates elected representatives to fulfill the expectations of their constituencies.

- *Public meetings:* Thornhill (2008:502) indicates that public meetings are a mechanism for community participation because they offer the community an opportunity to discuss with the political leadership. During public meetings community members interact with local leaders in person, as such local residents articulate their interests and get instant feedback from local leaders. Local leaders also have an opportunity to give feedback and updates on previous discussions. Phago (2008:242) indicates that municipalities and government departments should publish the dates, time and topics of meetings for the benefit of the public who want to take part to give local residents enough time to prepare for the public meetings.
- *Open meetings:* Open meetings are a method of public participation that is open to all community members. Unlike closed meetings and other restrictive meetings open meetings welcome all and sundry. Open meetings are a rich method of participation because they are broadly representative of the community. They convened to discuss policy issues such as proposed budget (Schroeder, 2004:11-12).
- *Referendum:* A referendum potentially involves all members of the population who cast votes to decide on a particular matter. It is an instrument of citizen involvement that allows the people to decide on controversial matters (Kersting, 2011:68-69). The outcome of a referendum is binding, thus it is a method that elicits public input in policy-making. For example citizens can vote to endorse a new bill or policy. Referendums are usually preceded by educational campaigns to enlighten the citizens on the issue at hand so their votes are well-informed.

- *Public opinion surveys:* Public opinion surveys are a method of eliciting public opinion, they are usually administered in the form of questionnaires or telephone surveys. Public opinion surveys elicit public views on a wide range of issues that are important to decision-makers and service providers (Berinsky, 2006:499). As such public opinion surveys involve the public in decision-making.
- *Citizen jury/panel:* Citizen juries/panels usually consist of selected members that will be representing the public. Citizen juries consist of randomly selected citizens that form a panel established to adjudicate on a particular issue. To enable them to adjudicate, the panel is exposed to information about the issue and gather relevant information from witnesses. The panel is given an opportunity to interrogate the witness and or call for supplementary information or witness (Smith & Wales, 2000:55). The goal is to give the panel all the necessary information required for them to reach an informed decision. Citizen juries are a method of public participation where a selected panel represents the interests of the public.
- *Consensus conferences:* Consensus conferences are a public involvement tool that brings together experts and lay people to discuss on a particular subject. The object under discussion is usually of technical or complex nature that lay people do not readily have expert knowledge on (Morkrid, 2001:235). Consensus conferences seek to fuse expert knowledge and lay people perspectives in policy-making. As such consensus conferences are an excellent method of public participation because administrators usually shun public involvement in policy-making by citing the public's lack of requisite skill required to meaningfully contribute in the exercise. Consensus conferences highlight that public input is always welcome even on issues that are traditionally reserved for experts because there is a social side to every policy.
- *Citizen/ community advisory committees:* These advisory committees are a tool for public involvement in decision-making. They vary in structure, membership and function however what is common is that they represent the interest of the community (Hull, 2010:3). Citizen advisory committees are

made up of representatives of the community convened to deliberate on a particular subject such as a proposed policy. Citizen advisory committees provide decision-makers with the community's perspectives. They are a method of public participation because they represent the community.

Ward committees are also a method of public participation in South African municipalities. The next section of this chapter is going to discuss ward committees and highlight the importance of ward committees in promoting public participation.

2.7.1 Ward committees as a method of public participation

Ward committees are a vehicle that entrenches 'participatory governance at the grassroots level' (Nyalunga, 2006:44) through promoting active public participation in local government matters (Raga & Taylor, 2005:143). Ward committees are designed to promote participatory democracy (Van Rooyen & Mokoena, 2013:761) by creating bridges between the community and the local municipality. Ward committees promote grass-roots democracy (Ababio, 2007:614) by 'furthering the constitutional requirement of increased accountability and democratisation in local government' (Raga & Taylor, 2005:143). In the same vein, Madumo (2011:68) believes that ward committees enhance accountability in municipal affairs because they are able to hold the municipal council accountable for the promises made. Lindeque and Cloete (2005:25) maintain that public participation in decision-making should be treated as a necessity as opposed to regarding it as a sideshow that is carried out merely to fulfil legal stipulations. Accordingly ward committees are important because they ensure that public participation is strengthened through the active involvement of citizens in matters of governance. To this end, ward committees expedite community participation in local governance matters by providing an interface between the community and the local municipality (Mulaudzi & Liebenberg, 2013:153).

Post-apartheid South Africa saw increased calls for direct public participation in making decisions that impact on the quality of their lives (Lindeque & Cloete, 2005:27). Resultantly, government administrative and political authority was devolved to grass root level as enunciated by the Constitution, 1996. Local government sphere structures such as municipalities and ward committees were

created to bring government closer to the people. Masango, Mfene and Henna (2013:91) remark that municipalities must encourage community involvement (and community organisations) in local governance affairs. Furthermore Ceasar and Theron (in Mautjana & Makombe, 2014:52) suggest that local government should facilitate development and direct community engagement. To this end, ward committees as key structures established to stimulate participatory democracy (Sikhakane & Reddy, 2009:244) are an efficient way of enhancing community involvement in local municipalities.

Mautjana and Makombe (2014:53) indicate that involvement of the community in decisions that have a bearing on their wellbeing is an essential feature of democracy. Involving community members in decision-making is key because through it public officials are made aware of the challenges and preferences of the local community. In turn, public officials can use the information to formulate policies that address the prevailing concerns of the community. Ward committees are the hub that co-ordinates community involvement and participation in a given community (Mokale & Scheepers, 2006:36) by bringing the community closer to local planners and decision-makers. It is evident that ward committees play a critical role in enhancing participatory democracy and communication between local residents, their representatives and the local municipality. However, contemporary studies paint a somewhat grim picture. Davids and Cloete (2012:97) and Barichievy, Piper and Parker (2005:370) observed unbecoming tendencies affecting some ward committees across South Africa which if not addressed might cripple ward committees and derail the democratisation of grassroots governance. Mhlari (2014:1) maintains that ward committees promote meaningful community involvement in local government affairs, thereby they generally enhance service delivery. However, Davids and Cloete (2012:97) question the effectiveness of ward committees as a medium of communicating local residents' concerns about service delivery to government because they believe that ward committees have become political playgrounds. Similarly Barichievy, Piper and Parker (2005:370) lament the poor state of participatory governance in South African municipalities which paints a grim picture for the effectiveness of ward committees as an implement for promoting public involvement in government affairs.

Generally speaking, the role of ward committees is to facilitate and enrich communication between the ward and the municipal council through the chairperson of the ward who is also the ward councillor. The Ward Committee Resource Book (2005:36) states that the main function of ward committees is to be a formal channel of communication between the local municipality and the community. Ward committees are platforms used by communities to voice their concerns to the municipality because they ensure that communities participate directly in the decision-making processes of the local municipality (Nyalunga, 2006:44). As such local municipalities have a duty to engage the community in municipal affairs so as to represent the community accordingly.

Mayekiso, Taylor and Maphazi (2013:192) propound that section 73 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 provides for the establishment of ward committees as a tool for enhancing public participation. Public participation is a platform where public officials meet and discuss with the community in an effort to engage the community in policy-making and identifying solutions to the problems facing the community. Reddy and Sikhakane (2008:693) indicate that ward committees are one of the most important structures devised by government to promote participatory democracy in the local government sphere. As such through promoting public participation, ward committees assist local municipalities to determine the needs of the community. Community participation helps municipalities to identify the community's service requirements as well as contributing to IDP (Thornhill & Madumo, 2011:133). Ward committees as one of the ways through which government devolved political and administrative autonomy entrench public participation in government affairs (Tau, 2013:152).

In summary local democracy requires broad community participation in government affairs that is non-exclusionary of some sections of the community (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:671). As such public involvement in municipal affairs should be broad-based in order to accommodate all members of the community. In this regard ward committees are local structures that seek to enhance the quality of public participation in the local sphere of government. Apart from being promoted through the ward committee system, public participation is also enhanced through IDP. As

such the next section of this study will unpack how public participation is enhanced through IDP, furthermore methods of public participation in IDP will be identified.

2.7.2 Public participation in Integrated Development Planning

The former Department of Provincial and Local Government (in Asha, 2014:808) defines IDP as a stakeholder-oriented, holistic planning approach focusing on the socio-economic and environmental factors with the aim of promoting sustainable development. The post-apartheid government policy that tasked local municipalities to provide basic services to all citizens including the previously disadvantaged groups left the local government sphere faced with enormous service delivery challenges (Naidoo & Kuye, 2005:619). To address the service delivery challenges government mooted a holistic planning tool known as IDP. IDP was introduced as a measure of improving the capacity of municipalities in planning and implementation of development programs (Asha, 2014:808). As such it was in response to the mounting service delivery challenges facing municipalities across South Africa. It is unique because it is centred on stakeholder participation in the formulation of municipal development plans. Theron (2009:135) opines that IDP is instrumental in promoting public participation aimed at local government development. As such communities, CBOs, local businesses and local government departments are involved in the development of municipal plans. The rationale behind stakeholder inclusion in development planning is that stakeholders are the ultimate beneficiaries of municipal development therefore their participation in the development of plans is necessary. As such, the successful implementation of IDP relies on extensive stakeholder involvement.

IDP revolutionises public participation in the local government sphere because by design it is an interactive planning tool that dictates that all the stakeholders in the community must be involved in municipal development plans. Local municipalities have a duty to erect mechanisms that ensure maximum stakeholder participation in formulating development plans. The underlying assumption of public participation in IDP is that decisions arrived at through participation are informed, practical and sustainable because affected people are at the core of the decision-making and implementation process (Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008:452). An IDP is a product of a consultative process between the municipality, community and other stakeholders

(Roberts 2008:533). Thus, IDP avails ample opportunities for the community to be a constituent of municipal planning. Ward committees have a pivotal role to play in mobilising the community to take in the IDP process. Furthermore, they are a source of information because through ward committees members of the communities are made aware of the various forums, meetings and programmes through which the community can take part in IDP. Ward committees play the role of a communication medium between the community and the municipality (Raga & Taylor, 2005:143).

IDP accelerates active participation of individuals, the community and other local stakeholders in the process of municipal planning and implementation of development policies (Asha, 2014:808). IDP enhances local democracy by ensuring that community voices are reflected in municipal strategic plans. In other words, it is a golden opportunity for grassroots democratisation and transformation management (Theron, 2009:150). Community engagement is essential to IDP because it identifies the needs of the community; furthermore, it is a source of local solutions to the challenges faced by the community. Mautjana and Makombe (2014:54) postulate that IDP is primarily a plan concerned with directing and co-ordinating the activities of elected municipal authorities, while promoting community participation. Therefore, ward committees are structures through which the community can be involved in IDP. The next section contains methods of public participation in IDP.

2.7.1.2 Methods of public participation in Integrated Development Planning

In order to gather views from stakeholders there is need to set up effective structures that cater for stakeholders' input in the IDP process. Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA) (in Moodley & Govender, 2006:831-832) identifies public meetings and hearings, consultative sessions, advisory committees, focus groups and interest groups as channels of public participation. In any given municipality there is bound to be a homogenous community. It is important to establish effective structures of public participation that cater for community members from all walks of life. Effective structures of public participation in IDP are instrumental in ensuring maximum public participation in the IDP process. The IDP Representative Forum is one of such important channels.

IDP Representative Forums are forums for negotiations, discussion and joint decision-making where stakeholders are given an opportunity to represent their constituencies' interests. They are platforms through which stakeholders can communicate and coordinate and monitor the IDP making process (Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008:457). Examples of groups that are part of the IDP representative forums include ward committees representatives, traditional leaders, representatives from organised stakeholder groups, community representatives such as concerned groups, councillors, CBOs and municipal officials and officials from government departments. Mafunisa and Xaba (2008:456) note that the constitutional and legislative provisions for public participation in the IDP process should be augmented by context-specific structures suitable for the unique circumstances prevailing in municipalities across South Africa. Municipalities should not only rely on the above mentioned structures, but they should utilise participation mechanisms that best suit their unique localities. The goal of these structures of participation is to maximise community involvement in the IDP process. Extensive community involvement will increase the quality of contribution by community members as it will result in IDPs that are well-articulated and broadly representative of the people's opinions.

Ward committees also play a role in promoting public participation in IDP. They are non-political forums that promote democracy at the grassroots, they are established by local municipalities to give effect to section 152 (1) of the Constitution, 1996 (Mokale & Scheepers, 2006:34). Ward committees are community-based structures that interact with both the community and the local municipality. As such, ward committees are ideally placed to relay information from the municipality to the community. Ward committees are an efficient platform utilised by local municipalities to publicise municipal agenda and forthcoming community meetings. Successful community involvement in IDP relies on the effectiveness of ward committees because they educate the community about the need to engage in IDP and how best the community can be involved in the process.

2.8 THE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

According to André *et al.* (2006:2) public participation is vital for promoting good governance and empowerment in local communities. Similarly, Morebodi (2015) opines that public participation promotes a stable and prosperous society.

Accordingly, when the public participates in government affairs they will be empowered through having a voice and they will contribute towards the development of local policies. It should be borne in mind that public participation is a legal requirement in South African local municipalities. For public participation to be deemed worthwhile it should be beneficial to local municipalities and the community at large. Mokale and Schepeers (2006:27) identify the benefits of public participation which are listed below:

- Public participation promotes a citizen-focused delivery of services because through continuous interaction with the community, the municipality is aware of the needs and challenges faced by the community.
- It fosters a sense of direction for the community and highlights the most pressing community needs.
- Public participation brings out otherwise hidden talents and expertise from community members that the local municipality might never know existed had it not been for public participation.
- It helps with the identification of alternative solutions because the participation process include a wide range of people with a multiplicity of views and skills that the local municipalities would not have known had it not engaged the community.
- Public participation improves the municipality's credibility if the municipality incorporates the community's views.
- Public participation promotes community ownership of decisions and their outcomes because the community was part of the decision-making machinery.
- It gives the community a better understanding of projects and the objectives of the project if the community was involved in the planning of the projects.
- Public participation adds value to municipalities' decisions because through wide consultation skills and wisdom from community members are utilised.

From the above, it is apt to deduce that public participation in local government matters is of paramount importance. This importance is heightened by the realisation that public participation is closely linked to local development and the promotion of grassroots democracy. Cloete and Wissink (2000:78) assert that the extent of development in a particular area is influenced by the availability of natural resources and also the 'influence of public participation'. In addition, the World Bank

Development Report (quoted in Shaidi, Pillay, Raga & Taylor, 2011:119) asserts that community involvement is a prerequisite for development. In South Africa, apart from fulfilling legal and constitutional imperatives public participation is beneficial because it promotes development especially in grassroots communities where poverty and deprivation are prevalent. Lastly, public participation is vital because it enables local municipalities to keep in touch with their communities thereby promoting democracy in the local government sphere (Van der Waladt, 2014:28).

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided the theoretical foundation of public participation by identifying various theories and typologies of participation in decision-making. Furthermore, the phenomenon of public participation was interrogated from a democracy perspective. A link between democracy, in particular local democracy and public participation was made which revealed that local democracy, an extension of democracy at local level, and public participation are interrelated concepts. The chapter also identified the various methods through which the public can be engaged in government affairs. Ward committees were identified as a crucial mechanism of promoting public participation in the local government sphere. However public participation should take place in an informed and orderly manner. The South African government promulgated an array of legislation and policies to enhance and regularize public participation in the local sphere of local government.

In the next chapter, the legislative and policy framework of public participation and ward committees will be provided. Various legislative instruments and policy documents such as The White Paper on Local Government, 1998 will be utilised.

CHAPTER 3

THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK GOVERNING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND WARD COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the theoretical foundations of public participation primarily from a democratic standpoint. Ward committees were identified as one of the methods of public participation in the South African sphere of local government. Public participation is vital for the successful implementation of participatory governance in South Africa, hence local government legislation was passed to promote public involvement in government affairs. This chapter discusses legislation and regulations that promote public participation in the sphere of local government. Furthermore, the legislative and policy framework of ward committees will be discussed. This chapter is focused on achieving the third research objective of the study namely to analyse the statutory and regulatory requirements that promote public participation and the effective functioning of ward committees in SA and Northwest 405 Municipality in particular.

3.2 THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The legislative framework encapsulates the constitutional and legal implements that provide for public participation in government affairs. This section of the study will identify and discuss the legislative and regulatory framework of public participation in South Africa.

3.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) mandates municipalities to increase opportunities for participation by deploying sufficient authority and resources closer to the people (Mogale 2005:136). Murray (2006:141) indicates that South Africa (SA) is a constitutional democracy. Accordingly, the Constitution, 1996 is supreme such that all legislation must be in compliance with it (Muntingh, 2007:5-6). As such, legislation that is inconsistent with the Constitution, 1996 is deemed null and void. In a nutshell the Constitution, 1996 is

a supreme legal document that directs how the democratic state of South Africa should be governed.

The Constitution, 1996 is the bedrock of public participation in local government because it directs local government institutions to involve communities in policy-making (Govender & Reddy, 2011:61). Maphazi (2012:10) states that 'public participation in local government is a Constitutional obligation'. In its preamble, the Constitution, 1996 envisages democratic values, social justice and human rights to be the hallmarks of the South African society. De Visser (2009:18) observes that public participation plays an important role in the democratisation of the local sphere of government. Public participation contributes towards a democratic society because it ensures citizen involvement in government matters. Tau (2013:157) indicates that government developed autonomous institutions to allow for community consultation on issues pertaining to their well-being. These institutions include local municipalities and ward committees; they are pivotal in promoting local democracy because they provide the community with an opportunity to be involved in governance affairs. Through devolution of political and administrative authority, the sphere of local government can focus on promoting local democracy without undue influence from the erstwhile superior tiers of government. Section 152(1) submits that local government must provide democratic and accountable government and encourage the involvement of communities in matters of local government. In section 195(1) (e), the Constitution, 1996 further highlights the importance of public participation where it identifies response to people's needs and the encouragement of citizen participation in policy-making as a constituent of the basic values and principles governing public administration.

Community involvement in municipal affairs entails the establishment of spaces that enable community members and CBOs to participate in municipal decision-making. Municipalities must spearhead 'social and political mobilisation' especially in historically disadvantaged communities in order to promote community involvement in municipal matters (Williams, 2006:212). Pieterse (2013:20) believes that the South African local government system was contrived to accommodate community involvement in municipal matters. Local municipalities must ensure that they govern according to the wishes of the people they serve. In this regard, ward committees

are an enabling structure of public participation through which local communities can be involved in municipal affairs. However, municipalities should not only rely on ward committees but should make use of other forms of public engagement for example those that were mentioned in section 2.7 of this study. In a nutshell, the Constitution, 1996 in section 152 (1) (e) provides for public participation in the sphere of local government by directing local municipalities to involve communities in municipal government. This clause spearheads the doctrine of public participation in the South African local government sphere.

3.2.2 White Paper on Local Government, 1998

The White Paper on Local Government (WPLG), 1998 is a principal regulation that seeks to transform the sphere of local government into a democratic and people-centred entity. To overcome the shortcomings related to the apartheid regime, the WPLG underscores the importance of public participation and development in local government by providing for the creation of a local-oriented system of public participation. According to Govender and Reddy (2011:61) municipalities should establish mechanisms that ensure community participation in policy matters. Williams (2006:199) indicates that post-apartheid South Africa is biased towards participatory governance, public participation and community-driven development. The WPLG also presents the concept of developmental local government (DLG). DLG refers to the engagement of local communities in local development planning and implementation (De Visser, 2009:9). The WPLG emulates the Constitution, 1996 because it places the community at the centre of local government development as such local development is influenced by community needs. Local communities are the recipients of government's development initiatives (Mayekiso *et al.*, 2013:187) thus, they are better placed to know about their challenges and development needs. Hence, continuous community involvement in municipal affairs cannot be underscored. The WPLG indicates that municipalities require active participation with citizens at four levels, namely:

- As voters – to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote.
- As citizens who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible.

- As consumers and end users, who expect value-for-money, affordable services and courteous and responsive service.
- As organised partners involved in the mobilisation of resource for development via for-profit business non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based institutions (CBOs).

The WPLG further introduces the concept of IDP. As discussed in section 2.7.2, IDP is holistic and participatory planning by involving stakeholders, individuals and other sectors of society in development planning. IDP feeds into developmental local government in two aspects. Firstly, it encourages coordinated and sustainable development. Secondly, it promotes public input in development programmes of their locality. Accordingly, municipalities must develop mechanisms that ensure citizen participation in policy initiation, formulation, monitoring and evaluation of decision-making including implementation (White Paper on Local Government, 1998; Khan, Khan & Govender, 2013:128). The WPLG provides for community involvement in municipal development (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:667) by directing local municipalities to develop mechanisms that promote community participation in local development because participation is a key element of democracy that is strongly linked with development (Khan *et al.*, 2013:126). Lastly, the WPLG provides for local government to work with local communities to achieve the objectives of local government (Tau, 2013:158).

3.2.3 Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998

The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 (MSA) provides for municipalities to ensure adequate public participation by developing ways aimed at consulting and involving CBOs and the community in local government matters (Khan *et al.*, 2013:128). Raga and Taylor (2005:141) indicate that chapter 4 of the MSA stipulates that municipalities must enhance community participation, and moreover, municipalities must:

- Receive, process and consider petitions and complaints lodged by members of the community.
- Institute notification and public comment procedures.
- Hold public meetings and hearings.

- Hold consultative sessions with community organisations; and report back sessions.

The MSA gives effect to section 152 of the Constitution, 1996 which sets out that the object of local government is to promote community involvement in municipal matters. Members of the community should not be left out but rather they must be engaged in the affairs of the municipality (Ababio, 2007:275). Particularly, the community is not viewed merely as recipients of services instead they are valuable stakeholders who must be continuously involved in municipal affairs. The MSA directs local government to be democratic and development-oriented by mandating municipalities to govern and structure their operations in a manner that resonates with participatory governance. Community involvement is not an exercise meant to merely fulfil legal imperatives. Its purpose is to better the services of local municipalities (Phago, 2008:248), for this reason it contributes towards raising the community's living standards. Public participation is important because it informs decision-makers and planners about the needs of the community. This is important because municipalities have an obligation to provide communities with basic services such as health, education and sanitation. Municipal services are paramount because they promote the wellness of the community (Raga, Taylor & Gogi, 2012:236). Section 73 of the MSA provides for the establishment of ward committees. As such, the MSA is the legal foundation of ward committees (Masango *et al.*, 2013:91). An in-depth regulatory perspective of ward committees is provided below in section 3.2 of this study. By identifying the importance of public participation, the MSA submits that political structures such as ward committees must be established in local municipalities to promote community participation in municipal matters.

3.2.4 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000

The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 (MSA) contains the core principles, processes and mechanisms that are necessary for municipalities to fulfil the duty of providing basic services. The preamble of the MSA highlights the constraints of apartheid such as failure to satisfy the basic needs of the majority of citizens, this is attributable to the absence of public participation in local municipalities. Cloete and Thornhill (2005:41) indicate that the MSA is the foundation

of post-apartheid local government that is committed to engaging communities in municipal affairs. The MSA tasks municipalities to actively engage the community in municipal affairs such as the provision of basic services, municipal planning and performance management. Section 4 sets out the rights and duties of municipalities by pointing out that municipalities should encourage involvement of the community in municipal matters. Municipalities should consult the community about the level, quality, range and impact of municipal services. Therefore municipalities must communicate with the community and explore alternative ways to meet their service needs because continuous community engagement will assist municipalities to provide sustainable and cost-effective services to meet the needs of the community. The MSA provides that municipalities must promote and create conditions for the community to take part in local affairs (Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008:454). In this regard, local municipalities must find ways to notify the community about any upcoming events which require community participation. Section 18 and 19 of this Act provides for municipalities to advertise and inform the community about upcoming events.

Section 6 of the MSA stipulates that municipal administration must reflect the needs of the community. Municipalities should also establish political structures that enhance community participation in municipal affairs (Khan *et al.*, 2013:128). The MSA submits that local municipalities should be accountable and should provide the community with accurate information about the nature of municipal services they are entitled to receive. The MSA operationalises municipal governance by detailing the duties and responsibilities of municipal councils and how they must be structured and managed. The MSA is 'quite clear about the need for community participation' (Nzimakwe & Reddy, 2008:668) as it directs municipalities to develop a culture of community participation with the aim of ensuring participatory governance in the sphere of local government. Craythorne (in Nzimakwe, 2010:511) indicates that public meetings, *izimbizo*, political structures, consultative sessions and report back sessions are some of the mechanisms through which public participation takes place. Section 17 of the MSA stipulates that community participation in municipal affairs must take place through:

- Political structures promoting participation set out in the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 177 of 1998.
- Councillors.

- And other appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures established by the MSA.

As such the MSA promotes community participation (Cloete & Thornhill, 2005:41) by ensuring that municipalities involve communities in municipal processes through participatory governance. Consequently, the community is involved in IDP, performance management and municipal budgeting. Govender, Khan and Moodley (2007:71) suggest that the MSA is strategic because it 'formalises public participation at local level' by involving the community in municipal processes. In a nutshell, the MSA is a principal legal tool that promotes public participation in local government matters.

3.2.5 Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003

Financial management is a contested territory especially in the local sphere of government where numerous incidents involving misuse of public funds have received a fair share of publicity. The Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003 (MFMA) seeks to secure sound and sustainable financial management in municipalities and other institutions in the sphere of local government by establishing treasury norms and standards for the sphere of local government. Section 2 of the MFMA sets out the object of the MFMA which includes ensuring financial transparency and accountability by local municipalities, entities of local municipalities and national and provincial state organs when they are involved in financial dealings with local municipalities. The Act seeks to safeguard a healthy financial landscape in the local sphere of government by focusing not only on local government institutions but also on entities that deal with local government institutions.

The MFMA suggests strong links between municipal budgeting and IDP (in section 21). The holistic nature of IDP necessitates harmonisation of the municipal budget and the IDP. As stated in section 2.7.2, IDP process is the culmination of extensive stakeholder participation in the formulation, development and adoption of IDP. The MFMA indirectly promotes the involvement of the community in municipal affairs by promoting sound financial practices in local municipalities. Section 23 requires municipalities to consider views of the community in regards to a tabled annual budget. Khan *et al.* (2013:128) indicate that the MFMA directs municipalities to

consult the local community on budgetary issues. As such, the MFMA provides for community involvement in the development of municipal budgets (Mafunisa & Xaba, 2008:454). Section 121 provides for the adoption of annual reports for municipal decisions made throughout the year as an accountability measure to the community. As previously mentioned public accountability is an element of local democracy. By promoting accountability the MFMA ensures that public officials fulfil the needs of the community. The MFMA ensures that local municipalities remain accountable by promoting sound financial practices in the sphere of local government and providing for community involvement in the financial affairs of the municipality and directing local municipalities to consult and report to the community on budgetary matters. Raga & Taylor (2005:147) indicate that it promotes community involvement in the financial matters of the municipality because local communities play a significant role in local government decision-making.

Having discussed the various legislative instruments that support public participation in decision-making, the next section will focus on the regulatory framework of effective ward committee functioning detailing the establishment and composition of ward committees.

3.3 THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK CONCERNING WARD COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING

Ward committees are local government structures found in metropolitan and local municipalities across South Africa. As alluded in section 2.7.1 of this study, the main objective of ward committees is to enhance participatory democracy in local municipalities (Davids & Cloete, 2012:96; Mbuyisa, 2013:126). The Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 (MSA) provides for the establishment of ward committees in local municipalities. Additionally, the MSA details the functions and powers, term of office of members, remuneration and dissolution of ward committees. This is elaborated below.

3.3.1 Composition, structure and the establishment of ward committees

Whilst concurring with section 73 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998, Napier (2008:170) indicates that ward committees are made up of persons not exceeding ten including a ward councillor who is also the chairperson of

the committee. The overarching duty of the ward councillor is to ensure that the concerns of the ward are represented at the municipal council (Mbuyisa, 2013:121-122). As such the ward councillor is the focal point between the ward committee and the local municipality. It is important to note that a ward councillor is an elected representative of the ward whilst other ward committee members are not elected by the ward at large. The composition of a ward committee should be broadly representative of the ward population, as such women, religious groups, CBOs traditional leaders and the youth should be represented in membership of the ward committee (Reddy & Sikhakane, 2008:681). According to section 72 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 ward committees can only be established by metropolitan and local municipalities of certain types. These types include municipalities with a collective executive system and those with a mayoral executive system as stated by section 8 and 9 of the above mentioned Act. Ward committees are non-political structures who should not be comprised of members from one interest group or political party to which the ward councillor is affiliated (Madumo & Thornhill, 2011:132). A ward committee is a legislated committee of ten members drawn from a particular ward that is chaired by a ward councillor who is an elected representative of that ward. Municipalities are obliged by law to establish ward committees; municipalities must also ensure that ward committees succeed in facilitating public participation (Masango *et al.*, 2013:92).

3.3.2 Roles, powers and function of ward committees

Wards can be traced back to ward masters (*wykmeesters* in Afrikaans) which was introduced in the late 18th century in Cape Town. These individuals kept a register of people living in their area and they also reported on municipal matters to the local authorities. With the passage of time, their role evolved and became that of a contact point between the community and the local authorities (Craythorne, 1997:126-127). Section 72 of the MSA submits that the object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. Ward committees emulate the role of *wykmeesters* because they are a medium of communication between the community and the local authority. Masango *et al.* (2013:92) state that ward committees have an added advantage in the sense that they come from the communities which they represent; and as such they are acquainted with the challenges that communities are faced with. Familiarity with the community is important when dealing with people. If

ward committee members were alien to the community they were likely to face resistance and apathy from the communities they represent. Local government is government closest to the people, ward committees are key in ensuring that local governments are indeed in touch with the grassroots. To this end Raga and Taylor (2005:244) state that ward committees 'bridge the gap between local communities and the elected representatives'.

The Ward Committee Training Manual (undated:213-214) submits that unless delegated with powers and functions in terms of section 59 of Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, the powers and functions of a ward committee include the following:

- Advocate for the needs of their constituencies.
- Serve as an official contact point for consultation on behalf of a structure he/she represents.
- Serve as resource persons within the municipal council's processes and structures.
- Get municipal councillors and officials to respond to complaints from communities and community organisations.
- Share information among communities and community organisations.
- Continually evaluate the nature and level of community participation to allow for greater community involvement in municipal processes.
- To pursue other avenues, activities and associations, which are deemed to be of benefit to community participation in municipal processes.

Section 74 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 (MSA) provides that ward committees can perform duties delegated to them by metropolitan or local municipalities. Madumo (2011:54) remarks that 'ward committees have no legislative or executive power to make decisions'. As such, it can be deduced that they are advisory structures that work closely with both the community and the municipality. Reddy and Sikhakane (2008:682) indicate that the 'duties and powers are to act as a specialised participatory structure to enhance formal communication channels and forge cooperative local partnerships'. Mayekiso *et al.* (2013:192-193) suggests that ward committees are predominantly a communication channel between municipalities and communities. To achieve the aforementioned mandate,

ward committees advice and assist ward councillors; they should also relay information from the community to the municipality and vice-versa. As such, Heydenrych (2008:711) opines that ward committees provide a structured communication channel between geographic communities and their political representatives. The Handbook for Ward Committees (in Masango *et al.*, 2013:92-93) lists the following roles of ward committees:

- Ensure that communities are informed and involved in council decisions that affect their lives.
- Increase the participation of local residents in municipal decision-making.
- Participate in matters such as the IDP process, municipal performance management, the annual budget, council projects and other key programmes
- Identify and initiate local projects to improve the lives of the people in the ward.
- Help with community awareness campaigns for example waste, water and sewage, payment of fees and charges.

3.3.3 Ward committees as an element of community involvement in municipal affairs

In order to achieve their mandate, ward committees rely on local municipalities for support. The Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) (2005:32) states that municipal support rendered to ward committees varies according to the financial liquidity of the municipality. Below are some of the areas which a local municipality can support ward committees in its area:

- Copies of legislation, national guidelines and council policies on public participation and ward committees.
- Demographic information for the ward to help ward committees draft a ward profile.
- Information on the municipality's Performance management System.
- Municipal budget.
- Information about and dates and time of ward committees training and induction (DPLG & GTZ, 2005:32).

As stressed out in section 2.3 of this study, a democratic state allows involvement of citizens in decision-making processes of government (Mulaudzi & Liebenburg 2013:142). The purpose of ward committees is to promote community involvement in municipal affairs through various mechanisms of public participation such as ward meetings in an effort to enhance local democracy in municipalities across South Africa. In South Africa local democracy represents a microcosm of the broader democratic order that occurs at national level. Similarly, Heydenrych (2008:709) suggests that ward committees are the convergence point of democracy and participation, so it can be said that they promote democracy through enhancing public participation in government matters. Ward committees 'entrench participatory governance at the grassroots level' (Nyalunga, 2006:44) by promoting public participation in municipal affairs as envisaged by chapter 4 of the MSA (Mokale & Scheepers, 2006:34). To summarise, ward committees are important structures in the local government sphere of South Africa because they enable and enhance community involvement in municipal affairs. In other words, ward committees are an essential aspect of public participation in the local government sphere (Mbuyisa, 2013:121).

3.3.4 Remuneration, tenure and dissolution of ward committees

Ward committee members do not necessarily receive remuneration for their services, however, some local municipalities award them monthly stipends for transport costs, stationery, etc. For instance Umuziwabantu Municipality (UM) pays each ward committee member a monthly stipend of R250, 00 as imbursement for the costs incurred in the execution of ward committee duties (UM, 2009:5). Similarly the City of Cape Town (CCT) also pays an unspecified amount to ward committee members to recoup expenses incurred in the execution of their duties, such as cell phone and travel expenses (CCT, 2011:5). The MSA stipulates that ward committee members are not obliged to be paid. However, as stated above, municipalities can pay ward committees varying amounts only to reimburse them for the expenses they incurred whilst executing their duties. In section 75 the MSA affords local municipalities the discretion to determine the term of office of ward committees. Local municipalities have the authority to dissolve ward committees if 'the committee fails to fulfil its object'. Some municipalities have a code of conduct which acts as a

benchmark on which the conduct of ward committees is judged. In the event that a ward committee deviates from the code of conduct a municipality has reserved the right to dissolve it (Ward Committee Resource Book, 2005:65). Ward committee membership is a voluntary service to the community that does not attract any material benefits. Ward committee members' term of office varies across municipalities, however, in many cases they are concurrent to the council's five-year term of office. Local municipalities reserve the right to dissolve ward committees when felt that they are not fulfilling their mandate.

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter encapsulated the legislative framework of public participation and ward committees from a constitutional standpoint. The various legislative influences of ward committees were also discussed in this chapter. The primary preoccupation of this chapter was to attain the third research objective which was to describe the existing statutory requirements and constitutional provisions that promote effective public participation through ward committees in the former VLM.

The next chapter discusses the characteristics and features of a conceptual framework. The purpose and overall objective of this study was to come up with a strengthened public participation framework for ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. This would aide in providing directives on how to function more effectively.

CHAPTER 4

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dwelled on the regulatory and legislative requirements of effective ward committee functioning. In addition, ward committees were identified as a vehicle for public participation in South African municipalities.

The primary objective of this study is to highlight the key components of a conceptual framework and to discuss the process of developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees. Thus, the overarching purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundation of a public participation framework that will be proposed in chapter six of this study. This chapter shall demonstrate that there are two types of frameworks, namely; conceptual framework and theoretical framework. In academic circles, there is a great deal of ambiguity between the two types of frameworks. It is somewhat a challenge to differentiate between a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework (Sinclair, 2007:39; Jabareen, 2009:51). This is further compounded by the lean literature available on the subject (Green, 2014:14). The next three sections will discuss the philosophy of both a conceptual and a theoretical framework. By so doing, similarities between the two frameworks will be drawn and their differences will also be indicated where they exist. However, more attention shall be dedicated to 'conceptual framework' because it is the basis of this chapter. Given this background, the next section will discuss the relationship between a theoretical and conceptual framework.

4.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A “CONCEPTUAL” AND A “THEORETICAL” FRAMEWORK

In the process of developing a public participation framework, it is vital to determine the nature and characteristics of the framework that the researcher intends to develop. This section looks into some of the underlying arguments advanced by scholars on the nature, extent, similarity and/or difference between conceptual and theoretical frameworks. This section investigates the dynamic relationship between a conceptual and a theoretical framework. Furthermore, it demonstrates how both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are used in this study.

Imenda (2014) points out that there is an unambiguous difference between a “conceptual framework” and a “theoretical framework”. To advance this argument, the aforementioned author submits that a theoretical framework is deductive in nature because it is based on a theory or a set of theories whereas, a conceptual framework is not entirely tied to theories. In fact, a conceptual framework is a product of the interaction between various concepts that are inherent in a phenomenon under study. On the contrary, McGaghie, Bordage and Shea (2001:923) argue that a conceptual framework is synonymous to a theoretical framework and vice versa. This is to say that, in a research study a conceptual framework can replace a theoretical framework without introducing any negative consequences to the study. Green (2014:34) states that ‘conceptual framework’ and ‘theoretical framework’ can be used interchangeably and thus are synonymous. According to this line of thought, it is perceived that there is a semantic -rather than practical- difference between conceptual and theoretical frameworks because they both refer to the same thing. Hence, they can be used interchangeably in a research study. Fain quoted in (Green, 2014:35) states that if a framework is based on a concept, it should be referred to as a conceptual framework. Similarly, if it is based on a theory, it becomes a theoretical framework. This suggests that in practice a conceptual and a theoretical framework are not the same.

According to Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009:7) a theoretical framework is used to investigate a particular theory or a set of theories whereas, a conceptual framework consists of a theoretical framework coupled with empirical data collected from the field. This line of thought advances the notion that a theoretical framework is an element of a conceptual framework. As such, a conceptual framework is built up using ideas and information that were discovered in the theoretical framework. Imenda (2014:190) declares that both, conceptual and theoretical, frameworks ‘refer to the epistemological paradigm a researcher adopts in looking at a given research problem’. Liehr and Smith (cited in Imenda, 2014:190) state that ‘each of these terms refers to a structure’ that a researcher uses when undertaking a study. It is apt to conclude that both the conceptual and theoretical framework assist the researcher in structuring the study, from the conception of the topic, to the research methodology used and the collection and interpretation of field data. Furthermore, they both act as a guiding mechanism which guides the researcher during the course of the research

study. Therefore, against this background, a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework are fundamentally not the same. However, they are both used by a researcher in the design and execution of a study. As a result, they are said to be complimentary.

It is important for a researcher to identify, describe and explain an appropriate framework that best suits the study he/she is undertaking. Imenda (2014:190) states that without an appropriate framework, a study 'lacks proper direction and a basis for pursuing a fruitful review of literature, as well as interpreting and explaining the findings accruing from the investigation'. A conceptual framework maps the relationship between concepts that are found in the study whereas a theoretical framework discusses the theories that support the study. To this end, Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009:3) suggest that 'qualitative researchers incorporate both relevant theory and empirical research that help to organize the conceptual framework'. Figure 4 below, adapted from Imenda (2014:189) summarises the dynamic and interdependent relationship between a conceptual and a theoretical framework.

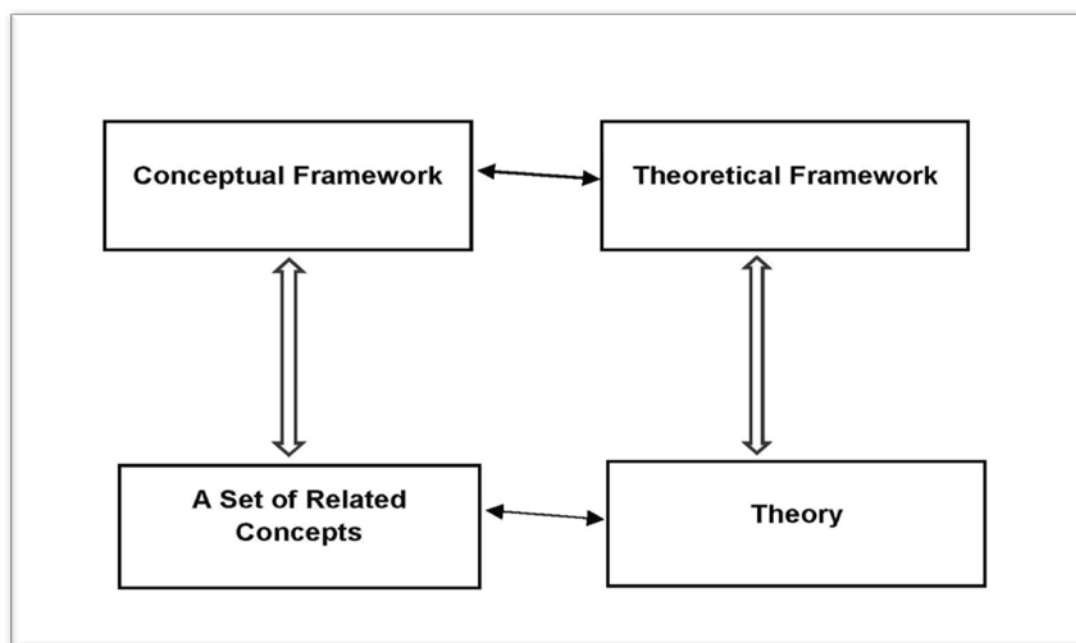


Figure 4. The interdependent relationship between a theoretical and a conceptual framework
Source: Adapted from Imenda (2014:189)

From the arguments submitted in this section, it is evident that scholars such as Imenda believe that to a certain extent 'conceptual frameworks' and 'theoretical frameworks' share common characteristics. Some scholars maintain that the two are

synonymous. However, for purposes of this study -as will be discussed in section 4.3 and 4.4- conceptual frameworks and theoretical frameworks will be treated as two different things. The point of departure of this study maintains that a theoretical framework, though different from a conceptual framework, unpacks the theories that inform this study. The next section discusses the characteristics of a theoretical framework.

4.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sinclair (2007:39) views a theoretical framework as a 'map of travel plan'. In this case, Sinclair equates academic research to a traveler embarking on a journey to an unknown destination. Just as a compass gives directions to a voyager, a theoretical framework serves the same function to a researcher who has embarked on a research study; a journey in pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, a theoretical framework is used as a guiding tool to map out the course of the study. Parahoo cited in (Green, 2014:35) opines that theoretical frameworks are utilised in studies that are grounded in theories. Grant and Osanloo (2014:13) believe that a theoretical framework is the 'blueprint' of the study. As such, a theoretical framework is a guiding mechanism that provides a structure to define the philosophical, epistemological, methodological and analytic approach of the study. Eisenhart quoted in (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:13) understands a theoretical framework to be 'a structure that guides research by relying on formal theory constructed using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomenon and relationships'.

From the above, it can be deduced that a theoretical framework emanates from the existing theories that inform the phenomenon under study. Theories are important because they contain broad assumptions, deductions and conclusions that are applicable to a study. To develop a theoretical framework, a researcher investigates the existing body of knowledge. It is important to point out that at this stage the researcher examines available information with the goal of using that information to substantiate his study. Information and theories that are not pertinent to the study will be discarded. Examining theories also reveals knowledge gaps that exist in the body of knowledge. Researchers can conduct a review of theories to identify areas that have not been adequately studied.

To conclude this section, it can be summarised that a theoretical framework relates to the theoretical foundation of the study. In this study, the theoretical framework was addressed in chapters 2 and 3. The next section elaborates on the characteristics of a conceptual framework.

4.4 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As it was mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the study is aimed at developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees. In this section, particular attention will be given to the discussion on the philosophical underpinnings of a conceptual framework. 'A conceptual framework relates to concepts, empirical research, and relevant theories to advance and systematise knowledge about related concepts or issues' (Rocco & Plakhotnik 2009:128). Svinicki (2010:5) states that a conceptual framework is 'an interconnected set of ideas (theories) about how a particular phenomenon functions or is related to its parts'. A conceptual framework serves as a foundation of the relationship between concepts, knowledge and other components of human knowledge. Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009:122) affirm that the goal of a conceptual framework is to categorise and describe concepts relevant to the study and investigate their relationship. This is usually presented in the form of a diagram that clearly traces the relationship between concepts. The main purpose of a conceptual framework is to show the interaction of concepts in a phenomenon that is under investigation. To achieve this, a researcher conducts a review of literature and also undertakes an empirical study. Data obtained from an empirical study together with information obtained through literature review is instrumental in designing a conceptual framework. Conceptual frameworks also allow researchers to make predictions about concepts in a particular study. Svinicki (2010:6) insists that a conceptual framework also influences how researchers interpret events. By using a conceptual framework, a researcher can interpret and determine how certain concepts are relevant to the study. Imenda (2014:189) asserts that conceptual frameworks are closely related to models. As such, a conceptual framework can be understood as a type of a model. Imenda (2014:189) goes on to define a conceptual framework as the 'end result of bringing together a number of related concepts to explain or predict a given event, or give a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest – or simply, of a research problem'.

What is outstanding from the definition of conceptual frameworks proffered by the above mentioned authors is that they acknowledge that a conceptual framework is a culmination of the relationship between concepts of a phenomenon. In other words, concepts can also be identified as variables that are under investigation in a study. It can therefore be deduced that a conceptual framework represents the dynamic relationship between the elements, subjects or concepts of a particular phenomenon. Hence, a conceptual framework is grounded in the interaction of elements with the aim of interpreting or predicting the behavior of such elements and how they influence the phenomenon under investigation. To this end, Imenda (2014:189) advances the notion that 'the process of arriving at a conceptual framework is akin to an inductive process whereby small individual pieces (in this case, concepts) are joined together to tell a bigger map of possible relationships'.

According to Regoniel (2015) a conceptual framework refers to a researcher's 'understanding of how the particular variables in the study connect with each other'. In this regard, Regoniel (2015) concurs with the abovementioned scholars on what constitutes a conceptual framework. He further propounds that a conceptual framework is a constituent of a theoretical framework. Accordingly, Regoniel (2015) suggests that 'the conceptual framework lies within a much broader framework called the theoretical framework'. This line of reasoning presumes that a conceptual framework is a product of a theoretical framework. Put differently, a conceptual framework is indebted to theoretical framework for its subsistence. In this regard, the theoretical framework represents the body of knowledge derived from time-tested theories that have been verified or reviewed by other researchers. In the development of a conceptual framework, theories are a source of information and assumptions that motivate the study. Similarly, Jabareen (2009:50) suggests that a conceptual framework is a culmination of a 'qualitative process of theorisation'. For that reason, a conceptual framework cannot be distanced from theories, hence a conceptual framework cannot be distanced from the theoretical framework.

According to Bader, McGrath, Rouse and Anderson (2016:3), a conceptual framework graphically illustrates the complex and evolving interplay between variables (concepts). Thus, it is a pictorial impression of the variables and concepts

of the phenomenon that the researcher is investigating. Miles and Huberman quoted in (Rahmatizadeh, Rajabifard & Kalantari, 2016:81) infer that a conceptual framework is a 'written or visual presentation that explain the key concepts or aspects that need to be studied'. Jabareen (2009:51) points out that a conceptual framework is a 'network of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena'. Solomon, Solomon, Norton and Joseph (2000:447) suggest that a conceptual framework is a 'diagrammatic representation' of the concepts under observation. Jabareen (2009:51) further states that the concepts that make up a conceptual framework 'support one another, articulate their respective phenomena, and establish a framework-specific philosophy'. Thus, a conceptual framework can be conceived as a synthesis of complimentary and interdependent concepts that interact together within the parameters of a given phenomenon.

The above statements strongly suggest that a conceptual framework is usually presented in a diagrammatic or picture format. Likewise, in this study, the conceptual framework will be presented in the form of a diagram because a diagram is easy to comprehend.

In conclusion, a conceptual framework - though some aforementioned scholars erroneously likened it to a theoretical framework - represents the interactive relationship among concepts of any phenomenon under investigation. Conceptual frameworks are a product of a dedicated theoretical (theories) review. A conceptual framework can be presented in the form of a model or flow chart. Having unpacked the definition, nature and characteristics of a conceptual framework, the following section will identify and discuss the steps followed in developing a conceptual framework.

4.4.1 Step by step guide on how to develop a conceptual framework

The diagram below depicts a step by step guide on how a researcher could develop a conceptual framework.

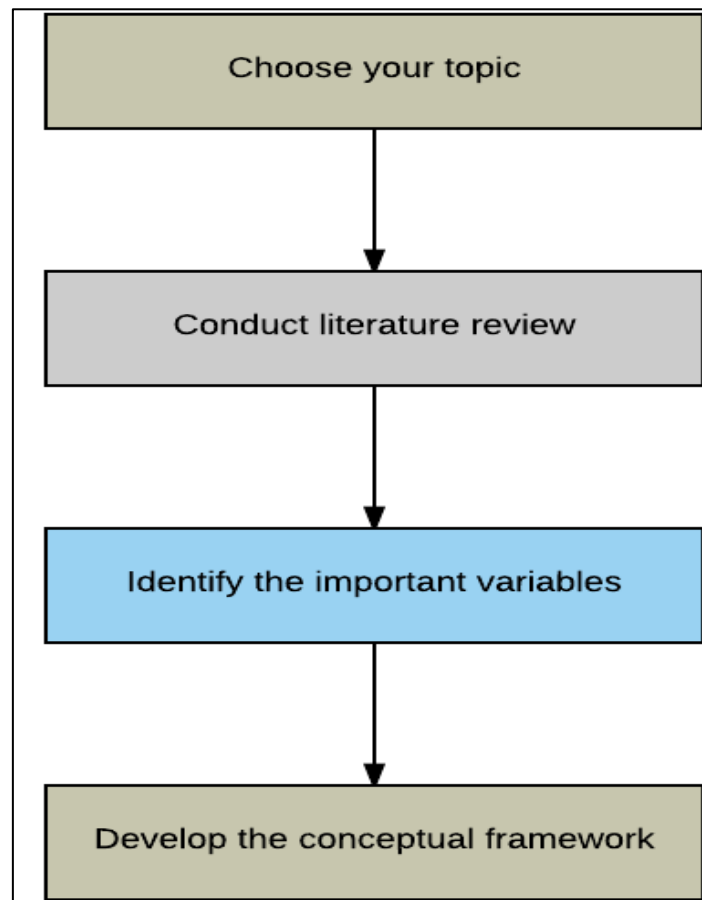


Figure 5: Steps to develop a conceptual framework
Adapted from Regoniel (2015)

Figure 5 shows the steps taken in the development of a conceptual framework. Choosing a topic sits at the apex of the diagram. Girardi (2012:46) and Luse, Mennecke and Townsend (2012:144) agree that choosing a research topic is a daunting task. Prior to undertaking a study, a researcher must adequately brainstorm and research before coming up with a topic that is feasible. Therefore, at this step, a researcher chooses an appropriate and researchable topic that will be the basis of enquiry. The topic should be unambiguous, succinct and practical. A topic can emanate from a problem experienced in the environment or it can be purely for academic purposes. Regoniel (2015) asserts that the topic must be in the researcher's field of specialization. In other words, the researcher should possess the aptitude to execute the research study that will emanate from the chosen topic. After choosing a topic e researcher conducts literature review. According to Steward (2004:496) literature review provides readers 'a clear understanding of the subject'. Conducting literature review introduces the study to current information, data and

theories that apply to the study. Literature review also enables a researcher to identify gaps in the existing knowledge. Thus, through conducting literature review, a study can identify areas that have not been adequately researched. It is not unheard of for a researcher to initially conduct a preliminary review of literature when they are still in the process of framing a research topic. Thus, even though figure 2 depicts literature review as a second step, it is not uncommon for researchers to conduct literature review -albeit preliminarily- at the first step.

The penultimate step involves the identification of variables. Regoniel (2015) believes that a researcher should 'identify the specific variables described in the literature and figure out how these are related'. The relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable is investigated at this step. Variables are important because in many cases they are the concepts that the researcher seeks to study. Finally, the last step is the development of a conceptual framework. A researcher develops a conceptual framework for the study using information gathered from all the steps undertaken during the study. A conceptual framework is developed using a mix of numerous variables (Regoniel, 2015). He further adds that the problem statement of the study is important because it 'serves as a reference in constructing the conceptual framework'.

The steps discussed above relate to the process of developing a conceptual framework. The next section focuses on the main characteristics of a conceptual framework.

4.4.2 Key features of a conceptual framework

According to Jabareen (2009:51), the following are the primary features of a conceptual framework.

1. 'A conceptual framework is not merely a collection of concepts but, rather, a construct in which each concept plays an integral role'.
2. The primary aim of a conceptual framework is to provide an 'interpretative approach to social reality'.
3. A conceptual framework enables researchers to understand the phenomenon that is being studied. In this regard, a conceptual framework is a tool that simplifies a research problem.

4. The focus of conceptual frameworks is to provide an interpretation of the phenomenon.
5. 'Conceptual frameworks can be developed and constructed through a process of qualitative analysis'.
6. A conceptual framework is not a tool that enables researchers to predict an outcome, as such, conceptual frameworks are 'indeterminist in nature'.
7. A conceptual framework gathers data from multi-disciplinary sources. Thus, it is a qualitative synthesis of data from different disciplines.

Having mentioned the various characteristics of a conceptual framework, the next section details the process to be followed when a researcher is developing a conceptual framework.

4.4.3 The process of developing a conceptual framework

Developing a conceptual framework is a sequential process. In other words, it follows pre-determined steps that ultimately result in the development of a conceptual framework that is sound and relevant to the study that is being undertaken. This section is in line with Figure 1, where a step by step guide on how to develop a conceptual framework was presented. Helitzer, Sussman, Hoffman, Getrich, Warner and Rhyne (2014:158-160) coined a process of developing a conceptual framework. The process consisting of seven steps is discussed below.

- **Step 1: Assemble the 'right' research team.** Having competent personnel on the research team cannot be overstated. By nature, a research study is mentally and physically demanding. As such, research requires a team that is knowledgeable and committed to the study and its objectives. This is important especially when the researcher conducts fieldwork. A competent team will be important in this regard because it will help the researcher to attain the research objectives that were spelt out in the research proposal.
- **Step 2: Identify how information from the existing body of knowledge can be incorporated into the emerging conceptual framework.** This step entails the review of literature. Literature review is important mainly because it highlights the current knowledge gaps. Moreover, literature review provides

the researcher with background information that is pertinent to the study. Thus, the researcher will not expend time and resources devoting attention to areas that have been adequately studied because he is likely to replicate the previous findings.

- **Step 3: Construct the conceptual framework for the proposed study.** This step consists of looking at the overall study and coming up with a tentative conceptual framework. The conceptual framework includes all the concepts (variables) that were included in the study. This includes determining the nature and extent of relationships between all the variables identified in the study. As such, at this step the researcher consolidates all the necessary information in anticipation of presenting a diagram of the conceptual framework.
- **Step 4: Diagram the framework.** The next step, after constructing a conceptual framework is to organise the various components into a diagram or flow chart. Essentially, this step entails producing a visual blueprint of the conceptual framework. Diagrams and models are easy to understand and interpret as compared to lengthy analysis and essays. Thus, presenting a conceptual framework in the form of a diagram has an unquestionable advantage of it being easily understood. In this study a diagram of the conceptual framework will be developed in the sixth chapter.
- **Step 5: Operationalise the framework: develop the research design and measures.** This step entails the formulation of an appropriate research design and the methods of data measurement and analysis. As stated in chapter one, this is a qualitative study. As such, interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data from the research participants in the Ventersdorp region. Subsequently, qualitative data analysis will be employed to simplify and give meaning to the data gathered from the respondents. This is also known as conducting an empirical study. An empirical study is one that emanates from verifiable and practical data, usually collected from research participants.
- **Step 6: Conduct the research.** At this stage, the researcher conducts field research. Field research involves physically visiting the study area and collecting data. In this study, as will be discussed in chapter five, the

researcher made use of questionnaires as a data collection method from sixty ward committee members. In addition, the researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews with three NW405M officials. Data collected from the respondents were analysed and would be presented in the fifth chapter of this study. The data is qualitative in nature, however where it will be deemed necessary, figures such as pie charts, graphs, or tables will be used to depict data. Data collected from the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality was instrumental in the development of a public participation framework.

- **Step 7: Revise the framework.** This is the final step in the process of developing a conceptual framework. Revising the framework involves examining how the relationships between various concepts were presented, misrepresented and or overlooked. In other words, at this stage the researcher is concerned about whether the conceptual framework fulfills the intended purpose. Furthermore, at this stage gaps and overlaps in the framework are identified for further research.

4.4.4 Functions, and the importance, of a conceptual framework

Having outlined the steps and processes followed in developing a conceptual framework above, this section gleans assertions from various scholars pertaining to the functions and the importance of a conceptual framework in research studies. To start off with, Merriam and Simpson quoted in (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009:123) identify five functions of a conceptual framework. Therefore, a conceptual framework:

- builds a foundation;
- demonstrates how the study advances knowledge;
- conceptualises the study;
- it is a tool for assessing the design and the instrumentation of the study; and
- it is a reference point for interpreting the findings of the study.

These functions form the basis of a conceptual framework in a research study. For instance, building a foundation is the bedrock of the study because it links the study with theories, literature and the existing knowledge from previous studies. Research

studies do not exist in a vacuum, in most cases, studies are necessitated by gaps in existing knowledge. As such, research studies should contribute to the existing body of knowledge. In this regard, a researcher should ensure that he/she does not duplicate studies from other researchers as this will amount to plagiarism and academic fraud. Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009:123) state that 'demonstrating how any study advances knowledge uses the literature to present existing knowledge building a case that clearly shows the gap in what is known that a study will address'. Similarly, a conceptual framework positions a study within the broad spectrum of other researchers' findings. Thus, it makes it easy to interpret the findings and or the outcomes of the research study. For purposes of this study, a conceptual framework was deemed necessary because it articulates and somewhat summarises the entire study in order to fulfil the research objectives as stated in chapter one of this dissertation. This will make it easy for an average reader to understand the objectives and the findings of the study. Furthermore, a conceptual framework will also be a tool that can be used to interpret the findings and aims of the study. Imenda (2014:193) summarises the purposes of a conceptual framework below.

- It helps a researcher to see clearly the main variables and concepts inherent in the study.
- A conceptual framework provides the research with the appropriate research methodology which includes the following: research design, target population, sample and methods of data collection and analysis.
- It guides the researcher in data collection, interpretation and explanation in the absence of a dominant theoretical perspective.
- A conceptual framework is also a springboard for future research because it integrates existing literature and field data.

The abovementioned points are in line with the functions of a conceptual framework mentioned above. The points emphasise that a conceptual framework propels future research. Miller and Redding cited in (Solomon & Solomon, 2000:5) identify three reasons for developing a conceptual framework, namely: description of the current trends (reality); prescription of the future, and defining the main concepts. Miller and Redding suggest that a conceptual framework can be adopted as a knowledge dissemination tool; one that is aimed at diagnosing the current environment and

monitoring the prevailing practices and occurrences in a particular field of study. In academic circles this is understood as the existing body of knowledge that informs a particular academic discipline. According to the doctrine of scientific research, the existing body of knowledge should be supported by empirical data. This knowledge is critical because it is the basis of current and future research. Furthermore, a conceptual framework can be employed as a tool to solve future problems by addressing current challenges to avoid their recurrence in the future. Lastly, a conceptual framework is instrumental in providing a definition of the key concepts under investigation. It goes without mention that before developing a conceptual framework a researcher should thoroughly understand and be able to define the main concepts and variables that are part of the study.

According to Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009:7) a conceptual framework is important because it situates the study. To this end, a conceptual framework is essential because it helps a researcher to justify the study by offering a platform to define the central ideas and determine the relationship among them. A conceptual framework defines a discipline in order 'to develop a fully comprehensive, analytical framework for the discipline' (Solomon & Solomon, 2000:4). Furthermore, it is key because it helps the reader to identify the variables in a study (Victoria, Huttly, Fuchs & Olinto 1997:226). Identifying variables is important because it allows a researcher to focus on specific concepts in the study. Thus, a conceptual framework is important because it allows the researcher to be specific and to focus on a particular concept. Imenda (2014:194) states that the 'scope of conceptual frameworks is usually applicable only to the specific research problem for which it was created'. Nye and Berardo cited (Solomon & Solomon, 2000:4-5) advance the following as advantages of using a conceptual framework.

- In the development of a conceptual framework a researcher identifies and provides the definition of concepts.
- Conceptual frameworks provide researchers with a wide range of ideas.
- Conceptual frameworks allow effective communication between scholars and academics even from different disciplines.
- Conceptual frameworks clarify concepts and variables.

Lastly, a conceptual framework is important because it 'provides an empirical basis for future research' (Leamy, Bird, Le Boutillier, Williams & Slade, 2011:445).

4.6 TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

The previous sections in this chapter provided the underlying philosophy in the development of a conceptual framework. Particular attention was given to the characteristics, the importance and the process of developing a conceptual framework. This chapter is part of the theoretical framework. As stated before, the aim of this chapter is to provide the background and a theoretical basis of a conceptual framework. This section contains a synopsis of the process of developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees. The synopsis of the process of developing a conceptual public participation framework are condensed into four stages and discussed below.

- **Stage 1: Research topic.** *A conceptual public participation framework for ward committees to promote local government democracy.* The genesis of any academic study is the formulation of a research topic. A research topic is an express statement that determines the nature, context and location of the study. After formulating a research topic, the researcher articulates the problem statement, the objectives of the research and the research questions. In short, a topic is important because it sets the parameters of the study.
- **Stage 2: Theoretical framework.** When building a conceptual framework, a researcher requires knowledge about the various concepts under study (Victoria *et al.*, 1997:225). The various theories imbedded in the theoretical framework were a source of information on the nitty-gritties of public participation. Furthermore, the theoretical framework was crucial because it provided definitions of the key concepts that are inherent in the study. Therefore, this stage of the study sought to provide a theoretical background of the study. Consequently, various theories were submitted in this regard namely, *the Democratic Theory*, *the Public Choice Theory* and *the Social Theory* were identified as the theories that describe and explain the phenomenon of public participation. To complement the abovementioned theories *Citizen Participation Strategies*, *The Ladder of Citizen Participation*

and *The Continuum of public participation* were discussed to bolster the theoretical framework of public participation. Lastly, the legal framework of public and the regulatory framework of ward committees completed the theoretical background of public participation and ward committees in South Africa.

- **Stage 3: Empirical Study.** An empirical study entails the collection of data with the aim of fulfilling the objectives of the study. Prior to conducting fieldwork, a researcher design the structure of the study. This study employed a qualitative approach. As such, questionnaires distributed to -and interviews conducted with- the research participants supplemented information obtained from literature review. Subsequently, the researcher analysed data collected from the field. Data analysis entailed analysing and presenting field data.
- **Stage 4: Developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees.** This stage presents the ultimate goal of the study. It is envisaged that a conceptual framework will improve public participation in the sphere of local government.

Figure 3 below, is a summary of the overall process of developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees to promote local government democracy.

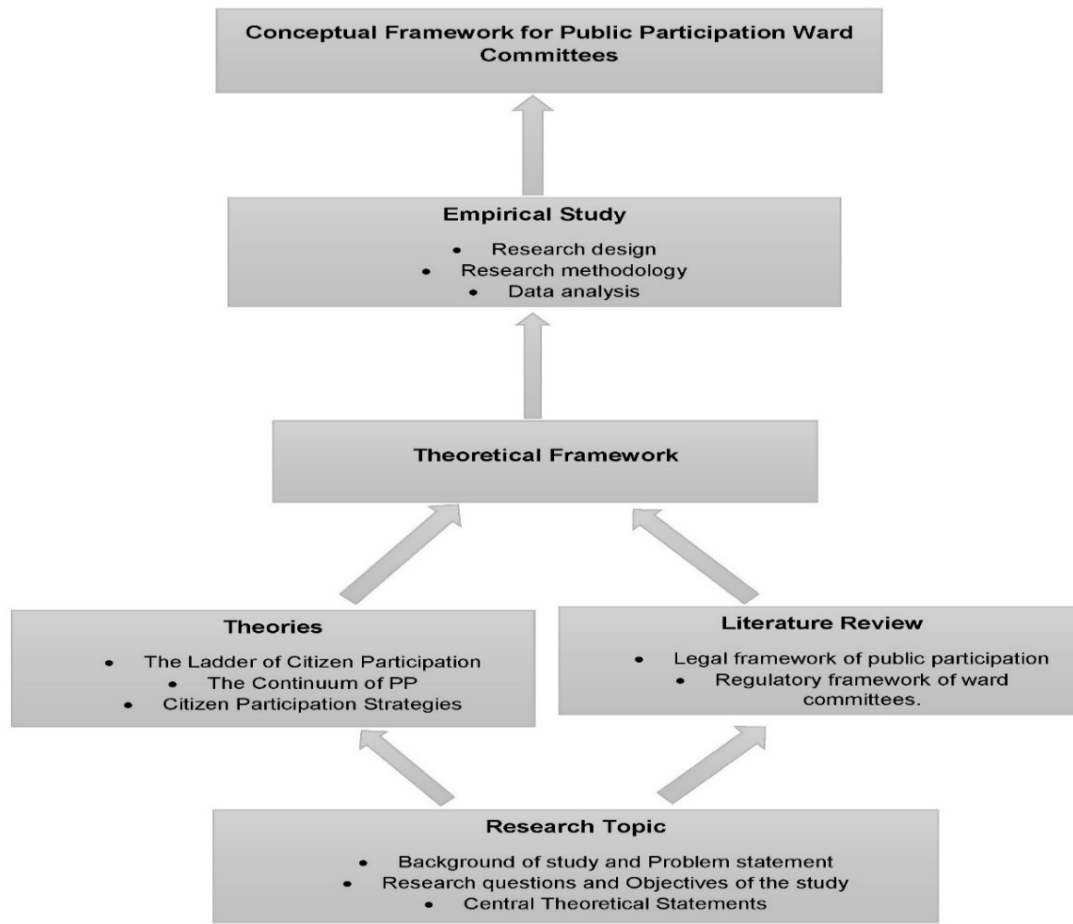


Figure 6: A synthesis of the process of developing a conceptual public participation framework
Source: Researcher's own compilation

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the development of a conceptual framework. The chapter serves as a preamble to the strengthened public participation framework for ward committees that will be proposed in the sixth chapter of this study. At the beginning of the chapter, the researcher motivated his choice of choosing to develop a conceptual, rather than a theoretical framework. An extensive discussion on the characteristics of a conceptual framework was undertaken. Furthermore, the guiding steps and processes to be followed when developing a conceptual framework were highlighted. Given this background, the next chapter focuses on the empirical findings with regard to the effective functioning of ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of NW405 Municipality.

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: A CONCEPTUAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK FOR WARD COMMITTEES TO PROMOTE LOCAL DEMOCRACY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter laid the groundwork for the development of a conceptual framework including providing a guiding narrative about how a conceptual framework will be developed in this study. This chapter addresses research objective four as stated in chapter one, namely, to investigate the challenges faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in North West 405 Municipality. As such, in this chapter the researcher analyses and makes deductions from the information provided by the respondents. Information presented in this chapter was obtained after the researcher conducted an empirical study in the Ventersdorp region of NW405 M. Information analysed in this chapter will be used in chapter six to develop a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees. The layout of the chapter includes: i) presentation of the empirical findings; ii) analysis of data obtained from the respondents.

5.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA

Data analysis entails organising, coding, presenting and interpreting data (Creswell, 2013:179) to give it meaning. Creswell (2013:187) submits that data interpretation 'involves making sense of the data'. In this study, it involves transcribing material gathered from semi-structured interviews and also from semi-structured questionnaires. Henning *et al.*, (2013:127) believe that in qualitative research, data analysis is a continuous and non-linear process. In a nutshell, data analysis is a process of converting raw information into meaningful data that can be easily understood (Struwig & Stead, 2011:150). Thus, in a qualitative study, data analysis is the simplification of qualitative data that has been collected from the respondents.

5.2.1 Processing research data

This section explains the methods of processing data that were used in this study. As previously stated in section 1.7, this study adopted a qualitative research methodology because of the nature of the data that was sought after in this study. Qualitative data such as statements, feelings, beliefs and opinions cannot be easily

quantified. As such, this study refrained from using quantitative methods of data analysis. As a result, no statistical services and software were used but the researcher analysed the data according to stipulated procedures and guidelines as advised by authoritative literature on research methodology.

Pie charts and tables were used to depict the biographical information of all the respondents who took part in this study. The researcher recorded some of the interview sessions with the respondents, however, some interviewees declined to have the interview sessions on record. In such cases, the researcher wrote down their responses verbatim during the course of the interview. After conducting interviews, the researcher transcribed the data obtained from the interviews. With regards to the questionnaires, the researcher issued out hard copies to the targeted respondents. After collecting the questionnaires from the respondents, the researcher transcribed their written statements. Information gathered from the respondents forms the basis of data analysis. The information was used in chapter 6 to achieve the main objective of this study which is to develop a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees in NW405M. The main objective of data analysis was to fulfill **RO2** and **RO3** of this study.

5.3 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

The researcher conducted interviews with eight municipal officials (see the interview schedule attached hereto as Annexure 1 on pages 157-159). The interviews were divided into five sections, namely sections A, B, C, D and E. Each section probed something specific, namely section A established the biographical profile of the respondents. Section B attempted to determine the establishment of ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. Section C investigated the roles and functions of ward committees. Section D evaluated the extent of community participation in Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. Section E was instrumental in investigating the role of public participation in IDP. The information that was gathered from the interviews is presented below.

5.3.1 Section A: Biographical information of the interviewees

Section A of the interview schedule contains the profile of the respondents. The profile is important for purposes of quantifying the findings of this study. The profile of the respondents depicts the race, sex and the highest qualifications of the respondents. The profile of the respondents is summarised in the tables below:

A 1. Gender of the respondents

Gender of the respondents	Total (%)
Male	7 (87, 5%)
Female	1 (12, 5%)

Seven of the respondents (87, 5%) were males while one (12, 5%) was a female. This result indicates that there were very few women still in key positions of the municipality. Therefore, opportunities should be availed to more women to enable them to enter into key positions within the field of public administration as to advance a South African civil service that is balanced.

A 2. Highest qualifications of the respondents

Highest qualifications	Total (%)
Grade 12	1 (12.5%)
Diploma	2 (25%)
General degree	1 (12.5%)
Post graduate degree	1 (12.5%)
Did not to mention	3 (37.5%)

The information above shows the educational qualification of the respondents. It is shown that one respondent attained Grade 12, two respondents attained diplomas, one respondent attained a general degree and another one attained a post graduate degree. Three respondents did not mention their qualifications. Overall the respondents possessed enough qualifications for senior positions linked to facilitating public participation in NW 405 Municipality.

A 3. Race of the respondents

Race of the respondents	Total (%)
Black	6 (75%)
White	2 (25%)
Coloured	0
Other	0

Six (75%) of the respondents were black, while two (25%) were white. This empirical finding indicates that the majority of the interviewees were black. This is likely to result from the employment equity policies introduced by the post-apartheid government. Employment equity laws, in particular the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 seeks to give employment opportunities to designated groups that were disadvantaged during apartheid.

5.3.2 Section B: Establishing ward committees in NW405M

This section investigated the process of establishing ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M. As emphasised throughout this study, local municipalities must establish ward committees for each ward within the municipality (Section 73 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998).

Question 1: *What is your understanding of public participation in municipal affairs?*

This question was posed to establish if municipal officials are knowledgeable about public participation in municipal affairs. As previously pointed out in section 2.2.1, public participation plays a pivotal role in the sphere of local government. For this reason, government promulgated legislation such as the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 and the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 to entrench local democracy. The respondents understood public participation as:

- *the inclusion of community views towards municipal policies;*
- *community involvement in municipal development plans;*
- *consulting the community on topical municipal matters;*

- *promoting local democracy;*
- *an aspect of participatory democracy; and*
- *municipal governance that seeks to accommodate the wishes of the recipients of municipal services.*

The respondents demonstrated adequate knowledge about public participation in municipal affairs. As a follow-up, the researcher inquired about what the respondents *thought is the relationship between public participation and ward committees?*

Most of the respondents stated that ward committees enhance public participation in municipal affairs. The respondents were aware that ward committees have a duty to promote local democracy. With regards to public participation, respondents stated that ward committees:

- *enhance public participation;*
- *represent the community;*
- *are drawn from the community;*
- *are agents of the community;*
- *advise the community on municipal matters.*

Most of the respondents demonstrated enough knowledge about the phenomenon of public participation in local government affairs. They also stated that ward committees were introduced to advance local democracy in South African municipalities. It can therefore be concluded that these municipal officials were knowledgeable about public participation in municipal affairs.

Question 2: *Are ward committee members (a) elected or (b) appointed into ward committees?*

The aim of this question was to explore the process of establishing ward committees in NW405M. As part of literature review, section 3.3.1 dealt with the processes of establishing ward committees in local municipalities. Section 3.3.2 also indicated that ward committees are community based structures designed to interact with local residents. As such, in the interest of democracy, it is important for the community to have a role in the establishment of ward committees because ward committees are there to represent the community interests. The respondents unanimously agreed that ward committees are elected by the residents of their ward. This indicates that

the community has a stake in the establishment of ward committees. As discussed in sections 2.3.2 and 2.4, allowing the community to elect individuals that they feel can represent their interest is a clear sign of the democratic nature of local government in South Africa.

Question 3: *Briefly discuss the process of establishing ward committees in North West 405 Municipality.*

This question enabled the researcher to determine the process of establishing ward committees. An overview of the process of establishing ward committees was provided in section 3.3. To prevent undemocratic tendencies in the establishment of ward committees, the Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2005, issued Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Municipal Ward Committees. The guidelines ensure that ward committees are broadly representative of the communities they represent. Incidentally, a ward committee must reflect the homogenous nature of the ward it represents. Respondents indicated that the process of establishing ward committees in Ventersdorp of Northwest 405 Municipality is as follows:

- *The municipality advertises ward committee vacancies.*
- *The municipality disburses nomination forms for prospective ward committee members.*
- *Members of the ward nominate residents whom they want to be ward committee members.*
- *Elections are held to elect 10 members from the nominees.*

Annexure 7 on page 168 depicts a typical nomination form for ward committees in NW405M. Once the community is satisfied ward committee members are required to sign contracts that signify that they have assented their election.

A resident cannot nominate him/herself to be a ward committee member; however, he/she can lobby and or motivate other residents to forward his/her name for nomination (Respondent 5).

The process of establishing ward committees is an important exercise because it has a bearing on how the community perceives ward committees as representatives of community interests. Annexure 6 on page 167 depicts a notice of invitation for community members to take part in the process of election ward committee

members. According to the responses given by the respondents, it can be deduced that the municipality adheres to the processes of establishing ward committees as prescribed by section 73 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 177 of 1998.

Question 4: *What measures are there to ensure that ward committees are broadly representative of the community, for example the representation of women, youth, religious people, traditional leaders and Community Based Organisations?*

The aim of this question was to determine if ward committees in North West 405 Municipality are broadly representative of the community. Section 3.2.1 of this study underscored the need for representativeness in ward committees. Section 73 (3) (a) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 stresses the need for diversity and equitable representation in ward committees. In 2008, the municipality promulgated the Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Ward Committees. These guidelines seek to regulate the composition and representation of ward committees (Part 6).

All the respondents indicated that they are aware of the need to have balanced ward committees. To achieve this, they stated that there are provisions in the nomination process that includes various interests groups to ensure that ward committees are broadly representative of the community. For example, Respondent 7 stated that the municipality has a policy to include physically challenged members in ward committees. He stated that a minimum of five women and other interests groups are represented in ward committees. One of the respondents had the following to say:

The nomination process seeks to accommodate various groups and interests that are inherent in any particular ward. As such, in the process of establishing ward committees groupings such as religious groups, community based organisations, the youth, the physically challenged and other interest groups as mentioned in section 6.2 of the Council's Guidelines for the establishment and operation of ward committees (Respondent 1).

The information provided above indicates that ward committees strive to have a balanced representation of males, females and interest groups in ward committees. Thus, the municipality has provisions to include interests groups. It can be deduced

that ward committees in NW405M are broadly representative of their community. The municipality's adherence to section 73 of the Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 ensures that all the interest groups present in the community are included in ward committees.

Question 5: *What is the term of office for ward committees?*

The question was posed to give the researcher an insight into the tenure of office of the ward committee members. As it was discussed in section 3.3.4, the tenure of office of ward committees is important because it determines the continuity of ward committees. This study submits that a short term of office means that ward committees do not have sufficient time to cultivate a working relationship with the community and the local municipality. On the other hand, a lengthy or indefinite term of office is likely to encourage a sense of unhealthy comfort and complacency on the part of ward committee members. Responses obtained from all the respondents indicate that the term of office for ward committees is consistent with the term of office of a municipal council. As such, ward committees are elected each time a new council starts its term of office. It can be deduced that one of the benefits of having a limited term of office for ward committees is that it promotes quality community representation. In this regard, non performing ward committee members will not be elected by the community to represent them once their term in office has expired. However, Respondent 4 stated that ward committee members can still be elected to represent the community if they get sufficient votes from the residents. Thus, although ward committees tenure of office is consistent with that of the municipal council, ward committee members are free to contest again for a fresh term.

Question 6: *Do ward committee members receive pay or any other benefits for their services?*

The question sought to establish if ward committee members based in the Ventersdorp region are paid for their services. The question was asked in light of section 77 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 which states that ward committees shall not be remunerated. Section 3.3.4 of this dissertation revealed that, whilst the above stated Act does not sanction the remuneration of ward committees, certain municipalities in South Africa give their ward committee members monthly stipends. All the respondents confirmed that ward

committee members do not receive pay for their services, however, they receive a monthly allowance of R700. The respondents indicated that ward committee members do not necessarily receive remuneration for their services but rather they receive an allowance to cater for auxiliary costs such as phone bills, transport and stationery expenses. Respondent 6, 1 and 7 stated that they only receive the monthly allowance if they submit their monthly reports.

The information obtained from Respondents 7, 6 and 1 somehow suggests that the R700 monthly allowance given to ward committee members in North West 405 Municipality is directly linked to the performance of each ward committee member. In a way, giving out a monthly stipend to ward committees negates section 77 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) which states that ward committees shall not be remunerated. Regrettably, the allowance may be perceived by ward committee members and community members as a form of remuneration. This study is of the viewpoint that such a perception is in direct contradiction to the spirit of volunteerism that is expected from ward committees. In deduction, ward committees are supposed to foster grassroots democracy, viewing them as a form of employment will undermine their purpose.

Question 7: *Do ward committees receive training or induction when they become members or during their tenure as members?*

The question was posed to solicit the competency of ward committees based in Ventersdorp. The question is in line with section 2.7.1 of this study which emphasised that ward committees are a method of public participation in South Africa. In order to be successful, ward committees should be competent and effective. To be competent, ward committee members need be trained and inducted so that they can meaningfully contribute towards local democracy. Respondents 4, 2, 8, 1 and 6 stated that the municipality in conjunction with SALGA (South African Local Government Association) inducts elected members once they join a ward committee. All the respondents stated that induction is an exercise that raises awareness and imparts knowledge on the roles, duties and the responsibilities of ward committee members. In addition Respondent 6 stated that, induction equips ward committee members with skills and competencies that are critical in the execution of their duties. Respondent 5 emphasised the importance of giving ward

committees a background of the system of local governance in South Africa and the role of ward committees in enhancing local democracy. In addition, the respondent stated that well-informed ward committees are more likely to contribute towards the democratisation of the sphere of local government especially in poor neighborhoods that continue to face governance and service delivery challenges. However, Respondent 7 and Respondent 1 were of the opinion that the municipality should allocate more resources towards training ward committee members. Respondent 7 pointed out that there are many ward committee members who are not well acquainted with what is expected from them. Thus, ward committee members in NW405M were inducted and trained by the municipality in conjunction with SALGA. However, information provided by the respondents shows that the amount of training and induction received is not enough.

5.3.3 Section C: The roles and functions of ward committees in Ventersdorp

The aim of this section was to explore the roles and functions of ward committees to determine how they contribute to community involvement in municipal matters.

Question 8: *What are the roles and functions of ward committees?*

It will be difficult to develop a conceptual public participation framework without first understanding the roles and functions of ward committees. The above stated question sought not only to investigate the roles and functions of ward committees but also to understand how their roles and functions relate to the overall objective of promoting local democracy. As stated in section 2.4.1, public participation plays a pivotal role in advancing local democracy because it enables local communities to interact with local planners and decision-makers. Most of the respondents confirmed that the main role of ward committees is to represent the interests of their wards. They further stated that in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M, ward committees are deployed as community based structures tasked to interact and gather views, concerns, problems and challenges from the residents and present them to the municipality. This is consistent with section 2.7.1.2 of this dissertation which stated that 'ward committees are ideally placed to relay information from the municipality to the community'. Respondent 3 stated that:

Ward committees represent the interests of the community, basically, they are a mouthpiece of the community. They represent the interests of the community by gathering their views, suggestions and challenges..

Based on the information above, it can be deduced that ward committees serve as a link between the community and the municipality. Democracy, as mentioned in section 2.3 of this study, requires government, especially the local sphere of government to get the mandate to govern from the people. Practically speaking, government should continuously consult, interact and communicate with the people in order to gather their views. Therefore, to achieve maximum needs-satisfaction, the government should address people's needs in a democratic matter. In the sphere of local government, communication between the community and the local municipality cannot be understated. In this regard, ward committees are strategically positioned to be instrumental in promoting public participation.

Question 9: *Does the municipality delegate specific functions to ward committees?*

The question investigates whether the municipality delegates specific functions to ward committees. As stated in section 3.3.2 of this study and in line with section 72 (3) of Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998, 'the object of ward committees is to enhance participatory democracy in local government'. This study submits that there are many ways of achieving participatory democracy in local government. However, without specific functions delegated from the municipality, ward committees are likely to become redundant. All the respondents affirmed that ward committees are community-based advisory structures that are used as a communication tool that promotes reciprocal communication between the community and the local authority. As such, when there is a need, the municipality delegates extra duties to ward committees.

When the municipality is in need of community information such as the number of residents in a particular ward, the number of unemployed youth and other profiling information; ward committees are given the task to compile the information from their respective wards and submit it to the ward councilor (Respondent 2).

Ward committees are given the task to contact residents who are far behind in the payments of their municipal rates. Ward committees also assist in the compilation of the indigents' list (Respondent 5).

Thus, this study deduces that, owing to their proximity to the community, ward committees are an effective tool that is used to disseminate information timeously. They also distribute flyers and publicise information about public meetings. Therefore, apart from the generic duties stated in section 3.3.2 of this study, the municipality deploys ward committees as a communication and an information dissemination tool, to transmit vital municipal information to the residents.

Question 10: *Are there specific measures to involve ward committees in municipal decision-making?*

South African local government was designed to be responsive to the needs of local communities. Chapter 2 of this study, particularly section 2.7.1 underscored the important role of ward committees. This was further emphasised in section 2.7.2 where it was stated that ward committees are a medium of communication between the community and the municipality. As such, there should be measures designed to involve ward committees in municipal decision-making because ward committees are agents of the community. Against this background, the researcher posed the question in order to explore how information gathered from the community is incorporated into municipal decision-making. This question resonates with the **RO4** of this study.

Out of the eight interviewees, seven pointed out that input from ward committees is transmitted to the local municipality through ward councilors. They stated that ward committee members compile monthly reports which they combine and submit to the ward councilor, who in turn submits them to the municipality. Ward committees are each assigned areas to focus on such as health, local economic development or education. A ward committee's monthly report covers all the areas of the community's concern. Respondents 2 and 5 stated that beyond monthly reports, there are no specific measures that directly include ward committees in municipal decision-making. However, this is not to say that the input from ward committees goes unnoticed. Section 2.3.1 of this study demonstrated that representative democracy allows individuals drawn from the population to represent the interests of

their constituencies (Verba, 1999:238). In addition, Setala (2009:151) declares that 'citizens' direct participation in politics would involve enormous practical problems in the modern context'. Thus, in an effort to promote local democracy, ward committees are given certain duties and functions within their wards. As local representatives of the community they inform the municipality about the needs of their wards.

Question 11: *What form of support is given to ward committees by the municipality?*

Section 3.3.3 of this study focused on the various forms of support rendered to ward committees by local municipalities. In order to represent the community, ward committees rely considerably on municipal support because outside the local municipality there is no statutory support for ward committees. This study believes that without municipal support, ward committees will face challenges that will deter them from achieving their goals. Bearing the above in mind, the question was posed to explore the extent of support rendered to ward committees. The majority of respondents stated that the municipality offers material support to ward committees to enable ward committees to fulfill their duties. For example, Respondent 2 stated that when ward committees want to convene meetings, the municipality avails transport and venue. They are also given stationery, access to printing services and access to municipal infrastructure such as community halls and municipal premises.

The deduction that can be made is that the abovementioned forms of support assist ward committees to reach out to the community with ease. In a nutshell, there are no designated offices and vehicles for ward committees thus, the municipality is obliged to support ward committees in the best way possible. Section 3.3.4 of this dissertation reiterated that section 77 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998, ward committees shall not be remunerated.

Question 12: *What are the challenges faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in municipal affairs? What has the municipality done to address those challenges?*

In line with **RO3**, this question identifies the challenges faced by ward committees. It further identifies measures introduced to address the challenges. An understanding of the challenges faced by ward committees is instrumental in developing a

conceptual public participation framework. Below is a summary of the challenges faced by ward committees as provided verbatim by the respondents:

- *The community is apathetic towards participating in municipal affairs.*
- *The community perceive ward committees to be an extension of political parties. For example, some residents view ward committees as an extension of the ANC's grip on the local municipality.*
- *Economic deprivation, especially in the former black residential areas. As such residents devote their time only on activities to economically better their livelihoods.*
- *Poor recordkeeping by ward committees.*
- *Failure by ward committees to submit minutes of previous meetings.*
- *Failure by ward committees to attend ward committee meetings.*
- *Lack of adequate information about local government affairs.*
- *Some ward committee members do not fully understand their mandate.*

Based on the responses given by the interviewees, it is clear that ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of the North West 405 Municipality are facing numerous challenges. The perceived alignment of ward committees to certain political parties deters community engagement in municipal affairs because of the polarised nature of political parties in North West 405 Municipality. Furthermore, the poor conduct of ward committees negatively impacts on the community's eagerness to take part in municipal affairs. In a nutshell, community apathy cannot be addressed if ward committees members are not fulfilling their duties. Lastly, in order to attain the level of 'citizen power/control' articulated in section 2.5.2 and section 2.5.3 of this study, the community should be actively involved in municipal matters on a regular basis. In this regard, ward committees are conveniently placed to promote active community engagement in North West 405 Municipality affairs.

5.3.4 Section D: Community participation in Ventersdorp

The aim of this section is to investigate how the community is involved in the affairs of the Municipality.

Question 13: *What is the role of public participation in NW 405 Municipality decision-making?*

This question investigated the role of public participation in the decision-making apparatus of NW405M. Section 2.6.1 of this study demonstrated that community participation promotes transparency and the prioritisation of the needs of the community. Most of the respondents stated that public participation seeks to influence municipal decisions. Respondents 3, 7 and 5 alluded that the community is a major constituency in the ecosystem of local governance. As such, communication between the needs provider (local authority) and the recipient of the services (community) is important. Respondent 4 stated that:

“In a democratic country like South Africa, government should strive to take on board the views of the community when designing policies and development programs. This will result in the formulation of local policies that address the plight of the people”.

Similarly, Respondent 1 stated that:

“The community is a reliable source of information about the pressing needs that the local municipality should attend to. The role of public participation is to provide the municipality with information useful in formulating development policies and plans of action that are aimed at addressing community needs”.

Generally, most of the respondents emphasised that public participation plays a fundamental role in grassroots democracy. Thus, it can be deduced that public participation seeks to involve the community in municipal decision-making. The respondents demonstrated an awareness of the importance of public participation in the affairs of NW 405 Municipality. As mentioned in section 1.2 of this study, the views and interests of the community are important in the South African system of local government. Therefore, including the community in municipal decision-making is one of the ways through which democracy can be cultivated in the sphere of local government.

Question 14: *In your view is the community effectively engaged in municipal affairs?*

The majority of respondents felt that the community is not fully engaged in municipal affairs. Respondent 1 stressed that mere attendance of public meetings does not

equate community engagement. Similarly, Respondent 2 was adamant that public participation in the Ventersdorp region is minimal. Respondent 2 bemoaned that the community is not empowered enough to meaningfully contribute towards municipal policies and development programs. Respondent 4 echoed that:

“At times when meetings are called, the community does attend. They ask questions especially to seek clarity on the issues raised; however, on substantive issues the voice of the community is eerily silent. Thus, they are reduced to recipients of information because they are not competent enough to engage local authorities on technical and specialised issues such as ecology and the environmental strain of certain development programs on the local environment. This has led to property development on risk areas without opposition from the community. A case in point is the construction of dwellings on dolomite areas”.

Respondent 8 stated that the community in the Ventersdorp region is apathetic. In the same vein, Respondent 2 believes that the municipality needs to do more to lure the community into taking part in municipal affairs.

In light of the above stated responses, it can be deduced that there is room for improvement for community engagement in NW405M affairs. Community engagement in municipal affairs will contribute to the realisation of the benefits of public participation outlined in section 2.8. As such, the local municipality should continuously promote the engagement of the community in municipal budgeting, IDP and other projects that benefit the community.

Question 15: *How does the municipality involve the community in the annual budget, IDP and performance management?*

This question sought to give the researcher an understanding of community involvement in IDP, budget and performance management. These are key areas in the development agenda of a municipality; therefore, community participation in these programs is crucial for community development. As stated in Chapter 2 (section 2.7.2), through public participation, IDP is instrumental in promoting local development. In the Ventersdorp region of NW405M, the budget is 'shaped by the

needs of the community' (Respondent 4). Most of the respondents stated that through ward meetings, the views of the community are gathered with the aim of incorporating them into an IDP and the budget. In these ward meetings, residents submit the needs which they want the budget/IDP to address. Respondents 6 and 4 stated that ward meetings are a useful method of public participation in the budgetary affairs of the municipality.

It can be deduced that the Ventersdorp community is involved in municipal decision-making because they contribute towards the municipality's IDP and budget.

Question 16: *Apart from ward committees, what other opportunities are there for the community to participate in municipal affairs?*

This question was posed to explore if there are other opportunities that can be used by the community to take part in the affairs of the municipality. Most of the respondents stated that even though ward committees are a vital channel for public participation in municipal affairs, they are by no means the only platform of community involvement. This is in line with section 2.7 of this study, which states that there are various methods of public participation in the sphere of local government. In South Africa these methods ensure that the community does not only exclusively rely on ward committees for involvement in municipal affairs. According to the information gathered from the respondents, the following are avenues through which the community can participate in the affairs of the municipality:

- *Community based organisations.*
- *Seminars.*
- *Budget meetings.*
- *Public meetings*
- *IDP representative forums*
- *Attending council meetings that are open to the public.*

As stated by Smith (in Rowe, 2000:3), public participation refers to various methods intended to consult, inform and involve the public to allow them to have an input in decision and policy-making. The responses above indicate that ward committees are not the only avenue of public participation in the Ventersdorp region of the NW405M. This resonates with what was discussed in section 2.7 of this study. More so, the responses show that there are enough opportunities for the community to engage

themselves with the municipality. By deduction, it can be stated that effective community participation can be achieved if the municipality and the local community exploit the available opportunities of public participation.

Question 17: *What are the benefits of public participation in the Ventersdorp region?*

This question was posed to establish among respondents what they would interpret as the benefits of public participation in Ventersdorp. It was motivated by section 2.8 of this study which identified the benefits of public participation. André *et al.* (2006:2) state that public participation is vital for promoting good governance and empowerment in grassroots communities. Thus, the main benefit of public participation in municipal affairs is that it promotes good governance.

“Residents have a tendency of alleging that there is misuse of public funds by public officials when their needs are not met. However, if they are involved in municipal budgeting they will know about the resource constraints the municipality is facing” (Respondent 3).

Thus, through involvement in municipal affairs, the community can appraise for themselves the amount of resources available at the local municipality. Respondent 3 stressed that public involvement in municipal affairs evokes a sense of pride and belonging from the community. He further stated that a sense of pride and belonging is a major deterrent of crime and vandalism. Therefore, it can be deduced that public participation in municipal affairs also lowers the incidence of crime in the Ventersdorp region of the NW405M. Respondent 7 stated that community involvement helps the municipality to provide user-specific services that satisfy the needs of the community. As such, local planners do not have to assume or overlook the needs of the community because they know what the community needs. The majority of respondents stated that if the community is involved in municipal affairs they will tend to have realistic expectations about the nature of services they would require. Therefore, residents taking part in municipal budget affairs will have a clear grasp of the financial standing of the municipality.

The responses outlined above show that all the respondents believed that there are benefits of public participation in the Ventersdorp region. Therefore, it can be concluded that public participation is vital, therefore it should be promoted.

5.3.5 Section E: Public participation in Integrated Development Planning

This section investigates how IDP enhances public participation in NW 405 Municipality, with specific reference to the Ventersdorp region.

Question 18: *What is the function of public participation in IDP?*

All the respondents stated that through public participation, the local municipality identifies the needs of the community. Several respondents stated that in the development of an IDP, ward committees hold ward meetings with residents to gather the views and needs of the community. The views of the community are subsequently combined with information from other wards. The municipality compiles the information accordingly, for example views pertaining to health, education, safety and security, leisure and recreation are sorted together. After compiling the information, it is easy to identify the key priority areas identified by the community that need immediate attention. Respondent 4 stated that during this process, the community is consulted because they know the development needs that should be prioritised. Lastly, the municipality collates the needs of the community with the available funds.

“The community provides the municipality with their needs. These needs range from the need for health facilities, housing, and employment opportunities. Judging from past experiences, communities come up with an array of needs. However, some of these needs are not priority areas, as such, municipal planners come up with a priority list that should be included in the IDP” (Respondent 5).

Respondent 2 stated that:

“Most of our community members are not aware that local government functions are limited. For example the provision of schools and hospitals and other major capital investments are usually in the ambit of provincial and national government. As such, the municipality does not immediately attend to such needs that do not fall under its area of influence” .

It can be deduced that public participation in IDP is important because it assists the municipality in identifying the needs of the community. Public participation also raises community awareness about the available resources at the municipality's disposal. To this end, effective cooperation between the municipality and the community will ensure a working relationship, one that is anchored on a mutual understanding of the limited resources that should be used sustainably to meet the needs of the community.

Question 19: *What is the role of ward committees in promoting community participation in the IDP process?*

This question was posed to explore the role played by ward committees in promoting community participation in IDP. This question was partly answered by section 2.7.1.2. The bulk of the respondents generally echoed that in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M, ward committees play an important role in IDP. Whilst Respondent 1 stressed that ward committees are not adequately fulfilling their role, he stated that their role is to coordinate the gathering of community needs during IDP.

Respondent 6 argued that the community is yet to fully grasp and hence effectively participate in IDP. Based on information from Respondent 6 it can be deduced that the municipality prepares an IDP and IDP reviews with little input from the community. Respondent 3 was of the opinion that the local municipality is bound by local government legislation to consult and engage the community on IDP matters. The respondent further stated that in IDP, ward committees are a channel of communication between the municipality and the community. Respondent 3 stated that they disseminate IDP information to the community. It can be deduced that they are a source of information to the residents. Respondent 8 stated that ward committees promote public participation in municipal affairs in this regard, IDP is not an exception. Respondent 8 further stated that ward committees are important in IDP because they are the easiest way to reach out to the community due to their convenient location in the community. As such, most of the respondents believe that ward committees promote public participation in the municipality.

The responses outlined above indicate that in IDP, ward committees assist local municipalities to determine the needs of the community. One respondent firmly

believes that ward committees still need to be more involved in IDP. Accordingly, there is need to capacitate ward committees to enable them to be more engaged in IDP. It can thus, be deduced that within the framework of IDP, even though there is room for improvement, ward committees, to a certain extent, assist the municipality to identify the needs of the community.

Question 20: *What are the benefits of involving the community in IDP?*

This question was posed to gauge the benefits of involving the community in IDP. It is in line with **Question 16** that explored the benefits of public participation in local government affairs. The benefits of public participation were discussed in section 2.8 in this study. Mokale and Schepeers (2006:27) state that public participation promotes a citizen-focused delivery of services. Section 2.7.2 of this study, stated that the goal of IDP is to ensure that community needs are met sustainably. Therefore, IDP, municipal services and community participation are intertwined. Respondent 7 stated:

“The benefits of involving the community in the IDP process are that the municipality is fully aware of the prevailing community needs. Going to the people to gather their views is not only a democratic exercise but it is also a good governance issue because when municipal officials interact with the people they get a firsthand experience of what the community goes through in the daily lives. Apart from giving municipal officials an insight into the daily lives of the community, involving the community in the IDP process also educates the community about municipal governance. For example, the community realizes that the local municipality does not have unlimited funds, therefore it is important to manage the available resources sparingly”.

Listed below are the verbatim responses from the respondents:

- *Community participation in IDP places the people at the center of municipal planning.*
- *It cultivates a healthy working relationship between the municipality and the local community.*
- *Through taking part in IDP, the community is enlightened about the way the municipality allocates its resources.*

- *It promotes transparency and accountability.*
- *It is a form of performance management because it enables the community to take stock of the municipality's previous pledges and promises.*
- *Community involvement in IDP promotes responsible citizenry in that the community is educated about the importance of using natural resources in a responsible and sustainable manner.*
- *IDP is a platform that can be used by the municipality to give feedback to the community.*
- *It builds and strengthens the relationship between residents and the local authority.*

All the respondents managed to at least mention one benefit of public participation in IDP. Their responses affirm that the municipal officials believe that community involvement in IDP is beneficial to the municipality and the community. Based on the quotations above, it is clear that there are numerous benefits that accrue from involving the community in IDP. Apart from the benefits, community involvement in IDP is a fulfillment of the democratic promise on which the post-apartheid South African government is based on. Community involvement in IDP is one of the ways of ensuring that the municipality is aware of the prevailing needs and the available resources that can be deployed to fulfill those needs.

Question 21: *In your opinion, does the community adequately take part in IDP? Are you satisfied with the level of public participation in IDP?*

This question determined whether municipal officials are satisfied with the level of community involvement in IDP. As mentioned in section 2.7.2 of this study, a successful IDP is one that is a product of wide stakeholder consultation. Respondents 8, 3 and 5 maintained that despite community involvement in IDP there is room for improvement. Respondent 3 reiterated that the municipality has not done enough to empower the community to enable them to meaningfully contribute towards community development. He bemoaned that public participation has been relegated to, and is now synonymous with, merely informing and reporting to the community. Respondents 3 and 5 argued that valuable and critical input from the community is largely not forthcoming because the community is not empowered to

contribute critically towards municipal policies. The researcher probed about what can be done to ensure that the community is in a position to meaningfully participate in the formulation of municipal policies. Respondent 3 believed that the municipality should revisit section 16 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 which states that a municipality must 'contribute to the capacity of the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality'. Deductively speaking, the municipality should use its resources to capacitate and empower the community in order to enable them to contribute towards the development of robust and sustainable municipal policies. This will improve the quality and frequency of community involvement not only in IDP but in other municipal programs that require community engagement such as budgeting and performance management.

Question 22: *Which mode of communication do you use to notify/invite the public to take part in IDP?*

Section 3.2.4 of this study discussed the statutory prescriptions followed by municipalities when notifying the community about events that require community involvement. Section 18 and 19 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 encourages municipalities to advertise and inform the community about upcoming events. In line with the above, this question established how the municipality notifies the community about municipal events. The respondents stated that the following are the methods of communication used by the municipality.

1. *Newspapers such as, Herald, Gazette, North West Independent,*
2. *Community radio stations*
3. *Advertise on social media platforms such as Facebook*
4. *Flyers*
5. *Pamphlets*
6. *Extensive word of mouth by ward committee members, councillors and community based planners.*

Information provided by the majority of respondents indicates that the municipality notifies the community about upcoming events. Notification of public events is important because it enables the community to make preparations. It is interesting to note that the municipality uses social media to notify the community about upcoming events. This study believes that the municipality should also have social media and

or online platforms that enable the community to participate in municipal affairs through communication devices such as cell phones and personal computers.

Question 23: *What challenges do you face in engaging the community in IDP issues?*

The majority of respondents reported that the main challenge was that community attendances of public meetings were low. Poor community attendance means that their input will be minimal as well. The other challenge identified by most of the respondents was that some members of the community were not aware of IDP and the aims thereof. These challenges make it difficult for the municipality to fully engage with the community in IDP because their input is not always good. Respondent 5 stated that the solution is to educate and raise awareness about IDP in the community. Respondent 1 advised the municipality to translate copies of the IDP into local languages so that they reach sections of the community that are not conversant with the English language. Respondent 8 suggested that the municipality should carry out road shows or seminars to raise community awareness on IDP before they invite the community to participate.

The responses provided above resonate with the *education-therapy strategy* that was identified in section 2.5.1. This theory states that the people should be empowered and informed before they are expected to take part in government affairs. It can be deduced that empowering the community will enable them to meaningfully contribute towards IDP.

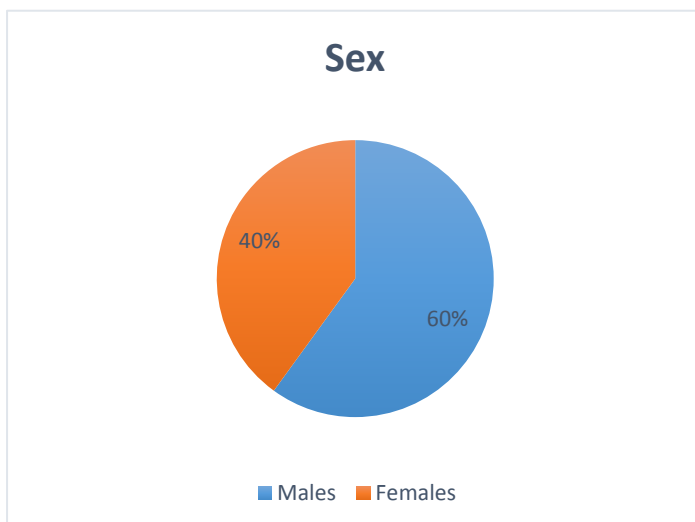
5.4 ANALYSIS OF SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

This section provides an analysis of the information gathered from ward committees in Ventersdorp. Section 1.9.2 stated that this study used semi structured questionnaires as an instrument of collecting data from six ward committees. Section 3.3.1 indicated that each ward committee should be made up of eleven members, that is, the ward councillor and 10 ward committee members. The questionnaires gathered information about ward committees and public participation in the Ventersdorp region. Respondents were drawn from wards 6, 2, 4, 5, 1 and 3. As shown below, questions 1, 2 and 3 created a biographical profile of the study sample.

Ward	Number of respondents who returned their questionnaires	Number of questionnaires distributed in the ward
4	5	11
1	5	11
6	4	11
3	6	11
5	7	11
2	3	11
Total	30	56

Information summarised above shows that a total of 30 respondents took part in this study. Generally, the extent of respondents participation was fair because the study managed to enlist at least fifty per cent of the target population. It can be deduced that the information obtained from the respondents is adequate. However, one of the limitations faced in this study was that some of the respondents were not responsive.

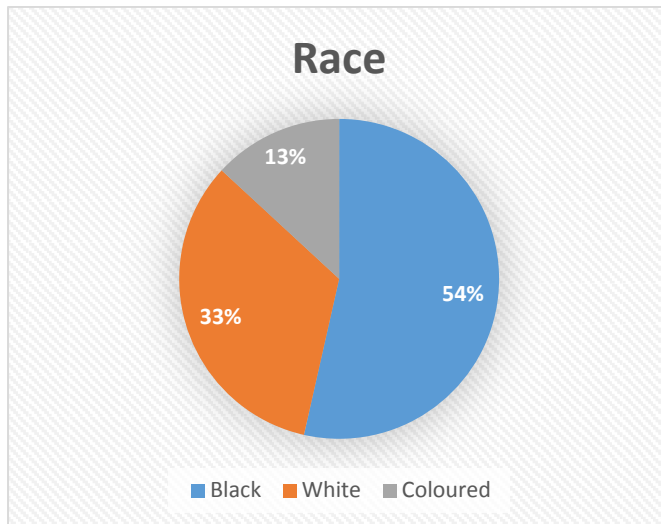
Question 2: *The sex of the participants.*



The results above indicate the skewed nature of the respondents that took part in this study. The sex of the respondents is important because, as stated in section 3.3.1, ward committees must be representative of all interests groups that are found in the ward. Women are designated as an interest group. The results show that most of the participants were males compared to females. Out of a total of thirty, twelve

were females while eighteen were males. It can be deduced that more opportunities will have to be unveiled to women to encourage them to engage in political matters.

Question 3: Race of the participants.



The pie chart above depicts the racial composition of the respondents. The data indicates that most of the respondents were black. Out of a total of thirty respondents, sixteen were black, ten were white and four were coloured. It can be deduced that this results indicate that black people constitute a bigger portion of the population in the Ventersdorp region.

Question 4: How many members does your ward committee consist of?

This question ascertained the number of ward committee members in the wards under investigation. Section 3.2.1 demonstrated that ward committees should consist of ten ward committee members chaired by a ward councillor. The results indicate that some ward committees have less than the stipulated 10 members. In an interview conducted with the Community Liaison Officer (CLO), he indicated that some ward committees do not have 10 members due to death, transference or resignation of a sitting ward committee member. The results also indicate that majority of the respondents, 25 (83.3 %), stated that their ward committee consisted of 10 members. As discussed in section 3.2.1, the result shows that ward committees in Ventersdorp comply with section 73 (2) of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998 which states that ward committees should not exceed 10 members. Thus, in compliance with legislation, most wards committees in

the Ventersdorp region of NW405M consisted of 10 members and they are chaired by a ward councillor.

Question 5: *For how long were you a ward committee member?*

This question determined the number of years in which respondents were ward committee members. Section 3.3.4 of this study reiterated that section 75 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 177 of 1998 gives local municipalities the discretion to determine the term of office of ward committees. Seventy per cent (70%) of the respondents stated that they were ward committee members for at least five years (one municipal term) whilst 30% of the respondents stated that they were members for ten years (two municipal terms). The results show that most of respondents were members for at least five years. It can be deduced that the term of ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of the NW405M is five years however members are allowed to seek re-election upon the expiry of their term.

Question 6: *How often did your ward committee meet?*

The question determined how often ward committees in the Ventersdorp region meet. The respondents unanimously (100%) stated that they meet at least once a month. This result shows that ward committees adhere to the stipulated minimum number of meetings per month. The CLO who was interviewed in this study stated that the municipality stipulates that ward committees should meet at least once a month. He stated that ward committees meetings are held before the ward councillor attends the monthly council meeting so that when the councillor attends the council meeting he/she will submit reports from the ward. Annexure 8 on page 169 is a copy of the proposed dates for ward committee meetings that was provided by the CLO's office. It shows the proposed ward committee meeting dates for a ward in NW405M. Annexure 8 shows that ward committees are scheduled to meet at least once a month. The ward councillor also submits the minutes of their monthly meetings to the CLO. The results indicate that ward committees meet at least once a month.

Question 7: *Which topics were usually on the agenda during ward committee meetings?*

The purpose of this question was to establish the items on the agenda of ward committees meetings. According to the respondents, some of the issues on the agenda include the following:

- *residents' complaints (water leakages, electricity faults, refuse removal);*
- *maintenance/infrastructure problems;*
- *ward committee projects/funds;*
- *rezoning applications;*
- *land use matters;*
- *any other business raised by members of the ward committee;*
- *minutes from the previous ward committee meetings; and*
- *ward committee monthly reports.*

The responses above indicate that ward committees discuss a number of issues during ward committee meetings. The information shows that ward committees touch on a wide range of issues. Most of the respondents stated that service delivery matters are by far the topical issues during meetings. Thus, it can be deduced that ward committees in the Ventersdorp region discuss mostly service delivery matters affecting their region.

Question 8: This question was presented in the form of a table that contained ten questions which required respondents to answer 'yes' or 'no' (see Annexure 2 on page 160-163). Question 8 gathered general perceptions of ward committee members about public participation.

8.1 *Are you satisfied with community attendance of ward meetings?*

Response	Total
Yes	15 (50%)
No	15 (50%)

The purpose of this question was to determine if ward committee members are satisfied with community attendance. The results were par. Fifteen (50%) of the respondents stated that they were satisfied, while 15 (50%) stated that they were not

satisfied, with community attendance of ward committees. The above results are an indication that community attendance in Ventersdorp is optimum. However, the results also show that there is room for improvement.

8.2 *Does your ward committee get views and suggestions from the community on municipal matters?*

Response	Total
Yes	30 (100%)
No	0 (0%)

To be effective, ward committees need to have a working relationship with the community. This question was posed to determine if ward committees get views and suggestions from the community. All the respondents (100%) reported that they get views and suggestions from the community on municipal matters. The results indicate that ward committees were at least operational and functioning within the Ventersdorp community.

8.3 *In your opinion, do ward committees influence municipal policies, plans and programs?*

Response	Total
Yes	17 (56.7%)
No	13 (53.3%)

The question probed whether ward committees believed they influence municipal policies. Seventeen respondents (56.7%) stated that they believed ward committees influence the plans, policies and programmes of the municipality. Thirteen respondents (43.3%) stated that they do not believe that ward committees influence the plans, policies and programs of the municipality. The results above show that most of the ward committees believe that they indeed influence the direction of municipal planning.

8.4 *Were you offered training and induction when you became a ward committee member?*

Response	Total
Yes	30 (100%)
No	0 (0%)

The question evaluated whether ward committee members were offered training and induction. All the thirty respondents (100%) unanimously stated that they received training and induction when they became ward committee members. The results indicate that all the respondents received training and induction. This shows that the municipality capacitates and trains ward committee members.

8.5 *Are you familiar with the duties and roles of ward committees stated in the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000?*

Response	Total
Yes	30 (100%)
No	0 (0%)

This question tested whether the respondents are familiar with their roles and duties as contained in the abovementioned Act as discussed in section 3.3.2 of this study. All the respondents (100%) unanimously acknowledged that they are familiar with the duties and roles of ward committees stated in the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 and that they are aware of the constitutional provisions about community involvement in municipal affairs. The results confirm that the respondents are familiar with their roles and duties.

8.6 *Is the municipality doing enough to promote public involvement in its affairs?*

Response	Total
Yes	12 (40%)
No	18 (60%)

This question determined if the respondents thought that the municipality was doing enough to promote public participation. Twelve respondents (40%) stated that the municipality is doing enough to promote public involvement in municipal affairs whilst eighteen (60%) were of the opinion that the municipality is not doing enough to promote public involvement in municipal affairs. The findings above indicate that

most of the respondents think that the municipality is not doing enough to promote public participation. Therefore, the municipality should devise more ways to involve the community in its affairs.

8.7 Do you believe that ward committees are fulfilling their mandate?

Response	Total
Yes	21 (70%)
No	9 (30%)

This question evaluated whether the respondents believed that they were fulfilling their mandate. Twenty-one of the respondents (70%) believed that ward committees are fulfilling their mandate whilst nine (30%) did not believe so. The findings show that most of the respondents believed that they were fulfilling their mandate.

8.8 Is your ward committee involved in IDP and municipal budgeting?

Response	Total
Yes	30 (100%)
No	0 (0%)

All the thirty respondents (100%) indicated that their ward committees were involved in IDP and municipal budgeting. This shows that ward committees in Ventersdorp take part in IDP and municipal budgets.

8.9 Are ward committees doing enough to involve the community in municipal decision-making?

Response	Total
Yes	23 (77%)
No	7 (23%)

This question sought to determine if the respondents felt ward committees are doing enough to involve the community. Twenty-three respondents (77%) believed that ward committees are doing enough to involve the community in municipal decision-making whilst seven (23%) felt that there is room for improvement. Most of the respondents stated that ward committees are doing enough to involve the community in municipal decision-making.

8.10 Does the municipality consult ward committees on municipal matters?

Response	Total
Yes	22 (73%)
No	8 (27%)

This question evaluated whether the municipality consults ward committees on municipal matters. Twenty-two respondents (73%) were of the opinion that the municipality consults ward committees on municipal matters such as IPD whilst eight respondents (27%) did not share the same opinion. The results indicate that the municipality consults ward committees on municipal matters.

Question 9: What were your main duties as a ward committee member?

This question was crafted to give the researcher an insight into the duties of ward committees. As stated in section 3.2.2 of this study, the main objective of ward committees is to enhance participatory democracy in local government institutions. The general consensus among respondents is consistent with the purpose of ward committees stated in the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 117 of 1998. In response to the aforementioned question, the following responses were provided:

- *represents the needs of the ward;*
- *a medium of communication between residents and municipal planners;*
- *gather the views, recommendations, suggestions and opinions of the residents;*
- *inform ward residents about impending public meetings;*
- *promote local residents involvement in municipal plans and development initiatives such as IDP and LED;*
- *submit monthly reports to the ward councillor;*
- *advise the ward councillor about community needs; and*
- *reporting back to residents on complaints and reports made to the municipality.*

The duties of ward councillors include the following:

- *advocating for better services in the ward;*

- *represent the community and ensure two-way communication between the community and the local municipality;*
- *conducting public meetings;*
- *raising awareness and a healthy and safe environment in the ward;*
- *chairing ward committee meetings and designating deputy chairperson in case the ward councillor is absent;*
- *ensuring that residents' concerns reach the municipal council.*

The results show that the main duty of ward committees is representing community interests. It can be deduced that ward committees represent the community by gathering community views and forwarding them to the municipality through the ward councillor. Raga and Taylor (2005:244) echoed that ward committees 'bridge the gap between local communities and the elected representatives'.

Question 10: *Which issues/matters did you discuss with the community?*

Giving community members an opportunity to air their views is supported by the literature review of this study. In particular, section 2.2.1 states that public participation is important in a democratic government. All the respondents indicated that during community meetings they discuss the following matters:

- *service delivery matters such as refuse dumping, refuse collection, potholes, water leakages, sewer bursts and lack of adequate housing;*
- *poverty alleviation and employment creation: the bulk of the youth in the municipality are unemployed;*
- *high incidence of crime (theft, women sexual assault) and the prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse;*
- *juvenile delinquency especially substance abuse;*
- *accessible health facilities;*
- *social support for senior citizens and indigents;*
- *the plight of people with disabilities;*
- *RDP houses;*
- *feedback on relevant council resolutions;*
- *IDP matters;*
- *ward projects feedback; and*

- *land use matters such as rezoning.*

The information above shows that during ward meetings, the dominant topics centre around service delivery and economic development of the community. It can be deduced that ward committees are an effective communication platform through which the community can communicate with the local planners and public officials.

Question 11: *What are the challenges faced by ward committees?*

In line with **RO4**, the question was posed to investigate the challenges that are facing ward committees. Most of the respondents mentioned that the main challenge they face is that the community is seldom engaged in municipal affairs. In many instances, residents do not attend well-publicised ward meetings. This makes it difficult to report back to the community on pertinent issues that would have been raised in previous meetings. Respondents stated that inconsistent community attendance affects the flow of information from the community to the local municipality and vice versa. Respondents stated that some of the challenges faced by ward committees include:

- *ward committee members are not fully conversant with their roles and functions;*
- *continuously having to address service delivery problems;*
- *the local municipality does not respond to reports and complaints;*
- *community apathy;*
- *some members still view ward committees as political groupings that are preoccupied with furthering the interest of particular political parties;*
- *resources constraints for example lack of reliable and prompt transport and other facilities;*
- *the monthly allowance given to ward committee members has eroded the spirit of volunteerism, ward committee membership is now viewed as an avenue of personal gain;*
- *ward committees feel that the local municipality does not take their input into account; and*
- *some ward committee members do not submit their monthly reports.*

The responses above indicate that ward committees in the Ventersdorp region face numerous challenges. It can be deduced that these challenges impede effective public participation in municipal affairs. The challenges outlined above support one of the objectives of this study, namely to investigate the challenges faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in the Ventersdorp region. As such, lasting solutions are required to address these challenges in order to promote effective public participation in local government affairs. Based on the findings stated above, this study will make recommendations aimed at improving ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M.

Question 12: *How can the above-stated challenges be addressed?*

This question followed up on responses to Question 11. Respondents were given an opportunity to come up with solutions to the challenges that were identified in Question 11. Most of the respondents came up with an array of solutions to address the challenges facing ward committees. Most of them believed that the municipality should give ward committees financial and material support. For example one respondent stated that:

“The local municipality should ensure that ward committees are reserved transport and venues to enable them to reach out and conduct meetings with residents in their wards”.

In addition, the second respondent stated that

“Ward committee members should be continuously trained and educated on the virtues of participatory democracy, it is only when ward committees understand their crucial role in local government that they begin to conduct their duties seriously...”.

Respondent 3 stated that:

“A web portal or an application should be developed that will enable fast and convenient communication between residents and the different departments of the local municipality”.

Two respondents felt that there should be a bias towards academic merit in the election of ward committee members. It was stated that ward committees will

improve if members with some form of formal education are elected. This however, is a contentious submission because education qualities alone do not make a person an effective ward committee member. This study submits that an individual can dutifully execute their ward committee duties with or without formal education. However, the ability of an educated person to understand and impart information cannot be dismissed.

Six respondents pointed out that there is an urgent need to educate and inform the community about the roles and functions of ward committees. They stated that emphasis should be placed on informing the community that ward committees are apolitical structures that were introduced to represent the interests of the community. This study submits that all community members regardless of their political leanings are entitled to representation by ward committees. Therefore, measures should be instituted that ensures that ward committees do not interfere in partisan politics. Four respondents emphasised that the spirit of volunteerism should be instilled in ward committees. In addition, a few respondents stated that if the community and ward committees themselves view ward committees as anything other than voluntary structures it will undo the positive outcomes that ward committees have achieved so far. Lastly, three respondents noted that the local municipality should do more to incorporate the suggestions and views brought to them through the ward committee systems. The seventh respondent pointed out that she feels that the local municipality does not take the views, opinions and suggestions of ward committees seriously. Taking into account the above responses, it is evident that more needs to be done to enable ward committees to effectively carry out their duties. The municipality should play a leading role in ensuring that the challenges and grievances of the ward committees are addressed.

5. 5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the empirical findings of the study regarding the roles, functions and the challenges faced by ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. Information about ward committees and public participation in the Ventersdorp region was gathered from eight municipal officials and a sample of thirty members that included ward councillors and their respective ward committee members. The data collected in this study was presented and

analysed in line with the literature review of this study that was conducted in chapters 2 and 3. The views, opinions, and perspectives of the respondents in this study were instrumental in the development of a public participation framework for ward committees.

The next and last chapter of this study summarises all the chapters contained in this dissertation. Chapter six demonstrates how the objectives of this study were accomplished. In addition, the conceptual public participation framework for ward committees would be presented. Lastly, recommendation of the study and recommendation for future studies are also discussed.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS: A CONCEPTUAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK FOR WARD COMMITTEES TO PROMOTE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the empirical findings discussed in Chapter five, this chapter summarises and concludes the study. Therefore, a conceptual public participation framework and a summary of the chapters are presented in this chapter. Lastly, recommendations and a final conclusion mark the end of this study.

All over the world, the discourse of democracy dictates that citizens should be given an opportunity to take part in the affairs of government (Carswell, 2002:55, Coghill & Wright, 2012:16, Smit & Oosthuizen, 2011:60, Kassa, 2015:127, Outhwaite, 2014:328 & Bevir, 2006:429). Citizens' involvement in government is vital, not only because it entrenches democracy but also, because it is an opportunity for public officials and public planners to interact with the recipients of government services (Coghill & Wright, 2012:18). In this view, public participation in government affairs is seen as a platform that allows a two-way flow of information between ordinary citizens and public officials who are tasked to run public institutions. South Africa is not an exception, as indicated in chapter 3 of this study, an array of legislative prescripts promote public participation in local government affairs.

In the field of public administration, public participation is important because it is a constituent of good governance. Public managers could formulate good policies if they are aware of the needs of the citizens to whom the policies are intended for. This is more pressing in the local sphere of government where government is confronted by the day-to-day needs of the people. As discussed in section 3.2.1, the Constitution, 1996, sets the pace for a democratic, accountable and people-centred local government sphere.

6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF STUDY OBJECTIVES

Chapter One introduced the topic of the study. This chapter dealt with the introduction and the background of the study. In addition, the problem statement, research objectives and the methodology used in the study were discussed. Table 1 aligns the research questions, research objectives and the reference chapters.

Research Question (RQ)	Research Objective (RO)	Chapter reference
RQ1. What does public participation and local governance according to the literature entail?	RO1. To investigate the literature pertaining to public participation and local democracy.	2
RQ2. What are the statutory and regulatory requirements seeking to promote effective public participation of ward committees in South Africa?	RO2. To analyse the statutory and regulatory requirements that promote public participation and the effective functioning of ward committees in South Africa and North West 405 Municipality in particular.	3
RQ3. What do the roles and functions of ward committees in promoting public participation in North West 405 Municipality entail?	RO3. To analyse the role and functions of ward committees in promoting local democracy within North West 405 Municipality.	3 and 5
RQ4. What are the challenges faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in North West 405 Municipality?	RO4. To investigate the challenges faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in North West 405 Municipality.	5
RQ5. How could a conceptual framework for public participation enhance the effective functioning of ward committees in North West 405 Municipality?	RO5. To develop a conceptual public participation framework for effective and efficient functioning of ward committees in order to achieve the ideals of local democracy.	4 and 6

Table 2: Research questions, research objective and their chapter references

The first chapter argued that, in South Africa, public participation in local government affairs is a recent phenomenon. Before 1994, there were few opportunities for ordinary citizens to be involved in government affairs. Consequently, the needs of citizens- especially the marginalised communities- were seldom attended to. To this end, this study identified ward committees as important local structures that bridge the communication gap between municipalities and local communities. Given this background, the next chapter provided the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Two was aimed at accomplishing **RO1**. In this chapter, the defining concepts of public participation were discussed at length. The study linked public participation, local democracy and public administration. The underlying argument asserted that in the field of public administration, public participation is essential for promoting local democracy and good governance. As part of the theoretical foundation of public participation, *the social theory, the democratic theory and the public choice theory* were identified as the leading theories that informed this study. Furthermore, *the citizen participation strategies, the ladder of citizen participation and the continuum of participation* were also discussed. These theories, models and strategies conceptualised the phenomenon of public participation. Ward committees were singled out as a tool that promotes public participation.

The South African government promulgated local government legislation aimed at promoting and regulating public participation. In fulfilment of **RO2** and **RO3**, **Chapter Three** focused on the statutory and regulatory requirements that promote public participation and the effective functioning of ward committees. The purpose of this chapter was to identify the legal framework of public participation and the regulatory framework of ward committees. In addition, chapter three discussed the roles and functions of ward committees in South African municipalities, furthermore; the remuneration, tenure and dissolution of ward committees were also discussed.

A systematic understanding of the statutory framework of ward committees is important in the development of a conceptual public participation framework. **Chapter Four**, which laid the groundwork for the fulfilment of **RO5**, focused on the theoretical foundation of a conceptual public participation framework. This chapter differentiated between a conceptual and a theoretical framework. This was addressed because, in academic circles, there is a great deal of ambiguity in dealing with the two types of frameworks. After having addressed the ambiguity, the key features and characteristics of a conceptual framework were discussed. Furthermore, a step-by-step guide of developing a conceptual framework and the functions thereof were discussed. The researcher went on to express how a conceptual public participation framework will be developed.

Chapter Five presented the empirical findings of the study. The various opinions, beliefs, feelings and perspectives of the respondents were presented in this chapter. The objective of chapter five was to obtain information about public participation and ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M. This chapter also dealt with the analysis of data collected from the field study. Data analysis involved giving meaning to the raw information that was obtained from the respondents. Transcription, pie charts and tables were used in this regard. As stated in section 5.2, data analysis refers to the organisation and interpretation of field data with the objective of giving it meaning. Data analysis was dealt with in line with **RO3** and **RO4** of the study.

Chapter Six is the final chapter of this study, it summarises the entire dissertation. In addition, this chapter presents the conceptual public participation framework for ward committees. The final chapter is two-fold; firstly it provides a summary of the study whereupon all the chapters are revisited. Secondly, a conceptual public participation framework is presented and explained. In this chapter, the researcher summarises the study and discusses the empirical findings that were presented in Chapter Five. The overall aim of this chapter is to achieve **RO5** namely, to develop a conceptual public participation framework for effective and efficient functioning of ward committees in order to achieve the ideals of local democracy. Lastly, the chapter provides recommendations and the final conclusion of the study.

6.3 A CONCEPTUAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK FOR WARD COMMITTEES

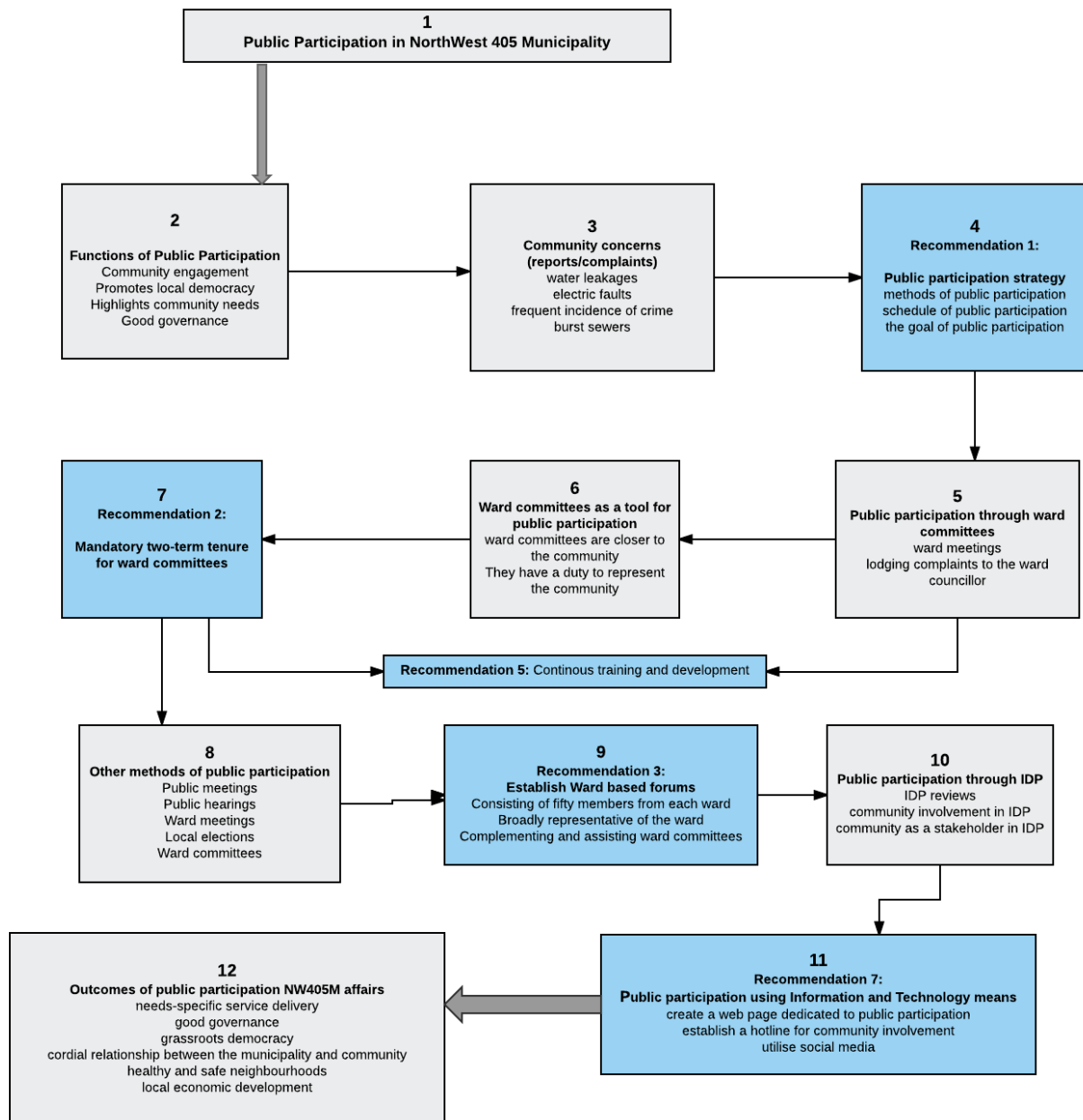


Figure 7: A conceptual public participation framework for ward committees (Author's illustration 2016).

6.3.1 DISCUSSION OF THE CONCEPTUAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

This section discusses the proposed conceptual public participation framework for ward committees depicted in figure 7. This discussion of the conceptual framework incorporates information that was discovered through the literature review and

empirical findings presented in chapter 5. As stated in section 1.3 of this study, **NW405M** is a local municipality located in the North West Province of South Africa. Like other municipalities, NW405M has a duty to provide affordable and quality services to its residents. To achieve this, the municipality carries out development initiatives such as IDP, municipal budget and local economic development. The conceptual framework shows that the municipality, through public participation, should involve the community in its development initiatives.

1. Public participation in NW405 Municipality

The conceptual framework of public participation recognises the importance of public participation in **municipal development plans**. Municipal development plans refer to any plan of action instituted by NW405M aimed at the development of the municipality. The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 directs municipalities to involve the community in IDP, annual budgeting and performance management.

2. Functions of public participation

In this regard, the **function of public participation** is to ensure that local planners are aware of the needs of the local community. As stated in section 2.2.1 of this study, public participation promotes citizen-focused service delivery because through continuous interaction with the community the municipality is aware of their needs. The empirical study indicated that the Ventersdorp community takes advantage of public participation to notify the local municipality about their needs.

3. Community concerns

In this regard, a public participation strategy will assist the municipality in addressing the **concerns of the community**, such as reports and complaints. The concerns of the community include the service delivery needs of the community. Addressing the needs of the community is one of the main duties of NW405M. Thus, extensive community engagement will ensure that the municipality is aware of the needs of the community.

The study recommends that NW405M should institute programs aimed at **empowering the community**. Most of the respondents indicated that the

community is not well informed about municipal affairs, as such; they do not have enough knowledge to contribute effectively in municipal matters. Section 16 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 encourages local municipalities to contribute towards 'building the capacity of the community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality'. Under the current budget, NW405M did not provide funds for capacitating the community. Community empowerment is important because apart from capacitating the community it will stimulate community interest in the affairs of the municipality. Thus, empowering the community to participate in municipal affairs will also enhance local democracy.

4. Recommendation: 1. Public participation strategy

However, without a clear and uniform strategy, public participation is conducted in an arbitrary manner. To this end, this study recommends that the municipality should develop a **public participation strategy**. A public participation strategy would streamline public participation activities to ensure that the objectives and advantages of involving the community in municipal affairs are achieved. A public participation strategy will also detail the goals of public participation. Clear goals of public participation will help the municipality and the community to come up with effective strategies that will enhance effective public participation. Hence, a public participation strategy will ensure that public participation in NW405M is effective.

5. Public participation through ward committees

This study indicated that **public participation through ward committees** is one of the various ways of ensuring that the community is involved in local government matters. Section 2.7.1 of this study indicated that ward committees are designed to promote participatory democracy (Van Rooyen & Mokoena, 2013:761) by creating bridges between the community and the local municipality. The conceptual public participation framework recognises that ward committees enhance local democracy through promoting public participation in municipal affairs. As such, the local municipality should ensure that ward committees have all the resources required for them to carry out their duties effectively. The study recommends that ward committees should be continuously trained to sharpen their tenacity and skills. The conceptual framework for ward committees recommends that the tenure of ward committee should be extended to at least two terms.

6. Ward committees as a tool for public participation

The conceptual framework recognises that ward committees are an important tool for public participation. In this regard, the municipality should work closely with ward committees because ward committees have the ability to reach a wider audience in the community.

7. Recommendation: 2. Mandatory two terms for ward committees

This study recommends that the local municipality should consider extending the tenure of office for ward committees. A **mandatory two terms for ward committees** will ensure continuity and consistency.

8. Other methods of public participation

The conceptual framework recognises that there are other **methods of public participation** apart from ward committees. Section 2.7 of this study discussed some of the methods of public participation that enable the community to take part in municipal affairs. As such, this study submits that ward committees in conjunction with other methods of public participation such as public meetings, public hearings and local elections are instrumental in promoting public participation.

9. Recommendation: 3. The establishment of ward based forums

This study recommends the **establishment of ward based forums**. Ward based forums are meant to broaden the scope of community representation through local based structures. Some of the respondents indicated that ward committees are strained because some of the wards are relatively big, and as such, it is difficult to attend to the needs of all the residents in the ward. It is difficult to ensure that all sections of the ward are represented in a 10 member ward committee. The proposed ward based forums will consist of thirty members that are resident in that particular ward. The forum will work together with regular ward committees. Interest groups mentioned in section 3.3.1 of this study will have a greater chance of representation in ward based forums. The function of proposed ward based forums is to enhance community representation by enabling the ward based forums to extensively gather the views of residents of the ward. The ward based forums as proposed in this study are not meant to impede or compete with ward committees.

On the contrary, they are conceived to complement and assist ward committees to reach a wider audience.

10. Public participation through IDP

The empirical study also revealed that **public participation in IDP** promotes local democracy. IDP brings together all the stakeholders in the Ventersdorp region of NW405 Municipality. IDP regards the community as a key player in local economic development. Research participants affirmed that IDP plays a major role in enhancing public participation in municipal affairs. This is because by nature, IDP seeks to initiate local development by incorporating the community in municipal development plans. IDP recognises that the community is the end-user of municipal services, as such, it is prudent to involve them in programs that are aimed at alleviating poverty and addressing service delivery challenges that the community faces. Public participation in IDP is important in this conceptual public participation framework because ward committees are part of the IDP process. Also, IDP is viewed as a process that promotes local democracy because IDP directs local municipalities to consult the community.

11. The use of modern information technology to promote public participation

This study further recommends the use of **modern information and technology means to enhance public participation** in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M matters. Modern technology makes it possible to disseminate and receive information fast and at a low cost. Modern technology enables information to travel over long distances in record time. According to Pew Research Center (2015: online source), South Africa has the highest cell phone penetration in Africa. 37% of South Africans use smartphones. In South Africa internet is readily accessible using smartphones, laptops or tablets. Information technology presents an opportunity for residents to send and receive information online. NW405M should take advantage of available technologies to entrench local democracy. Cell phones, laptops, tablets and desktops can be easily utilised to involve residents in municipal matters. The municipality should establish platforms, for example hotlines and websites that enable the community to participate in municipal affairs.

12. The outcomes of public participation

The final stage of the conceptual public participation framework for ward committees is the **Outcomes of public participation in the Ventersdorp region of NW405M**. The outcomes of public participation refer to what is envisaged in sections 2.2.1, 2.3.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3 of this study. The conceptual public participation framework for ward committees posits that effective public participation in NW405M affairs will result in affordable, quality and needs-specific services for the community. Furthermore, it will promote a healthy working relationship between the community and the local municipality. In short, the wishes and aspirations of the community will be addressed using the available resources. In a nutshell, the goal of public participation is to ensure that members of the community are not left out but rather they are part of the affairs of the municipality (Ababio, 2007:275). The conceptual public participation framework for ward committees is aimed at improving public involvement in municipal affairs through effective ward committee functioning. The conceptual public participation framework incorporated the existing aspects of public participation and recommendations brought forward by the researcher. The researcher believes that additional measures that were recommended in the conceptual framework are instrumental in addressing the challenges faced by ward committees.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ventersdorp region of NW405M lacks a coherent and uniform public participation strategy, as such, despite training and induction it is difficult for ward committees to efficiently promote public participation. To address this challenge, the municipality needs to come up with a public participation strategy aimed at coordinating public participation in the municipality.

The Municipality, especially the Ventersdorp region needs to formulate strategic goals of public participation. Public participation will be goal-oriented if the desired outcomes are clearly outlined and understood by all the stakeholders. According to the empirical findings of this study, it can be generalised that currently public participation is conducted as a statutory formality. As such, it is difficult to determine whether public participation is fruitful because there are no clear objectives and strategic goals. Therefore, the municipality should establish strategic goals of public

participation that should include the immediate and long term objectives of involving the community in municipal affairs.

NW405M should establish parallel structures that complement ward committees. Some wards in NW405M are relatively big such that, having a 10 member structure to represent the entire ward is not enough. The study recommends the establishment of ward based forums. These forums will consist of at least thirty community members; representing all the sections of the community. The forums will work closely with ward committees and community based planners. The reason for the forums is to have a wider representation of the community.

The Community Liaison Office should have an individual who deals exclusively with monitoring and evaluation of ward committees. In a big municipality like NW405M, the day-to-day management of ward committees is a substantial task. The empirical study found out that some ward committees do not submit minutes, dates of meetings and do not submit monthly reports on time. Even though the CLO oversees the day-to-day running of ward committees, he is inundated with other tasks such that it is ideal to have extra personnel to exclusively monitor and evaluate the performance of ward committees. To this end, this study recommends that the Community Liaison Office should have a specific person who attends to matters of ward committees.

The study recommends that NW405M should adopt the use of internet or social media to promote public participation. In a capitalist modern society, people are grappling with economic ways of making ends meet. As such, residents seldom have the time to attend community meetings or take part in other public participation forums because of work/school commitments. Thus, the municipality should look into setting up a website or a social survey internet platform where residents can interact with municipal planners. This is a more effective and time sensitive way of engaging a wider audience. It will enable residents who do not have the time or means to take part in municipal affairs using conventional methods to participate online. This recommendation is in line with the Presidential Hotline, a platform which gives ordinary citizens an opportunity to interact with the President of South Africa. NW405M should also consider having mandatory two terms for ward committees,

thus ward committees should run for at least ten years before fresh elections are called out. In the current set up, the term for ward committees is consistent with the five year term in office of the municipal council, hence after five years ward committees are dissolved and new members are voted in. this study recommends that ward committees should run for at least two municipal council terms. However, this does not say that non-performing members should be retained. The process of dismissal of ward committee members in the event of misconduct or inefficiency should be upheld. Allowing ward committees to run for ten years ensures continuity and consistency.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Based on the literature review and information gathered from the empirical study, the researcher makes the following recommendations for future research.

- Studies should be conducted on how to empower and capacitate local communities to enable them to meaningfully take part in municipal affairs. Most of the respondents who were interviewed in this study repeatedly indicated that public participation in the affairs of the municipality will be effective if the community is empowered and better informed about municipal affairs. As indicated in the *citizen power* stage of the 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' and the *co-management/control* stage of the 'Continuum of Public Participation' in sections 2.5.2 and, 2.5.3 respectively, when the community is empowered it effectively participates in government affairs. Therefore, this study recommends that studies should be conducted on how local municipalities can find ways to facilitate more effective public participation in municipal matters.
- Studies should also be conducted on the legality and practicality of giving ward committees more influence. Currently ward committees are only advisory structures. The discourse of local democracy on which the local sphere of government is based will remain unfulfilled if one of the primary structures that promote local democracy has no statutory influence. Most ward committee members who took part in this study reiterated that they feel the municipality does not consider or implement the views of ward committees. They indicated that they felt the municipality only considers ward committees as structures that are useful in relaying information to the residents. As such, communication

between ward committees and the municipality is skewed in a top-down manner. In this regard, this study recommends future studies on how ward committees' views and suggestions can be incorporated into municipal decision-making processes.

- The empirical findings and recommendations in this study were based on ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. This study recommends that further research should be conducted on ward committees functioning and the promotion of public participation in other local municipalities. This recommendation is grounded in the assumption that different municipalities are faced by unique challenges and opportunities. Lessons, solutions and strategies from such case studies can be replicated in municipalities such as Northwest 405 Municipality whose ward committees are facing challenges.

6.6 FINAL CONCLUSION

This last chapter of the dissertation, summarises the study by indicating the main issues that were dealt with in each of the six chapters and aligning them with the objectives of the study. Table 2 summarised the objectives of the study in relation to the relevant chapters and the central theoretical statement that underpinned this study. Despite concluding the study, the purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate that the study accomplished the aims and objectives of the study that were identified in chapter 1. Furthermore, in this chapter, the researcher presented a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees. The conceptual public participation framework was aimed at identifying challenges and sources of ineffectiveness of ward committees in the Ventersdorp region of Northwest 405 Municipality. In the same vein, the conceptual public participation framework came up with solutions and recommendations aimed at addressing the challenges highlighted in the empirical study. Based on the evidence collected in this study and coupled with the lean history of public participation in South Africa, it is important that government strengthens local government structures which are tasked with promoting local democracy. Ward committees are one of the ways through which local democracy can be attained and strengthened. In this regard, local government resources and expertise should thus be deployed to ward committees to enable

them to execute their duties in fulfilment of the doctrine of democratising the local sphere of government.

Since the birth of a new democratic nation in 1994, the government has made great strides towards the total democratisation of the South African society. To preserve South African democracy there is an urgent need to strengthen institutions and structures that ensure and promote democracy. In this regard, in order to preserve a democratic, just society and development oriented local sphere of government, local municipalities must continuously capacitate and strengthen local structures (such as ward committees) that promote community involvement in local government affairs.

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NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
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ANNEXURE 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

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Potchefstroom 2520
Republic of South Africa
Cell: +27 (0)73 477 4035
E-mail: brightmurondal@gmail.com

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR RESPONDENTS AT NORTHWEST 405 MUNICIPALITY

Title of Study: A conceptual public participation framework for ward committees to promote local government democracy.

You are cordially invited to take part in the aforementioned study undertaken by myself, Bright Muronda, as a part of my Master's degree in Public Management and Governance at the above-mentioned university. The aim of the interview is to gather information on the roles and functions of ward committees in Northwest 405 Municipality. The interview will probe a wide range of issues pertaining to ward committees and public participation in Northwest 405 Municipality with the aim of developing a strengthened public participation framework. It is hoped that a strengthened public participation framework will enhance local democracy in Northwest 405 Municipality and therefore fulfil the provision of the Constitution, 1996 of South Africa.

Participation in this semi-structured interview is voluntary, therefore respondents are allowed to withdraw their participation when they deem it necessary. Furthermore, the researcher vows that your rights to privacy, confidentiality and other ethical rights will be upheld and respected in this study. The findings of this study shall be used entirely for academic purposes and only by authorised personnel. The researcher greatly appreciates your participation and cooperation since the results of this study will go a long way in improving local democracy in Northwest 405 Municipality. It is hoped that findings from this study can also be useful in other municipalities across South Africa.

SECTION A: Biographical information

A 1. Gender of the respondents

A 2. Highest qualification of the respondents

A 3. Race of the respondents

SECTION B: Establishment of ward committees in Northwest 405 Municipality

1. What is your understanding of public participation in municipal affairs?
2. Are ward committee members (a) elected or (b) appointed into ward committees?
3. Briefly discuss the process of establishing ward committees.
4. What measures are there to ensure that ward committees are broadly representative of the community for example the representation of women, youth, religious people, traditional leaders and community based organisations?
5. What is the term of office for ward committees?
6. Do ward committee members receive pay or other benefits for their services?
7. Do ward committees receive training or induction when they become members?

SECTION C: The roles and functions of ward committees

8. What are the roles and functions of ward committees?
9. Does the municipality delegate specific functions to ward committees?
10. Are there specific measures to involve ward committees in municipal decision-making?
11. What form of support is given to ward committees by the municipality?
12. What challenges are faced by ward committees in promoting public participation in Municipality affairs? What has the municipality done to address the challenges?

SECTION D: Community participation in Northwest 405 Municipality affairs

13. What is the role of public participation in Northwest 405 Municipality decision-making process?
14. In your view is the community effectively engaged in municipal affairs?
15. How does the municipality involve the community in the annual budget, IDP and performance management?
16. Apart from ward committees, what other opportunities are there for the community to participate in municipal affairs?
17. What are the benefits of PP in the Ventersdorp region?

SECTION E: Public participation in IDP

18. What is the function of public participation in IDP?
19. What is the role of ward committees in promoting community participation in the IDP process?
20. What are the benefits of engaging the community in the IDP processes?
21. In your opinion, does the community adequately take part in IDP? Are you satisfied with the level of public participation in the IDP processes?
22. Which mode of communication do you use to notify/invite the public to take part in IDP? For example radio broadcast, flyers, social media etc.
23. What challenges do you face in engaging the community in IDP issues?

Thank you for your participation

ANNEXURE 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WARD COMMITTEES AND WARD COUNCILLORS



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Title of Study: A conceptual public participation framework for ward committees to promote local government democracy

You are cordially invited to take part in the aforementioned study undertaken by myself, Bright Muronda, as a part of my Master's degree in Public Management and Governance at the above-mentioned university. The aim of the questionnaire is to gather information on the roles and functions of ward committees in Northwest 405 Municipality. The questionnaire will probe a wide range of issues pertaining to ward committees and public participation in Northwest 405 Municipality with the aim of developing a strengthened public participation framework. It is hoped that a strengthened public participation framework will enhance local democracy in Northwest 405 Municipality and therefore fulfil the provision of the Constitution, 1996 of South Africa.

Participation in this questionnaire is voluntary, therefore respondents are allowed to withdraw their participation when they deem it necessary. Furthermore, the researcher vows that your rights to privacy, confidentiality and other ethical rights will be upheld and respected in this study. The findings of this study shall be used entirely for academic purposes and only by authorised personnel. The researcher greatly appreciates your participation and cooperation since the results of this study will go a long way in improving local democracy in Northwest 405 Municipality. It is hoped that findings from this study can also be useful in other municipalities across South Africa.

Answer in the spaces provided and mark (X) on an answer that best suits you.

1. Which ward committee did you belong to?

2. Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

3. Race group

Black		White		Coloured		Indian		Other	
-------	--	-------	--	----------	--	--------	--	-------	--

4. How many members were in your ward committee?

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	----	--

5. How long were you a ward committee member/ward councillor?

--

6. How often did your ward committee meet?

Every week		Twice a month		Once a month	
------------	--	---------------	--	--------------	--

7. Which topics were usually on the agenda during ward committee meetings?

8. Indicate your opinion on the following

	Yes	No
1. Are you satisfied with community attendance of ward committee meetings?		
2. Does your ward committee get views and suggestions from the community on municipal matters?		
3. In your opinion do ward committees influence municipal policies, plans & programs?		
4. Were you offered training and induction when you became a ward committee member?		
5. Are you familiar with the duties and roles of ward committees stated in the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (No. 32 of 2000)?		
6. Is the municipality doing enough to promote public involvement in municipal affairs?		
7. Do you believe that ward committees are fulfilling their mandate?		
8. Is your ward committee involved in the IDP process and municipal budgeting?		
9. Are ward committees doing enough to involve the community in municipal decision-making?		
10. Does Northwest 405 Municipality consult ward committees on municipal matters?		

9. What were your main duties as a ward committee member/ward councillor?

10. Which issues/matters did you discuss with the community?

11. What are the challenges faced by ward committees?

12. How can these challenges be addressed?

13. Use the space provided below if you have any other information about ward committees and public participation in Ventersdorp/Tlokwe Municipality?

End of Questionnaire: Thank you for your participation

ANNEXURE 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by the **Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts (FA-REC)** at the meeting held on **01/08/2016**, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby **approves** your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: A strengthened public participation framework for ward committees.															
Project Leader/Supervisor: Dr Melvin Diedericks															
Student: B. Muronda															
Ethics number:	N	W	U	-	0	0	3	9	6	-	1	6	-	A	7
	Institution			Project Number						Year		Status			
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation															
Application Type: N/A															
Commencement date: 2016-08-01				Expiry date: 2017-11-30				Risk: N/A							

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- The interview schedule and questionnaires must be submitted to the REC for evaluation.
- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the FA-REC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the FA-REC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via FA-REC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the FA-REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via FA-REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and FA-REC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the FA-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- FA-REC can be contacted for further information via Ms Yvette van der Merwe - 13128388@nwu.ac.za or 018 285 2301.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or FA-REC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof LA
Du Plessis

Digitally signed by
Prof LA Du Plessis
Date: 2016.09.09
08:56:27 +02'00'

Prof Linda du Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

REQUESTION LETTER



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

ANNEXURE 4:

School of Social and Government Studies
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Republic of South Africa
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E-mail: brightmuronda@gmail.com

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH STUDY AT NORTHWEST
405 MUNICIPALITY

Title of study:

A conceptual public participation framework for ward committees to promote local government democracy.

My name is Bright Muronda, I am full-time student (No. 26780348) undertaking an academic research study with the abovementioned title. The study is in fulfilment of the academic requirements for a Master's degree in Public Management and Governance at North West University. The study aims to collect data on public participation matters and ward committees with the aim of developing a conceptual public participation framework for ward committees to promote local government democracy. Essentially, the study examines the roles functions and duties of ward committees and the nature of public participation in NW405 Municipality. Data collected in this regard will be instrumental towards attaining the objective of the study encapsulated in the research title.

Taking the above into consideration, this letter requests permission to permit the researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews and distribute semi-structure questionnaires to the relevant office-bearers, officials and or ward committee members. The researcher vows to adhere to professional and ethical principles throughout this study, as such, privacy and confidentiality are guaranteed. The researcher expects the study to be beneficial to NW405M and other municipalities nationally. On completion, the findings of the study will be made available to NW405M and other interested entities upon request. Furthermore, the researcher will publish the findings in an academic thesis as well as academic journals.

Your assistance and cooperation is thankfully appreciated.

Bright Muronda

ANNEXURE 5: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER



Mr B Muronda

11 October 2016

Dear Sir,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE VENTERSDORP LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH STUDY.**

Your request dated 20th September 2016, serves as a reference.

Please note that Ventersdorp Local Municipality ceases to exist from the 10 August 2016 this after the promulgations of section 12 notice published in terms Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, (Act No 117 of 1998). The said Municipality was amalgamated with Tlokwe Local Municipality to form a new Municipality temporarily known as Ventersdorp\Tlokwe Municipality.

The newly formed Ventersdorp\Tlokwe Municipality is willing to honour your request should you consider using it for your research study, but it must be born in mind that the new Municipality is 2 months old since the promulgation of new municipal boundaries, the process of establishing ward committees is still in transit, and all policies and procedures approved by previous municipalities are also in the review process and they have not been approved by the New Municipal Council.

Hope you will find the above in order.

Regards


MUNICIPAL MANAGER
Dr. N.E BLAAI-MOKGETHI

ANNEXURE 6: NOTICE FOR WARD COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

 NORTH WEST 405 MUNICIPALITY • MMASEPALA • MUNISIPALITEIT VENTERSDORP TLOKWE Working Together Re Dira Mmogo Sammwerh	 NORTH WEST 405 MUNICIPALITY • MMASEPALA • MUNISIPALITEIT VENTERSDORP TLOKWE Working Together Re Dira Mmogo Sammwerh
NORTH WEST 405 MUNICIPALITY VENTERSDORP / TLOKWE	NORTH WEST 405 MUNICIPALITY VENTERSDORP / TLOKWE
Notice is hereby given that elections will be held in the various wards to elect members to serve in the Ward Committees.	Lo itsisiwe fa go tla nna le ditlhopo mo dikgaolong tse di farologaneng go tlhopa maloko ao a tla dirang mo dikomiting tsa dikgaolo.
Nominations forms are attached hereto Nomination forms will also be available in the Office of the Speaker.	Diforomo tsa go kwadisa maina a bao ba nopotsweng go emela ditlhopo di tshwaragantswe gammogo fa, mme di ka bonwa gape kwa Kantorong ya ga Mmusakgotla wa Lekgotlatoropo.
These fully completed nomination forms must be submitted to the Office of the Speaker on or before ~~23~~ ³⁰ September 2016.	Diforomo tse di tladitsweng maina a bontlhopeneng ka botlalo di tshwanetse go busediwa kwa Kantorong ya ga Mmusakgotla fa kgwedi ya Lwetse e tlhola matsatsi a le ~~23~~ ³⁰ , 2016 kgotsa letlha pele ga moo.
The Speaker will then determine dates during which elections will be held in the Wards.	Mmusakgotla o tla rulaganya matlha ao ditlhopo di tla tshwarwang ka ona mo dikgaolong tse di farologaneng.

ANNEXURE 7: NOMINATION FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE WARD COMMITTEE MEMBERS



NORTH WEST 405
MUNICIPALITY-MMASEPALA-MUNISPALITEIT
VENTERSDOORP | TLOKWE
Working Together | Re-Linking Mmasepalu | Samesoed

NOMINATION FORM

Notice for Ward Committee nominations

SECTOR PRESENTATION:

CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS: 23 SEPTEMBER 2016 DEPOSIT POINT FOR NOMINATION FORMS: MR PJ NAUDÉ PLACE: OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER, WALTER SISULU AVENUE, POTCHEFSTROOM	WARD 5
---	--------

I, _____ ID NO _____

ordinary resident in the abovementioned municipality and being a registered voter on the municipal voters' roll, hereby nominate

_____ ID NO _____

to contest in the abovementioned ward as a ward committee member.

Signature _____

Place _____ Date _____

SECONDDERS:

1. _____

2. _____

ACCEPTANCE:

I, _____ ID NO _____

do hereby accept

Signature _____

Place _____ Date _____

ANNEXURE 8: AN EXAMPLE OF THE PROPOSED DATES FOR WARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

CITY COUNCIL OF TLOKWE
JASPER M. VENTER
WARD 5/ WYK 5

Posbus 882
Potchefstroom
2520

Mobile: 082 854 7229
Email: jassie@mweb.co.za

13 February 2015.

Attention: The Speaker.

Ward 5: Proposed dates for Ward Committee Meetings: 2015.

Thursday, 05 February 2015.
Thursday, 05 March 2015.
Thursday, 16 April 2015.
Thursday, 07 May 2015.
Thursday, 04 June 2015.
Thursday, 23 July 2015.
Thursday, 06 August 2015.
Thursday, 03 September 2015.
Thursday, 15 October 2015.
Thursday, 05 November 2015.
Thursday, 03 December 2015.

Venue: Primary School M.L. Fick
Time: 18:00

I trust that you find this in order.

Regards.



J.M. Venter.
Councillor Ward 5

ANNEXURE 9: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE



33 Adams Crescent, Sherwood, Durban 4091

To whom it may concern:

This document certifies that the dissertation whose title appears below has been edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style by Augustine Shamuyarira, a member of STADCO Creatives who is a qualified journalist with vast editorial experience.

Title:

**A conceptual Public Participation Framework for ward committees
to promote local government democracy**

Author:

Bright Muronda (26780348)

Date Edited: 24 April 2017

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Augustine Shamuyarira', is written over a horizontal line.

Augustine Shamuyarira

078 506 5610