

Public participation in the Integrated Development
Planning process at local government sphere in
South Africa: A literature study

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Declaration

I, Reagalaletsa Keitumetse Matlhoahela declare that:

- I. This dissertation, titled **public participation in the Integrated Development Planning process in the local government sphere in South Africa**, except where otherwise noted, is my own work.
- II. This dissertation has not before been submitted to any university as a dissertation or thesis for a degree.
- III. Every important contribution to this dissertation, as well as every quotation from other people's works, has been acknowledged, cited, and referenced.

Reagalaletsa Keitumetse Matlhoahela (Miss)

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Abstract

The issue of public participation, or the lack of it, in local government, continues to be a concern. Various municipalities are still struggling to incorporate the public into the integrated development planning (IDP) process. This is evident as there has been minimal progress in terms of community engagement in developing the IDP. Thus, this research sought to examine public participation in the Integrated Development Planning process in the local government sphere in South Africa. The main objectives of this dissertation are to align Benjamin Barber's theory with community involvement in the IDP process in local government; investigate the nature and scale of community involvement in the IDP in local government; examine the structures and procedures in place to facilitate public participation in the IDP process in local government and explore the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government.

A qualitative research methodology was employed to identify public involvement problems related to the IDP. The literature study was based on the requirements of a qualitative study, which included extensive literature, legislation; policy documents, journal articles, books, conference papers, the internet, and government reports about, developmental local government, and IDP in the context of South African local government. The research utilized Benjamin Barber's Strong Democracy theory to explain why there is low public engagement in South Africa's integrated development planning process. To measure the level to which the people are involved in the standard works of democratic politics, as Barber stated, the researcher employed Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation. The research tries to figure out where participation in South Africa fits on it—at the bottom, where it merely rubber-stamps official choices, or at the top, where emancipatory ideals are at work and power flows from the government to the public.

The research found that the most significant obstacles were weak participatory mechanisms, low civic education, poorly skilled municipal officials, a lack of access to information, a lack of resources and time, outsourcing, and a lack of public accountability. Hence, the study provides recommendations to address the planning participation deficit in local government in South Africa

Keywords: Community participation, public participation, Participatory democracy Integrated Development Plan (IDP), Local democracy, Governance, Representivity,

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ACRONYMS

AGSA	Auditor General South Africa
CDW	Community Development Worker
CBP	Community Based Plan
CoGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MSA	Municipal Structures Act
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SALGA	South African Local Government Authority
WPLG	White Paper on Local Government
PR	Proportional representation

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation

The end of South Africa's apartheid regime culminated in the abolition of an oppressive rule: a government that did not ensure that the needs and demands of most of the population were met. Throughout the apartheid era, the majority of South Africans were passive citizens in their own country. They had few rights or only a limited ability to challenge the state, and above all, they were receivers of governance instead of participants. For example, black people (who formed the majority of the South African population) were deprived of voting rights or the right to participate in the formulation of policies that affected their everyday livelihoods. But, in 1994, all this ended as the new administration introduced a strong aspect of participatory democracy enshrined in policies and legislative frameworks (Held, 1996:264). Participatory democracy is a concept used to include a vast array of democratic models that involve public involvement in democratic governance (Piper & Parker et al., 2005:376). Benjamin Barber (1984) calls this kind of democracy a thick democracy and a strong democracy.

In 1994, South Africa introduced a new political dispensation equipped with a culture of participation, involving, for instance, elections and public hearings (Msenge & Nzewi, 2021). Mashe (2009:1) argues that the new political regime appears to have birthed high hopes of increased and better participation of the public in government. He maintains that the end of apartheid also brought the concept of public participation in governmental affairs into the public eye. The notion of public participation turned into a common phrase in democratic South Africa after it was included in many policy documents, for instance, the White Paper on Local Government (1998), which states that developmental local government should collaborate with the community and civic organizations within the municipalities to establish effective means of achieving and enhancing their standard of living and their economic, social, material, and political needs (Stein, 2001:488).

The Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process has been associated with community participation since the new democratic local government began, as the government declares that without public involvement in local government relations, there is no democracy (Sebei, 2013:22). The IDP is a five-year plan that addresses the issues of developing sustainable settlements to address the needs of the residents (Madumo, 2015:156). Rauch (2003:1) mentions that an integrated development plan is seen as a key policy instrument for

implementing the strategy of a developmental local government. This developmental approach aims to strengthen the skills and capabilities of community members by encouraging involvement in their community's issues and development. Moreover, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) gives both the municipality and its residents the ability to work together in local government. Community involvement, therefore, serves as an essential mechanism that could allow effective integrated development planning at the local government level (Madzivhandila & Maloka, 2014:652).

On the other hand, there have been critiques surrounding the concept of participation and IDP, arguing that it has become a wishlist created mainly for regulatory purposes by consultants. It can be argued that the majority of local governments have failed to take control of the IDP process. This is because, in almost all South African municipalities, the problem of service delivery remains unaddressed and unsettling. Even 26 years after the formation of the mechanism of an IDP, it is disturbing that South African municipalities are faced with a painful reality, as poverty and inequality continue to increase. This study will examine why public participation has been questionable in the sphere of local government. This question will be answered by investigating the integrated development planning processes in the sphere of local government by employing a literature study.

To ensure that local authorities are responsive to the communities, there are guidelines that are designed for such. For instance, the guideline for citizen involvement is laid down in section 152 (1) (e) of the South African Constitution (1996), which requires municipalities to promote the engagement of residents and local organisations in issues of local government (Modise, 2017:2). In essence, a relationship should be formed between the community and the local government to tackle local concerns. Moreover, municipalities are required to encourage developmental local government with an effective and equitable outlook on sustainability, and to tackle socio-economic inequalities. Madumo (2012:45) mentions that public participation is a key component of local democracy, making it a treasured initiative for any resident.

In theory, Section 152 of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) encourages public participation in local government by instructing municipalities to have a transparent and egalitarian government for surrounding communities and to promote society and local organization active participation in local government affairs. To ensure effective public engagement in local government, Masango (2009:127) states that there are a number of mechanisms formed to enhance public participation. As a case in point, there are several approaches, namely the IDP

representative forums, Izimbizo, community-based planning, community development workers (CDW) initiatives, the ward committee system, public hearings, community forums, and citizens' surveys. However, in reality, these institutions of participation usually lack credibility, and the functionality of such institutions may be debated, especially in the rural municipalities.

The former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere once said: "If the people are to be able to develop, they must have power." They must be able to control their activities within the framework of their village communities. The people must participate not just in the physical labour involved in economic development but also in the planning of it and the determination of priority" (Nyerere, 1979: 41). This statement is supported by Koma (2010:113), who put forward that local government has two objectives. Firstly, it has the administrative aim of providing goods and services. The second objective is to represent and include the local people in identifying certain needs for the community and how they can be fulfilled.

For the above objectives of local government to be fulfilled, there are several legislative measures aimed at enabling public participation in local government. These measures consist of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Local Government Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998), the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the Local Government Municipal System Act (Act 32 of 2000). These will be fully discussed in detail in chapter 3.

Despite the above-mentioned measures and mechanisms for enforcing public participation in local government in South Africa, academics such as Tshoose argue that citizen participation in South Africa lacks revelatory abilities and is embroiled by a combination of neglect, lack of service delivery, corruption, occasional feedback, lack of involvement, and insufficient knowledge on the aspect of decision makers and representatives (2015:18). He further argues that if participation takes place in local government, it is often brief, occasional, and feedback is hasty.

Also, scholars like Mathekga (2006:89) and Buccus and Hicks (2006:2) challenge how citizen participation is conducted in the sphere of local government. They base their arguments on the ability of local government to meet numerous performance targets and service provision, with community involvement as an addition to those priorities. They argued that municipal officials usually function as 'gate-keepers' and regulators instead of facilitating community involvement. Govender and Reddy (2012:80) emphasise that the highly politicized nature of

local government is a key primary constraint on public participation. Instead of focusing on their shared commitment and aims for citizens and societies, political leadership tends to be engaged or distracted by things such as political survival and corruption. A prime example is the Msunduzi Municipality; according to Piper and Lieres (2008:11), many IFP ward committees and various ANC ward committees are characterized by inter-party competition in that only local ruling party members are allowed to compete on the ward.

Furthermore, Booysen (2009:24) emphasises that public participation in local sphere is more a function of political affiliation, with people in power advocating for party-political agendas, rather than one allowing citizens' inputs. De Visser and Steytler (2009) maintain those political interests are not usually following the demands of the people, and these interests undermine the rights of the citizens to participate in some processes. For instance, Todes et al. (2006:12) argue that the integrated development plan (IDP) processes lack credibility as they are excessively politicized, and the distribution of services is politically decided. Moreover, in most municipalities, the IDPs usually become bureaucratized instead of expanding the democratic process, and they frequently become a 'Wishlist' instead of a strategic and long-term vision of municipal growth.

To add to this, ward councillors, another mechanism to enhance public participation, tend to reject residents' immediate concerns in favour of partisanship. Supplementing the above, Gumbi (2014:112) puts forward that the participatory institutions like ward councillors are captured by politics and adds that political parties in local municipalities expend a great deal of time and energy pointing out each other's flaws, rather than representing the citizens most in need of growth. For a case in a point, Piper, and Deacon (2009:9) highlight that political parties have major control over Msunduzi municipality. Most ANC Ward Committees and some DA Ward Committees tend to be subjected to the jurisdiction of their respective parties, with regards to both formulation and agenda-setting.

Moreover, it is important to point out that some local municipality leaders have lowered public participation from a substantive issue-driven process to one that simply ensures adherence with the legislative framework's standards (Friedman, 2006:11). Also, capacitation adds to other issues many local municipalities face to implement proper public participation. This includes having incompetent officials or inexperienced delegates in the decision-making process (Van Donk, 2013:2).

To further understand public participation and democracy this study will draw on Benjamin Barber's theory on participatory democracy. Theorist Benjamin Barber (1984) published an innovative book on participatory democracy. According to Heydenrych (2008:706), Barber emphasized the importance of participation, stipulating that self-government is executed through institutions designed to facilitate ongoing participation in agenda-setting, deliberation, legislation, and policy implementation. In short, Barber calls on the community and elected leaders to build systems that can bring people directly into decision making. He also speaks about the instinctive aspect of participation by noting that society shapes participation and participation shapes society, therefore dealing with another crucial concern about participation, namely the sustainability of participation.

Barber also argued that a strong democracy cannot exist at the political level only, it should incorporate the cultural, social, and also economic factors to express a holistic definition of public participation (Nunes da Costa, 2013:141). South Africa, according to Piper and Anciano (2013), is a liberal-democratic state characterized by multiparty competition for office through free, fair, and regular elections, as well as the rule of law. Barber is against liberal democracy defined narrowly in terms of representative democracy; he claims that the lack of constructive participation is a central issue in the existing liberal democracy. According to him, liberal democracy is a thin democracy because its principles are not practical and thus partial, conditional, and optional – meaning purely individualistic and private (Barber, 2003:4).

1.2 Problem Statement

As stated by Modumo (2014:132), public participation is an indispensable component in local government, which makes it a valued concept that is highly appreciated by most marginalized people. However, there are some serious challenges surrounding the facilitation of public participation in the local government sphere. These challenges are a combination of partisanship, procedural adherence, and poor design of the invited spaces and capacity. The predominance of politics in the sphere of local government over social and economic factors acts as a way of justifying the incompetence of formal institutions in facilitating public participation in South Africa. Maloka and Madzivhandila (2014:654) connote that in some cases, community hearings, forums, and imbizos are utilized to brief the residents on an IDP report that has already been formulated in the absence of community inputs.

Given the abovementioned arguments, this study will examine why public participation has been questionable in the sphere of local government. This question will be answered by

investigating the integrated development planning processes in the sphere of local government by employing a literature study.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

-  How will Barber's theory be used as an interpretive frame to better understand the participation deficit in the IDP?
-  What is the nature and scale of community involvement in the IDP processes in local government; and what are the structures and processes for community participation in the IDP processes in local government?
-  What are the existing factors that impede public involvement in the IDP processes in local government?

1.4 Research Objectives

This study aims to:

-  Utilize Benjamin Barber's theory as an interpretative frame to better understand community involvement in the IDP process in local government.
-  Investigate the nature and scale of community involvement in the IDP in local government; examine the structures and processes in place to facilitate public participation in the IDP process in local government.
-  Explore the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government.

1.5 Central Theoretical Statements

The research utilizes Benjamin Barber's theory of strong democracy in order to explain why there is limited public participation in the integrated development planning process in the sphere of local government in South Africa. The theory criticizes representative democracy (thin) for being the core reason for democratic malaise and argues for participatory democracy, and regards it as an antidote (Werner, 2016). Different perspectives exist on the origins and causes of the democratic malaise. In this research, the concept of democratic malaise is linked with factors such top-down approach, political elitism, corruption, mediocre performance of political leaders and institutions, lack of accountability, and limited public participation in governmental affairs such as IDPs. Also, the concept of democratic malaise associated with Benjamin Barber's theory refers to representative democracy, which Barber called thin democracy. The Strong Democracy theory addresses the limitation of representative democracy with an antidote of participatory democracy. The theory aims to eliminate political activity for personal benefit and create a government that contains the people as a replacement for representative democracy introduced merely in the interest of the people.

In the context of South Africa, drawing from Barber's theory, the study puts forward that public participation in local government is primarily affected by the type of democracy and the electoral system. Based on the Constitution, South Africa is a representative democracy and utilises a proportional representation (PR) electoral system. The study emphasises that the mechanisms in place to facilitate IDP merely pay lip service to meet legislative requirements. Current structures and processes for fostering civic engagement are insufficient. Those that exist are not adequately used. It should be emphasized that in local government, the community should be the drivers of transformation and development by participating in the budgeting and planning of development.

Hence, the theory aims at addressing the limitations brought by representative democracy, for example, the intensifying weakness of public institutions, cynicism during elections, marginalization of poor community members, limited community involvement, and privatization of state facilities. This can be related to the arguments made by Anarchist theorists, as they aim to substitute the intrinsically repressive institutions, such as a merchant society, with non-ranked, horizontal institutions propelled by spontaneous human relationships. They are united by a set of key tenets, including horizontalism, consensual aid, independence, cohesiveness, direct action, and Strong Democracy, a kind of democracy in

which individuals make collective decisions (in contrast to representational democracy, which is exemplified by the South African government) (Kelly, 2020). Anarchism theory is relatable to this study, as today it is used to prevent abusive governments from further controlling and taking advantage of their citizens.

1.6 Research Design

To Mouton and Babbie (2009:74), research design is a model of how the researcher plans to conduct the study. According to Bhattacharjee (2012:38), research design can be defined as a technique used to analyse an existing problem when doing research. The problem discussed in this research is why public participation has been questionable in the sphere of local government, especially during the IDP formulation process. This research aims to utilize an explanatory research design. Explanatory research is designed to establish cause and effect. However, the study is primarily associated with the causes of a certain phenomenon, or a why factor (Akhtar, 2016:77), for instance, why public participation in IDP has not been a success in most municipalities. Exploratory research is pertinent to the study as it relies on a qualitative research approach that permits the researcher to investigate various textual resources connected to the issue of public participation and IDP. The research will therefore investigate possible independent variables, which affect the dependent variable of effective public participation in IDP processes.

1.7 Research Methodology

According to Kothari (2004:3), research methodology can be defined as a systematic approach to problem-solving. It includes the identification of ideas and values on which the study methods and techniques are based. The research methodology involves the explanation of the research design, research tools utilized in the process of data collection and the procedures that are used in the research study (Grbich, 2013:4).

This study will use a qualitative approach to research and will make use of secondary data to validate the research objectives set out in this research. This research will predominantly draw on literature from the disciplines of Political Studies. An extensive literature review will be conducted in various areas of public participation and IDP in the local government sphere in South Africa, by reviewing academic journals and books, presentations, and conference papers on previous analyses of public participation in integrated development planning in local government in South Africa.

Reference will also be made to grey literature, such as the policy documents of the South African government and South African census statistics. For instance, this research will consult literature on municipal data and intelligence, local democracy and party politics, good governance, local economic development, political economy, and public participation policy amongst other sub-themes. Moreover, literature evaluating the status quo of public participation in local government will be outlined and examined. This data collection process is referred to as secondary data collection. Secondary data means information that is already available, or information that has already been gathered and analysed by others.

This research was analysed thematically based on categories emerging from the theory of Benjamin Barber. Barber's theory will also be used to help explain or criticize the facilitation of public participation in the IDP process in local government in South Africa. Thematic analysis is defined as a means of understanding and making sense of seemingly unconnected data in a wide sense (Boyatzis, 1998:4). Thematic analysis offers a chance to code and contextualize data into themes. Coding will take place according to themes stemming from Barber's work; for instance, what factors impede public participation in the IDP process in local government? Thematic analysis is considered the most suitable for any research that aims to explore using interpretations. It provides a systematic dimension to data analysis (Ibrahim, 2012:42).

1.8 Significance Of the Study

The research aims at investigating the existing factors that impede effective public participation in the IDP process in local government. The identification of the root causes and factors that hinder community involvement in the IDP process in local government will broaden the body of knowledge. The findings from the study will be used as the solution in order to enhance public participation in governmental affairs, especially IDPs. Also, the study fills the gap that exists in literature. The literature has a vacuum in that it focuses mostly on criticizing public participation methods, rather than the kind of democracy, which is a cause, and how to restructure it. This study will mainly contribute to the body of knowledge in Political Studies on participatory democracy. Also, the research is going to be valuable to other researchers who have an interest in examining the linkage of public participation and IDPs. The research findings can be used as a learning experience for various local municipalities in South Africa, as this research offer a needed overarching appraisal of existing literature on this specific topic.

1.9 Limitations

Given the research methodology utilised, the researcher did not need to be travelling to any local municipalities in order to source information. Also, the Covid-19 travel restrictions is another reason that limited the researcher from travelling. Moreover, traveling would have incurred immense costs, as the researcher had to examine numerous municipalities. However, this limitation did not have major disadvantage to the study. To answer the identified problem statement and questions, the study relies on secondary data collected during the data collection process. It is worth stating that the secondary data collection allowed the researcher to gain a broader national level picture.

1.10 Ethical Consideration

This research is conducted through a desktop method, where only secondary data will be collected and analysed. The results of the analysis will not require the identification of any participants. The usage of the already existing data will not cause any harm or distress. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and every source incorporated into this body of knowledge will be recognized. All the regulations provided for by the North-west University policy on plagiarism are followed and adhered to (NWU, 2013: 02).

1.11 Chapter Outline

The thesis contains five chapters which are as follows:

Chapter One: Contains the orientation of the study. This chapter provides the background and outline of the research problem, aims and objectives, problem statement, and research methodology and methods were explored in this chapter.

Chapter Two: Will focus on Benjamin Barber's theory on Strong Democracy. The theory will be used in chapter four by aligning it with public participation in local government in the IDP process.

Chapter Three: Will provide a detailed investigation of the nature and scale of community involvement in the IDP process in local government. Furthermore, it will provide a discussion on the structure and process in place to facilitate public participation in the IDP process in local government.

Chapter Four: Will explore the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government.

Chapter Five: The conclusion produces a summary of the findings of the dissertation and considers avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research explored a brief background on the nature and dynamics of public participation during the Apartheid era and how the end of apartheid brought the concept of public participation in governmental affairs, such as the IDP, among others, into the public eye. This chapter sets the tone and scene for the rest of the research. It serves as the backbone of the study, detailing the theory that will guide the research.

Benjamin Barber's Strong Democracy theory is utilized to further understand the nature and dynamics of public participation in the IDP process. This chapter puts into context Benjamin Barber's theory on public participation; who influenced Barber, and how Barber has been criticized. It demonstrates the epistemology that emanates from this perspective. It emphasizes, in detail, why and how Barber is a good fit for this study. Moreover, this chapter is important because themes stemming from Barber's work will be used in chapter four. This chapter aims to explore the theory of strong democracy as it guides this study. The research encompasses literature on the concept of democracy and the types of democratic theories, so the literature review in this chapter is vital and will be consulted throughout the research.

2.2 Brief explanation of the concept theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is viewed as a blueprint for the research process. It is referred to as the basis from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study. The theory that underpins the researchers' thinking about how they are going to interpret and plan the research topic and the ideas and concepts from that theory that are pertinent to their study is referred to as the theoretical framework (Grand & Onsolo, 2014:13).

This research will use Benjamin Barber's theory of strong democracy. The theory will assist the researcher in examining why public participation in the IDP has had limited success. All the themes stemming from this theory, such as participatory institutions, civic education, technology, and representational democracy, are discussed in an attempt to explain why IDP has had limited success. The research below discusses the democratic theory in general. What are the main strands or types? What are the main authors in each type, and where does Barber fit?

2.3 Conceptualising Democracy

To begin this research, it is necessary to start with a definition of democracy. This is because, among the many terms that divide political scientists, democracy is certainly the most debatable. Barber sees democracy as a social order, an organisation, a community, a system wherein decisions are made collectively, a collaborative administration chosen, and shared principles generated in the sphere of everyday lives and a developing environment of politics, interests, and struggle for power (Morrell, 1999:293).

Barber (2003:104) draws to some extent from the ancient Athens democracy. Benjamin Barber's theory on Strong Democracy is somewhat like common ideas identified with the ancient Greek philosophy of democracy. Democracy in ancient Greece was a direct rather than representative democracy. For the Athenians, democracy (democratic) provided rule (Kratos) to the people (Dēmos). Their democracy was not only narrowed to enforcing citizens' right to vote. The public governed themselves, citizens participated in debates and voted on both big and small matters, for example, topics of wars and peace. The Athenians acknowledged the importance of checks and balances and implementing time for discussion before any decisions (Leach, 2000: 361-363).

However, Rothchild (2007:13) argues that Barber's Strong Democracy theory somewhat varies from the idea of classical Greek democracy because he does not see politics as a way of life. Barber emphasises the variance position in politics to be used as a resource, whereas the Greek concept depicts humans as political animals and renders politics as vital to life as oxygen. Moreover, Rothchild (2007:15), distinguished Barber's theory and the Greeks' Democracy by stating that Ancient Athens limited public participation to what could be deemed a miniscule percentage of the population. Below, this chapter will also look into how different theorists define democracy and democratic theories, what are the main strands or types, what are the main authors in each type, and where does Barber fit.

The key concept of democracy is usually accepted to have originated from ancient Greeks, specifically the city-state of Athens in the 5th century B.C. The original meaning of the phrase democracy can be mined from the Greek roots: 'demos' which refers to the people and 'Kratos' meaning power (Ober, 2008). In other words, democracy refers to a type of government which, in contrast to monarchies and aristocracy, the people rule. The distinguishing characteristics of Ancient Greek democracy distinguishing were: (a) fair involvement of all freemen in the

polis (city-state)'s affairs, which was viewed as an integral tool of good life; (b) reaching collective decisions in an environment of open debate; and (c) common reverence for the law and the community's existing guidelines (Gaubu, 2009:491). The definition of democracy provided by Abraham Lincoln (1858) is very similar to its literal meaning. It says: democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Today the meaning of democracy varies and changes.

According to IDEA, democracy moves beyond the rule of law and the defence of human rights; it advocates for virtuous governance and the operative management of public resources. Classical theorists such as Joseph Schumpeter (1984:336) described democracy as an institutional structure for reaching political decisions in which the people obtain the ability to decide through a competitive encounter for the people's vote. This implies that democracy is defined as the phenomenon of free and fair elections for executive and legislative positions, rather than hereditary succession, forceful takeover, and so on. Contemporary scholars like Larry Diamond (2007) state that democracy can be referred to as a system of government with four crucial components:

- 🚩 A process of selecting and changing the government through free and fair elections.
- 🚩 Effective participation of the people, as residents, in politics and public life.
- 🚩 Enshrinement of the human rights of all the inhabitants; and
- 🚩 A rule of law in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

Democracy, according to Diamond (2004), is a way for voters to select their representatives and keep them responsible for their actions and actions in office. He goes on to say that at both the national and local levels, the people decide who will represent them in parliament and who will lead the administration. They do so by voting in normal, open, and equal elections between opposing parties. Democracy entails citizens electing who they want in office, and those in power ensuring that all citizens have access to basic human rights. It is, however, not only about voting; it is also about freedom of expression and participating in events such as marches and gatherings where people believe their rights are being infringed, though they should be conducted in accordance with the constitution. Democracy needs transparency, so that citizens can get decisions taken which allow them to rule their own lives (Maloka,2013:199).

According to (Budge,2006:1), there are two main types of democracy, namely indirect democracy, and direct democracy. Direct democracy is a form of democracy whereby the power to govern is vested willingly in the hands of the people rather than being exercised

through their representatives. Direct democracy is a concept housing several political processes, enabling ordinary people to vote on laws directly instead of being represented by politicians (Berga & Moreno, 2019: 2).

A case in point is the town meeting, which is a community assembly where people gather at a specific place and time to render public decisions; the elections which are the common method of direct democracy, where constituents vote yes or no on particular legislation specified on the ballot, referred to as ballot measures or propositions; an initiative whereby regular residents who have been authorized to vote to collect signatures from registered voters to propose a new law; and a referendum, which is a debate on a law adopted beforehand by the government (Matsusaka, 2005:187). Concisely, direct democracy ensures that the government listens to its constituencies.

The scholar Sveinsson (2007:04) further added that direct democracy encourages openness in governance and more enlightened views in politics; that direct democracy promotes more civic engagement and participation among voters; and that direct democracy results in a higher scale of popular accountability for policies.

An indirect democracy is a form of democratic government in which electors elect representatives to draft laws on their behalf. A representative democracy is a concept that is sometimes utilized synonymously with indirect democracy. Manin (1997:237) argues that a fundamental method of representative democracy is elections, which allows the people periodically to change representatives. Representative democracy, in his opinion, is a fair system of government. He maintains that representatives make decision on behalf of the citizens to the government. Also, representatives debate issues and make laws on behalf of the citizens. They decide who will govern and how – on behalf of the people. In this regard, democratic elections, as well as the space between elections, are extremely important.

Alonso and Keane (2011:40) indicated that representative democracy has four major characteristics; (a) the citizens' sovereignty is demonstrated in the electoral selection of representatives (b) representation is seen as a democratically authorised relationship; (c) the electoral process has to assure the citizens that there will be some level of accountability to them by officials who speak and act on their behalf; (d) the general election should be grounded on promoting political quality. Scholars Dahl, Shapiro, and Cheibib (2003) state that in a representative democracy, every vote has equal weight, no unconstitutional constraints can be imposed on anyone aspiring to be a representative, and the independence of its qualifying

people is guaranteed by legitimized rights and liberty, which are usually covered by a constitution.

Several papers, articles and books have been written presenting insights on classical and contemporary types of democratic thoughts. Below, the research focuses on contemporary democratic thoughts, looking into Robert Dahl (1998), Ian Shapiro (2002), David Held (2008) and Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009).

Robert Dahl (1998) presents a short and extremely easy to read approach to democratic thought that contains the theoretical and methodological aspect of the study. Dahl (1998:35), basically defines democracy as rule by the people. He believes that people should work together and have similar aims and a common end. Dahl (1998) is also heavily influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's fundamental notion that, in order to be free, a person must be ruled exclusively by rules that he chooses. This implies that the people should be involved and engaged in the policy-making process. He argues that a democratic procedure should have meaningful engagement and fair voting opened to all citizens.

Furthermore, democracy needs to offer people opportunities to understand civic issues; also, to encourage them to participate in agenda-setting. Hyland (1995) states that Dahl believes that democracy's most unsolvable challenge is a trade-off between efficient individual engagement and mechanism effectiveness. To have a government that is successful in coping with macro-political problems, Dahl agrees that an individual in a dynamic, populous, modern society must give up some personal power (on the national scene, just about all of it).

Another insightful narrative of the context of contemporary democratic theory is provided by Ian Shapiro (2003). He challenges the two most popular theories of democracy: deliberative democracy and what he calls aggregative democracy. He argues that there is no proof to substantiate the argument that more deliberation would result in improved results in public policy and social conflict reduction (Shapiro, 2003:476). Shapiro (147-148) advocates for non-domination, described as structuring political institutions which guarantees that 'basic interests' of the citizens are protected from danger. He believes that democracy must be directed at reducing domination across the community.

Ian Shapiro strongly promotes the competitive democratic paradigm as an option for deliberative democracy. The author contends that by encouraging party competition, states might create an argumentation ideal that has parts of deliberation but does not suffer from the deliberative model's lack of reality or the possible veto rights of significant dissidents that

occurs when consensus is the decision rule or aim. He advocates for an argumentative model of the Westminster two-party competition model, in which each party must present its argument.

He insists that Joseph Schumpeter's classic defence of competitive democracy is a good approach for reaching this goal but that it needs radical supplementation – both in terms of how it works in national political systems and how it can be extended to other modes of voluntary association (Shapiro, 2006). He comes to the conclusion that debate necessitates people to act in good faith, but it is not possible to design institutions to induce good faith (Fishkin & Mansbridge, 2007:81).

David Held (2008) offers one of the famous overviews of the different models of democracy combined with a detailed analysis of what democracy means in the context of globalization. He introduces the fundamental ideas of democracy, from ancient Greece to the present. Held (2008: 48) defines democracy as a type of government in which, opposed to monarchy and aristocracy, people rule. He maintains that democracy requires a political community whereby there are people who are equal. In models of democracy, David Held employed Macpherson's approach. His models consisted of principles of justification, key political features, and assumptions about the nature of the society in which democracy is or might be embedded.

David Held successfully outlined five models of democracy. First is *competitive democracy*: he argues that it is centred on a 'procedural view' of representative democracy. In this model the election of representatives is seen as a significant activity in the political system. Supporters of this model adamantly oppose direct democracy. Direct democracy, as reported by Joseph Schumpeter (1942) and Max Weber (1921), is impractical in sizeable diverse and stratified communities. Second, *Plebiscitary democracy*: plebiscitarians believe that decision-making in the democratic structure should be conducted as little as feasible by representatives and as much as desirable by everyday citizens through elections and referendums, according to Held (1987).

Furthermore, he points out that the existence and usage of direct lines of communication between elected leaders and the general public will result in a whole new perspective on politics and democracy. In this circumstance, these mechanisms are being used to reinforce the citizenry's voice rather than to enhance the role of governors, lawmakers, and administrators. Thirdly, the pluralist model of democracy: in the pluralist model, democracy is not the sovereign power of the majority but an always-shifting coalition of minorities. The pluralist

model is a combination of direct and representative democracy (Hacker & Jan van Dijk, 2000:12).

The fourth model of democracy explored is similar to various elements of the pluralist model. However, it is focused on democratic perspectives that place a greater focus on the substantive facets and tools of democracy than the pluralist model. The major distinction is the change of focus from organizations to civilians. The core goal of the participatory democracy model is to promote citizenship. The first classical exponent of this model was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). The last model of democracy is Libertarian democracy. In many ways, the libertarian model is similar to the pluralist and plebiscitarian models. The libertarian form of government is both substantive and formal, and it is far closer to direct democracy than to representative democracy. It has emerged as a dominant paradigm among the founders of the internet community (Hacker & Jan van Dijk, 2000:13-14).

John S. Dryzek and Patrick Dunleavy (2009) offer a comprehensive examination of traditional and current theories of the state, with an emphasis on the democratic state that has come to define modern politics. They start by explaining the classical theories of state: Marxism, Pluralism, Market liberalism, and elite theory. They then refer to current models of pluralism in political science, extensively investigating how they approach key problems such as networked government, globalization, and shifting forms of electoral and identity politics trends. They then examine a variety of primary recent criticisms of modern states and democracy, including postmodernism, neo-conservatism, environmentalism, and feminism. Each methodology is deliberately applied and analysed in relation to a particular collection of concerns and headings to the extent practicable (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009).

Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009) emphasise theories of the liberal democratic state. They define Liberal Democracy as a democratic structure in which annual elections decide how the government is structured and who holds the government's executive authority. There should be transparent and equal competition between nominees and political parties. This is the democracy component of the definition. Basic civil rights are secured by law and institutional protections, while an autonomous judiciary and judicial system fairly and impartially enforce legal acts and rules. This is the liberal section of the concept. Both the liberal and democratic features must be represented for liberal democracy to prevail, they argue. (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009:17-18).

There are four main types of democratic theories: pluralist theory of democracy, liberal democratic theory, elite democratic theory, and participatory theory of democracy. All of these theories suggest different and various roles for public participation in the democratic process.

Dunleavy (2009:35) states that pluralism refers to a belief in various (plural) ways of life, different methods to knowledge and numerous midpoints of power in communities, dedicated to moderate and non-acrimonious rivalry. This means, it emphasises the numerous influences in and upon policymaking process, specifically the part played by varied organised interest groups. However, it also considers other actors like ordinary electorates in votes. In its perception, policymaking is not achieved by members of a cohesive majority, nor by an independent and unresponsive hierarchy, but rather by the participation of the communities (Gaubu, 2009:516). Moreover, it also encompasses work unions, business associations and groups campaigning for social justice, ecological, religious, or traditional principles.

Pluralists believe that it is socially preferable for people to be politically affiliated with a diverse variety of organizations in order to pursue their goals. These groups allow them to express themselves creatively while still seeking self-fulfilment in several aspects of life (Gaubu, 2009:197). Dunleavy (2009) maintains that pluralism considers this multiplicity as an honourable method to arrange government and policy. Pluralism opposes all methods of monism in political and social belief – thoughts that favour a single philosophical idea, particularly a theory of history or evolutionary pathway and a single centre of government beyond pluralist values. Pluralists believe that these thoughts can be best reached, or only reachable, under liberal democratic theory.

Elite democracy is a form of democracy in which a segment of the population, normally the rich and powerful and educated, have a significant control on policy decision-making processes. In general, elitist theories hold that any population is divided into two groups of men: (a) the elites, or the minority within a public gathering (such as a community, a country, a religious organization, or a political party) that wields disproportionate power; and (b) the people, or the main city ruled by the elite (Gaubu, 2009: 513). It can be argued that democratic elitism is a top-to-bottom method of governing. This top-down method enables clientelism to rule the political landscape. Elitism is a heteronormative method of governance since it offers the populace an illusion of involvement, whereas enabling them to choose between elite-defined choices.

Belden & McLuskie (2003:4) further explained that the appointed representatives are selected based on representing the people and the community's needs. However, elected representatives do not utilize their political positions to implement laws that favour the people who voted for them. Instead, certain lawmakers craft proposals that favour a specific group of supporters who helped finance their races. In the first half of the century, many elite theorists justified elite supremacy (Biegelbauer & Hansen, 2011:590). They argued that all dialogue of pluralist multitude is a swindle: that, in fact, government and citizens are governed by a single, cohesive elite. Elite theorists maintain that in an elite minority must always dominate. They belittled both liberal arguments about democratisation under capitalism, and Marxist views that after a social revolution, many of the working-class could successfully rule. Elitist democracy theory suggests that public participation is not an essential prerequisite for democracy (Biegelbauer & Hansen, 2011:591).

Liberal democracy is based on individualism, which is concerned with minimizing state authority. This means that it prioritizes the prosperity of individuals as a principal component of a mere political system (IDEA, 2009:6). A political system distinguished by unrestricted power for example totalitarianism and monarchy, are incapable of safeguarding citizens' lives and freedoms. Moreover, liberals argues that if each person is permitted to follow his egoism, shared interest would be attained inevitably as a consequence. They argue that people are not forced to contribute to society for his existence, his potentialities, and thus is free to pursue his self-determined aims (Belden & McLuskie,2003:4).

Liberals view common good as an overall sum of the good of all individuals, which is demonstrated by the reconciliation of their conflicting interests. In addition, liberalism emphasizes the value of process over product. This means that if the process for attaining a decision is accurate, the verdict may be seen as correct. Moreover, Liberalism sustains that public policy must be the result of free bargaining amongst groups of individuals created to follow their common interests. Liberalism treats the state as the means and individuals as the end. Early advocates of liberalism include John Locke (1632-1704), Adam Smith (1723-90) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832).

John Locke (1632-1704) is acknowledged as one of the creators of liberalism. In 1690, he published his Second Treatise of Government. In it, he alludes that the sole purpose of government is to safeguard people's natural rights, specifically the rights to lives, liberty, and

assets. He maintains that the abovementioned natural rights surpass non-natural rights, and that no head of state or government could seek to eliminate these inviolable rights.

Adam Smith (1720) was the second founder of liberalism. He strengthened the *laissez-fair* idea with his insightful work, *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith also penned the Invisible Hand, governing the course of free markets. Smith, like Locke, believed that the government must not and cannot employ the power of laws to achieve a specific economic objective. Smith (1720) wrote that if individuals are free to follow their own economic self-interest, the market will gravitate naturally in the route of increased wealth for a considerable number of individuals. It can be concluded that, Smith did for economic liberalism what John Locke had done for political liberalism: he laid the theoretical foundation for other theorists to establish a separate liberal tradition on.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) is regarded as the founder of utilitarianism, a moral theory that claims that acts should be deemed justifiable or bad according to how much they improve or decrease human well-being (or utility). He believed that if the outcomes of an action are pleasant, it is moral, and if the consequences are unpleasant, it is immoral. Bentham's ideology was resolutely autonomous, at least in its initial point, writes Pennock (1979).

It is worth highlighting that these Bentham (1748-1832) and Smith (1720), defended the *laissez-faire* philosophy, which states that the government should interfere as little as possible in people's economic activities. They are the founders of classical liberalism, commonly termed as 'negative liberalism,' because it projected the state's negative influence of the government in the arena of mutual interaction of humans.

The participatory democratic theory aims to create full participation of citizens, particularly in segments of society that are historically viewed as political, in their self-governance. Participatory democratic theory is extremely different from elite democratic theory and opposes all forms of liberal democracy which only gives average people exceedingly small possibilities of involvement, leading to a depoliticized population with no control over their own lives (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009:162).

Hilmer (2010: 58) states that there are three tenets of participatory democratic theory: the first tenet of participatory democratic theory is that a stronger sense of civic effectiveness and empowerment can be experienced by people who actively engage in their self-governance. Participatory democracy scholars argue that people of democratic governance are profoundly

knowledgeable, efficient, and empowered as they continue to exercise a great deal of influence over the social, political, and economic entities that directly affect their everyday lives.

The second tenet of participatory democratic theory is that the more frequently people engage in their self-government, the more political intelligence they have. Participatory democracy scholars assert that participatory institutions enable participants with a wide range of possibilities to learn how to be effective citizens. These opportunities emerge as people have accessibility to both the information required to make accurate political decisions and the political, social, and economic institutions that influence their daily lives. The last tenet of participatory democratic theory believes that to break the hegemony of state power, they stress the expansion of democratic control into historically non-political segments of the communities (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009:162). In other words, participatory theorists want to move beyond voting and other conventional ways of formal democratic expression to make room for additional modes of political activity that can help to retrieve the substantive promise of democratic life.

It can be argued that Benjamin Barber (1984) subscribes to this democratic theory (participatory democracy). This is because Barber supports the establishment of deliberative institutes which requires full involvement of the citizens (self-government) and allows them to partake in the process of policy formulation, which represent common good. It is worth noting that he is completely alert to what a deep-seated change this would be (participatory democracy) from 'what people are used to' (representative democracy). Hence, he argues that there should be a need for 'civic education and transitional leadership' to enable the transformation from 'undemocratic hierarchical decision-making structures' to a system where the residents can engage on an equal basis. He emphasised that citizens need indoctrination in civic communitarian principles as a corrective to representative governments.

To put it another way, the researcher state that democracy is based on the twin tenets of equal rights for all participants and collective control. As opposed to what we typically imagine, democracy does not just pertain to the state or to government. Democracy is for the people by the people. For the purpose of this dissertation, the focus will be in representative and participatory democracy. In explain the two concepts, it can be argued that in a representative government, people are only truly free during election time when they choose the representatives who will govern them; after that, they return to a position of subjection to their

rulers that is little better than slavery. While participatory democracy is simply seen as a democratic system which directly and indirectly participate in government processes.

2.4 Who Influenced Benjamin Barber?

Benjamin Barber mainly borrows from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book *The Social Contract* (1762), and the general will theory, and a bit of Thomas Jefferson's (1776) *Philosophy of Democratization*. Barber's work, primarily *Strong Democracy*, presents a Rousseauian concept of democracy. However, Barber modifies and alters a few of the faults of his influencers.

Rousseau grounded his concept of the *Social Contract* on the philosophy of *man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains* (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1988:85). These chains represent limits imposed against civilians and their freedoms in a modern state. He described sovereignty as free will not obliged and that the freedom of the citizens should not be represented. Democracy, according to Rousseau (1988), has to be direct democracy. To ensure that the freedoms of the individuals would be protected, Rousseau advocated for the creation of a government using a contract that rests on a pact (a social contract) formed between the community members which seeks to ensure equality for everyone (Elahi, 2005:4). The governmental system which Rousseau depended on to consent to this autonomy was a direct democracy. He argued that in a direct democracy, citizens must gather together to make their laws. For Rousseau, the social contract is to defend the close relationship between direct democracy and community participation (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1988:85).

According to Rousseau, the General Will can be referred to as the collective need of all to provide for the common good of all. Rousseau states that a general will can only occur only on the grounds of what dissimilar interests have in common (Cohen, 2010:23). Hence, despite various interests that organisations and people may have, at least they must have one thing as a common factor that will create a social bond among the community (Cunningham, 2002:129). For Rousseau, general will derives from this shared common interest. Rousseau maintained that the general will would incline towards fairness, and contemplates no more than general interest (Cohen, 2010:24).

According to Laskar (2013:6), the general will be better represented by the Majority Rule concept. The Majority Rule concept was approved on the basis that majority opinion is more just than minority opinion. Rousseau stated that elected representatives should not determine the general will of the people. He advocated for a direct democracy where people voted to voice their general will and create laws of the land. The community, meeting together, will

deliberate separately on laws, followed by the mass vote to discover the general will. For Rousseau, the purpose of direct participation was in the identification of the general will. Rousseau further states that all political power shall remain with the citizens practising their General Will (Rahman, 1997:3). According to Wolf (1985:376), for Rousseau, participation generates popular control of the government since participation includes each participant in an equal sharing of rewards and burdens. Participation is important to a just society, as it includes all the people in determining their interest, and it ties that interest to general public interest.

Barber largely agrees with Rousseau's positive view of human existence and people's fundamental desire to create common good that will prevent the attacks on people's basic rights. Rousseau wrote: *We are born weak, we need strength; we are born totally unprovided, we need aid; we are born stupid, we need judgment. Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown, is given us by education.* Barber's corresponding statement is *we are born insufficient, we need cooperation; we are born with potential natures, we require society to realize them; we are born unequal, we need politics to make us equal; we are born part slave, part free, we can secure full liberty only through democratic community.*

Rousseau's commitment to direct democracy and political sovereignty, according to Barber, is reflected on the general public by creating shared values and goals, shared agendas, and shared language. For Barber, Rousseau's conception of the General Will is an epitome of community-oriented democracy. He further argues that Rousseau's General Will ideology is an ideal method for democracy as it considers the general interest and is precisely how democratic political actors should think. Barber, influenced by Rousseau, disregards the concept of representation in government as an alternative for direct democracy (Wolf, 1985:376). Both Rousseau and Barber emphasize how representation separates public involvement from democracy. He also makes a compelling case for community-based participatory democracy as the most feasible anti-representative democracy solution (Jason, 2015:41-42). As a result, he is a worthy heir to Rousseau.

Benjamin Barber also borrows a little from Thomas Jefferson, who advocated for public education in America. He argued that educating people was the only way to empower them. Barber (1999) has written that for democratic theorists, "Education has defined not merely citizenship but democracy itself." This means that without adequately educating its people, democracy will embody the hegemony of thought over wisdom. According to Jefferson, this education would better judgment, on which we may depend on the best assurance for the

maintenance of a proper degree of independence. Jefferson highlighted that the people are the defenders of democracy. To guarantee that the public were the only defenders against an irresponsible administration, Jefferson's national vision demanded an educated citizenry. Like Barber, citizenship was not a meaningless phrase for Jefferson. Jefferson valued education more than representation as a custodian of democracy, he claims.

Rousseau is significant to Barber because he opposed the earlier modern contract theorists, particularly Hobbes. On Hobbes's idea of self-interested men in a natural state are driven by reciprocal dread to surrender to a sovereign power in return for protection. Rousseau contrasted individual will with the General Will. Individual will, according to Rousseau, is linked to private interest, whereas general will is linked to the greater good of the political community and each of its constituents.

2.5 The Strong Democracy Theory Explained

Benjamin Barber was a political theorist with comprehensive writings on the concept of democracy, mainly defending participatory democracy. He strongly advocates for citizenship which mainly comprises of meaningful public participation in community affairs in order to improve their living standards. This is not a system whereby the citizens elect representatives to rule them; it is a system where all residents partake in self-governance.

Barber (1984:219) put forward that citizen in a democratic state should take part in various activities, namely policy discussion, policy formulation, referendum involvement, assisting in the local and regional municipality and political bureaus, assisting and campaigning for political parties and interest groups. Barber states that direct democracy is the *real democracy* when correctly formulated and implemented. Called Strong Democracy, his vision offers stability absent in other models of direct democracy, for example, communitarianism and majority rule (Powell & Geoghegan, 2005:140).

Participatory democracy, according to Benjamin Barber (1984), is self-governance by individuals instead of representational government acting on their behalf, it gives voters a sense of authority over government decisions. This viewpoint goes beyond simply developing policies to incorporate voters in the agenda-setting, debating, legislation, and policy enforcement processes. He claims that people cannot become individuals unless they participate in the everyday experience that defines them and the decision-making that creates their socioeconomic surroundings (Dacombe, 2018:28-30).

He is committed to a democratic society that insists on engagement, partisanship, and democratic competence. Norris (2016:2) states that Barber describes Strong Democracy as follows: “politics in the participatory model where conflict is resolved in the absence of an independent ground, but through a participatory process of ongoing, proximate self-legislation and the creation of a political community capable of transforming dependent, private individuals into free citizens and partial and private interests into public interests.” He believes that strong democracy provides an opportunity for the revision and re-creation of modes of society fit for democracy in the 21st century, especially in the local sphere. Strong democracy exemplifies how the solution to democracy's faults is greater democracy, not representative democracy (Norris, 2016:173).

In addition, according to Barber (1984: 208), strong democratic political process's objective is to fortify the position of the citizen – to re-create its sovereignty above other roles – and thus deliver a political means of common will. Strong Democracy combines communication, listening, and shared judgment with community and intellectual integration by accentuating the politics of shared will and de-emphasizing the politics of broken interests. Deprived of citizens, Rousseau warns, “there will be neither free natural men nor satisfied solitaires – there will be nothing but debased slaves, from the rulers of the state downwards” (Barber,1984:230). Thus, strong democracy intends to unchain men and to legitimate their dependence by means of citizenship and to establish their political freedom by means of the democratic community.

Under Barber's Strong Democracy theory, people are encouraged to be more than mere voters; by contrast, they should define themselves by being involved in community matters rather than their matters of self-interest. The above statement can be supported by a statement by Aristotle, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), and Hannah Arendt (1906-1975); *we are only human when we participate in something beyond ourselves*.

The core principle of a strong democracy is talk among the people, and the epitome of these talks is active listening and conversation directed at shared action. Barber writes “*Community decisions would not actually be set in stone; instead, they would be open to further debate and subsequent modification. To make all this feasible, it will first be important to set up neighborhood assemblies to address topics and set up agendas*” (Haskell, 2001:90).

Barber's idea of democracy is based around a strong municipal government system in which communities, regions, and cities work together to promote concerns and propose policies that concern residents. Communities will host town hall meetings and meet regularly with others in

other regions as well as the national administration, forming a network of strategic knowledge sharing and deliberation in which neither the local nor the national government has dominance in creating and implementing policies (Stromer-Galley, 2000:45).

Barber's neighbourhood-assembly structure initially serves as a forum for dialogue and deliberation, where people can partake in local discussion or in regional and national matters. Thus, Barber sees democratic talk as a progressive and voluntary procedure of public education, which later breeds civic competence that can take on decision-making duties. Neighbourhood assemblies empower people to articulate their ideals equally without fear of criticism; however, the validity and public importance of their statements will be decided by the mechanism of democratic talks (Deane, 2016:111). There are nine functions of strong democratic talks:

1. *The articulation of interest, bargaining and exchange:* According to Barber this one is common to the liberals and has what they consider to be the duties of the talks. He maintains that they view talks as a main medium of exchange between rivals seeking to enhance their self-interests by market interaction. The phrase *interest* is vital here as it represents the concept of individualism and its societal role that is hostile. Moreover, here liberals reduce talks to be pleasure-seeking dialogues of bargaining, which form an environment which is antagonistic to the effective practice of talks (Barber, 1984:179).
2. *Persuasion:* Barber also argued that this one is common to the liberals and incorporates what they consider to be the duties of the talks. Liberals argues that this function is conservatively linked with the concept of the interest-based logic, a view of talks that lacks a public interest. It is worth noting that liberal democrats support economic elements of political interaction, and they generally consider it as a means to convince others of the acceptability of one's own interests. However, they are far too knowledgeable to believe that hollering on the stock market floor and the bargains that such hollering seals exhausts the opportunities of political conversation, Barber said (Barber, 1984:180).
3. *Agenda setting:* Strong democratic talk positions agenda-setting at the core instead of at the start of its politics. It themes all difficult topics to continuous investigation and probable reformulation. It investigates what remains unsaid, looking for indicators of an unexpressed problem, a voiceless victim, or a mute protester in the cracks of silence.

Barber highlighted community's agenda informs a community where it is and what it is. It explains that community's symbiosis and the limitations of cooperation and draws up plans for pasts to be institutionalized or overcome, and for futures to be avoided or achieved. Far from being a mere preliminary of democracy, agenda-setting becomes one of its pervasive, defining functions (Barber, 1984:182).

4. *Exploring mutuality*: Barber means that when the process of talk is compressed to a simple adoption of bargaining process, it can allow us to only discover our dissimilarities in the hunt for equally advantageous exchange. He highlights that resident who wish to be self-governing need to have conversational skills in order to attain mutuality without compromising their sovereignty. Talk provides life to a concept of citizens in which such antinomies are superseded (Barber, 1984:182-84).
5. *Affiliation and affection*: In strong democracy, the affective and affiliative functions of talk are not limited to ceremonial community-building or to entirely non-cognitive aspects of emotive speech. Talk of every kind – cognitive, prudential, exploratory, conversational, and affective – can enhance empathy, and there is perhaps no stronger social bond and no more significance of public thinking than the one fashioned by empathy (Barber, 1984:189).
6. *Maintaining autonomy*: According to Barber (1984:190), talk helps us overcome narrow self-interest, but it plays an equally significant role in buttressing the autonomy of individual wills that is essential to democracy. It is through talk that we constantly reencounter, reevaluate, and repossess the beliefs, principles, and maxims on the basis of which we exert our will in the political realm.
7. *Witness and expression*: The function of talk is to allow people to vent their grievances or frustration or opposition, not in hopes of moving others but in order to give public status to their strongly held personal convictions. A healthy democratic community will therefore leave room for the expression of distrust, dissent, or only plain opposition, even in lost causes where dissenters are obviously very much in the minority (Barber, 1984:1920).
8. *Reformulation and reconceptualization*: The reformulation of words and principles, as we have seen, infiltrates all of the other features of talk. For instance, agenda-setting as a continuous mechanism entails a constant rethinking of public business, of the whole concept of the public; “the discovery of mutuality involves an expansion of

consciousness that brings with it new and broader understandings of common language; affiliation and affection depend on empathy, which shifts how we see our interests and separate identities; autonomy involves rethinking our values and beliefs in a changing world; and witness imply a challenge to commonly taken decisions that may just show negotiating and persuasion (in a broad sense) are immune to transformation, which is precisely what is wrong with them”. (Barber, 1984:193).

9. *Community-building as the creation of public interests, common good and active citizens:* All of the roles of talk addressed above work against a common, critical goal: the formation of a general populace capable of truly public thinking and political judgement, and therefore capable of envisioning a shared future dependent on sincerely common goods. Here, talk is essentially a power through which we can build a society capable of building its own future, and talk is nourished by community even though it contributes to the establishment of community conditions (Barber, 1984:194).

Barber insists that the above-mentioned talks are limited in what he calls thin democracy, he maintains that officials cut down more talk, and thus significantly decrease the sense and purpose of citizenship (Mansbridge, 1987:1341). In Strong Democracy, this perspective exceeds merely making policies to include the citizens in agenda-setting, deliberation, legislation, and policy implementation (Dacombe, 2018:28-30).

2.5.1 Participatory Institutions

According to Sparks (1997:78), people in a participatory democracy need substantial engagement in the mutual institutions of self-rule, institutions destined to promote the continuous democratic engagement in the development of the policy, deliberations, and the implementation of policies. Benjamin Barber (1984:151) proposed the institutionalization of participatory democracy in local and national government. He suggested institutional frameworks which will facilitate strong democracy. He encouraged the residents and government officials to develop institutions that would explicitly engage residents in the decision-making process. For these institutions to work they are expected to maintain the following requirements:

1. *Participatory institutions should be realistic and workable:* For all practical purposes, this means that they ought to be a product of actual political experience. Ideal and Utopian institutions can clarify and embellish a theory (the inventions of Fourier come to mind), but they cannot be the test of a theory that claims to be of practical relevance.

2. *The institutions should balance and be consistent with the key representative institutions of the modern world:* Barber notes that regardless of the friction among the theories, the Strong Democratic method can only function as an adjustment to the liberal democracy. He notes that realistic solutions for transformation cannot be radical if democracy is their goal, and change cannot await the collapse of the liberal community to the ground – even although that was preferred (which it obviously is not).
3. *The institutions should directly address liberal anxieties over such unitary propensities of participatory communities as irrationalism, prejudice, uniformity, and intolerance:* In other words, these institutions must protect the community, the minority and mainly their liberty that dominant parties may often violate in the name of the community. The dissimilarity between independent participation and mere agreement, between frequent talk and simple elections, and between political consideration and mere decision-making through plebiscite requires the attention of the institutions.
4. *Participatory institutions should handle specifically the hurdles that the modern world continues to put in the direction of participation, for example, 'scale, technology, complexity, and the paradox of parochialism:* This means that public participation in the local sphere of government should not undermine national identity, and power should not be exerted through centralized institutions; this will prevent genuine participation.
5. *Participatory institutions should give expression to the special claims of strong democracy as a theory of talk, judgment, and public seeing by offering alternatives to representation, simple voting, and the rule of bureaucrats and experts.* This means the democracy for the people should be made viable instead of the democracy of the government officials (Barber 1984: 262).

These participatory institutions, by transforming strangers into citizen-neighbours through common conversations and projects, enable citizens to envision and articulate a shared future in respect of truly shared goods (Barber, 1984;197). And as Benjamin Barber argues in Strong Democracy, this common vision need not be obtained by instigating conflict or by sacrificing individual interests. Moreover, Barber (1984: 281-89) noted that participatory referendum functions as a worthy institutional method of public participation, but he also insists that the methods of participation should be as important as the institutions in which participation takes

place. He argues that we need to organize public involvement in a way that would have the beneficial results anticipated by participatory theorists.

Barber (1984) describes referendums at the local level as one of the most important forms of institutionalization for participatory democracy in modern society. Referendums can improve public interest in and accountability for democracy, serve as a lasting civic education tool, and provide mainstream discourse with the reality and discipline of authority that it requires to be successful. He maintains that this form of public engagement, referendums, are low-cost and need very minimum effort. The transformative institutions outlined above offers a practical starting point for those who want to reconfigure democracy toward public involvement. These institutions have the ability to increase the efficiency of democracy by providing opportunities and privileges to those who were previously side-lined.

2.5.2 Technology

The theory of Strong Democracy is one of the earliest theories to praise the democratic potential of the new telecommunication technologies. Hence Barber (Barber, 1984) heavily depends on telecommunication technologies to ensure quick access to information, effective electronic voting, and improved communication in local and national political realms. The internet will provide the type of communication platform required for direct democracy, such as knowledge collection, deliberation, and voting. Barber proposed communicating technologically as a response to the problem of distance. It has the potential to bridge the gap and get people together in the kind of contact needed for direct democracy. He believes that the efficiency of the digital technologies can be utilized to increase public engagement, ensure fair access to information, and link people and organisations into platforms that allow participatory dialogue and conversation from afar (Stromer-Galley, 2000:48). For instance:

Electronic Balloting: Interactive video communications allow new ways of voting, which will improve democracy with great care. Feedback polling should be used as a reliable tool for civic education during public discussions on the questions of the neighbourhood or national referenda. If the latest video technology is to be used electronically, we can do best to put immersive settings into the neighbourhood assembly halls or school rooms where too much polling takes place – and reserve home voting rights for those who are disabled.

Television Town Meetings and a Civic Communications Cooperative: Since scale is in part a feature of communication, electronic communication enhancements can provide alternatives to scale challenges. Despite the risks it poses, current telecommunications technology has the

capability to be used as a vehicle for public debate at the regional and national levels. This comprises “cable television wiring in houses, the availability of low-frequency and satellite transmissions in places outside of normal transmission or cable, and interactive video, computer, and information retrieval capabilities” (Barber,1984:274).

2.5.3 Civic Education

Many scholars, commentators, non-governmental organizations, including the government, have recently shifted their attention to the relationship between civic education and public participation in local governance. They are informed by a majority of classical political theorists, arguing that citizens are made rather than born (Haag, 2000:76).

Also in his theory, Barber proposed that government’s funds be invested in reviving community views and civic education platforms. Barber (1984) state that the concept of democracy has been linked with civic education and the transformation of private people into citizens, from the period of the Ancient Greeks. There is only one way to democracy, and that is education, writes Barber.

According to Barber (1984:234), civic education can take place in three forms: through formal education (institutional schooling in civics, history, and citizenship); private-sphere social activity; and participatory politics itself. Formal education is where the citizens are educated about the nation's constitution, legal system, its political history, its culture, and political practice. Private-sector social activity promotes emotive linkages that underpin unitary democracy, judgmental measures beneficial to representative systems, and types of public thought fundamental to healthy democracy. Participatory politics itself; this is where civic education fully and successfully take form (Barber,29184:235). It should be emphasised that education associated with political participation is usually called civic education and it has a strong ancient support in its account. Sparks (1997:81) state that civic education, in its most traditional form, entails teaching people the basics of the political structure in which they reside. Also, Barber (1984:348) pointed out that local institutions are the vital practice field for democracy.

By quoting De Tocqueville, he argues that municipal institutions are the foundation of free states. A country can create a free government, but it cannot have the values of freedom without a municipal institution. Moreover, Barber (1984:342) maintains that these institutions in civic education must identify ways to maintain citizen engagement and encourage public civic discourse. Barber contends that it is the process of public involvement itself that will motivate

and educate the public to take greater responsibility for themselves and their electoral processes. Barber acknowledges that civic education and transitional leadership would be required to ease the shift from undemocratic hierarchical decision-making systems (so common and fundamental in representative democracy) to systems in which people will engage fairly (Haag, 200:140-141).

2.5.4 Representative Democracy

As Rousseau cautioned, the moment the people consent to a representative system, they lose their freedom. This is because representation is irreconcilable with freedom since it delegates and thus betrays political will at the expense of true self-government and sovereignty (Barber, 1984:12). Hence, Benjamin Barber rejected representative democracy and formulated a theory which he argues is a more participatory type of democracy intended eventually to replace representative democracy. In essence, representative government, according to Barber (1984:109), is more similar to dictatorship than to democracy.

In a quest to substantiate his arguments, Barber names Hobbes (1588-1679) and Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) as liberals who rejected participation but sought democracy – which Barber deems to be the biggest problem of liberalism's paradoxes. Hobbes (England, 1588–1679) proposed that government is the outcome of individual acts and human qualities, and that it is driven primarily by interest. De Tocqueville (1835) was a classical liberal who supported parliamentary government and opposed democracy's extremes.

According to Barber (1984), the main justification why representative democracy is not democratic is that ordinary citizens are not able to make joint decisions. Their public engagement is only restricted to voting, and that is motivated by deceptive advertising strategies primarily funded by cooperates. It stifles public involvement and citizenship while promoting passivity among people who hand over their autonomy to representatives. The elected officials, in essence, rule by self-interest, bargaining and exchange rather than the pursuit of the common good. He claims that in representative democracy, there are only two types of people: leaders and followers, and that the effectiveness of representation is dependent on this clear separation of roles. Take the lead, follow, or get out of the way. (Haskell, 2001:100).

Barber (1984:297) writes that representative government expects the worst of people: it considers them incompetent to make choices on their own and they need to be saved from themselves. People are not permitted to be creative or to engage in the production of a

community political decision. Representatives, bureaucrats, and judges dictate what is just in society, not in public ends. Civic virtue is still present, but it is now characterized by reciprocal control or accountability.

Through the initiative and referendum participatory modes the electorate does not have a fair opportunity to participate; instead, they are subjected to individualism. Citizens then continue to vote based on their secluded verdicts, not after a beneficial public debate including collaboration and democratic participation. At its peak, Barber claims, the representative democracy is a hunt for great leadership. But this hunt is turning people into submissive watchdogs. Representative democracy, he claims, is based on precautionary governance rather than participation, private benefits rather than public interest, and limited government rather than participatory citizenship (Danecki, 2011:35).

Emphasized by Barber, representative democracy is basically inconsistent with individual liberty, since the citizens freely surrender their freedom to selected representatives and the administrations they establish; it is conflicting with fairness, as persons with the most possessions regularly win the elections and participate in legislative politics; and it is antithetical to social justice, as actual justice only exist in a participatory setting whereby citizens make well-versed decisions as equals in a deliberative setting. He also highlighted that representative democracy shelters control, separating citizens and restricting their input to the voting booth. This kind of system is treacherous to people's souls, as there is little to no public participation which is in agreement with the fully interdependent nature of people's lives and their desires for society (Haskell, 2001:88).

Below is a summary of forms of citizenship in both Thin and Strong Democracy.

	Representative democracy	Strong democracy
Citizen conceived	Legal person	Neighbours
Bound together by	Contract	Common-participatory activity

Related to government as	Sovereign but also subject	Active participants
By ties that are	Vertical (citizen to government)	Dialectical (levels vanish)
Political style	Distrustful, passive	Cooperative, active
Civic virtue	Accountability (reciprocal control)	Civility (reciprocal empathy and respect)
Status of citizenship	Discretionary (One among many)	Sovereign (The first among equals)
Ideal ground (actual ground is territory)	Common contract (Generic consensus)	Common talk, decision, work (Creative consensus)

Table 1: Forms of Citizenship

Source: Benjamin Barber (1984)

2.6 Critiques of Barber's Theory

Several participatory theorists have questioned Barber's view of participatory democracy, despite its strength. These theorists criticize Barber's inability to consider deep-rooted inequalities that impair involvement and communication in public life. As a case in point, most theorists bluntly condemn Barber's theory for prioritizing political equality over economic equality, and for believing that common talk and action will take place in the existence of capitalism's systemic inequality (Sparks, 1997:79). Moreover, Macpherson (1997:23) calls Barber's theory on participatory democracy a downward spiral. This is because Barber pushes us to act on faith, but faith appears to be a little fragile in this scenario. Also, Carroll (1987:1343) reported that Benjamin Barber disregards actions that threaten the structure and conducts of political institutions, that expose inequality and alienation within the community, that demand the independence of those who are less powerful, that seek to educate or change the mindsets of those who are more powerful, or that challenge the boundaries of politics.

Another theorist, Young (1990:79), highlighted that although she embraces Barber's theory of an inclusive society in which all people participate in civic debate and decision-making. She criticizes Barber for portraying the public sphere as one in which social and cultural dissimilarities must be submerged for seemingly impartial deliberation about the common good. Young writes that in Barber's strong democracy, the pursuit of particular interests, the advancement of certain demands, all must take effect within a context of community and common goal formed by the public domain (1990:117). She contends that this is questionable since the ruling/upper classes may represent their own views as embodying society as a whole (1990:59). She highlights the fact that public debates based on common goals and unity, rather than group affiliation and individual needs and wants, aid the viewpoints of ruling elites who monopolise the apparently common public.

Despite Young's critics, she admires Barber's ability to fight the liberal perspective of fragmented, self-interested individuals, arguing that it is pointless to substitute the liberal ideology with a fraudulent homogenizing ideal of society. Rather, Young calls for the formation of a diverse society (Sparks, 1997:80). She argues that the re-structuring of the democracy does not necessitate the formation of a common world whereby people abandon their specific group affiliations, backgrounds, and follow a mythical common good. Instead, she maintains that to foster an inclusive society, participatory theorists must promote the ideal of a heterogeneous democracy, in which people stand up and have their opinions recognized and accepted, even though they are not fully understood by some (Young, 1990:119).

According to Waligorski (1986:230), Barber's quote "*men and women who are not directly responsible through common deliberation, common decision, and common action for the policies that determine their common lives are not really free at all*" is democratically questionable and detrimental. He emphasizes that constraining and imposing participation and self-government on citizens is not in agreement with a 'free democratic society.' He made an example of Cairo, where some people dissociated themselves from political participation and avoided political engagements.

Also, Hadari (1985:940) argued that Barber's adversarial approach to government continues to be an unsettling limitation of his theory. Despite the fact that he supports improved public participation, he still acknowledges its disadvantages. Barber contends that participatory systems, are plainly burdened with the necessity for leadership, as a result of which he is self-contradictory on some of his arguments, according to Hadari (1985). Moreover, he argues that

Barber is struggling to convincingly topple representative democracy; rather he reorients it toward greater public and communal participation.

Despite the above criticism on Benjamin Barber's theory, this study is going to utilize Barber as leverage for the study's arguments on why public participation has been questionable in the sphere of local government in South Africa and how to move in the right direction. This is largely due to Barber's provision of a series of real-world measures toward increasing national, particularly local, public participation, ranging from regular neighbourhood meetings and public voting in of local politicians to a national initiative and referendum processes, each formed to allow public participation (beyond voting and representation).

He also challenges elitism and states that disguise themselves as democratic states, which is visible in local government in South Africa. As a result, he proposed a pertinent substitute to what he calls thin democracy (representative democracy). Barber's Strong Democracy: politics in the participatory mode- will be adopted as a panacea for South Africa's lingering democratic insufficiencies of liberal democracy. He proposes stronger a political engagement as a panacea, as well as a systemic reform in governance centred on wider citizen participation in decision-making.

The concept of Strong Democracy suggests a diverse and more dynamic response to this study. For instance, its focus on transformation and its intentions at understanding individuals not as abstract persons but as citizens, so that commonality and equality rather than separateness are the defining traits of human society (Barber,1984). As critics have pointed out, Benjamin Barber is not blind to economic inequality among citizens, but he calls for political equality first, followed by economic equality. He claims that by promoting Strong Democracy, politics surpasses economics, and that that once established strongly in the political and civic realm democracy can assure sufficient equality and justice to coexist with a variety of economic systems, even where the market permits or even fosters inequality (Barber,1984).

In the light of this research, the above critiques are insignificant since they promote Barber's position on political equality, which is followed by economic equality. Political equality is a democratic concept that underpins citizen involvement. Political equality advocates for the equal involvement of all local residents, and it highlights that participation is not confined to a specific set of people, regardless of their political affiliation, ideology, or status (Clapper, 1996:54).

Scholars such as Wu and Davis (2004:1) contend that independence, enshrined in civil liberties, is the vehicle for achieving economic liberty. The above authors maintain that the importance of political equality is that the society is free to make its own decisions, as they do not violate others' identical rights provided that they do not infringe on other's rights. In addition, the author tries to put the above theoretical framework to the test by examining the merits and demerits of the structures and processes in place to facilitate public participation in the IDP process in local government.

A detailed analysis of various aspects of Barber's participatory democracy, and its implementation in local government in South Africa, will demonstrate that democratic self-governance is necessary in South Africa, primarily in the local sphere. Barber's theory contends that not only ought individuals to engage actively in policy-making procedures, but also that this mechanism should not just be a bargaining exercise, where there is necessarily incompatibility between individual interests. He has viable institutions and policy solutions, for instance, civic education, the use of new communications technologies, proper leadership, a higher use of referendums or a compulsory civil service scheme, in order to improve public participation, interactive television, television town meetings and polling; more equal access to information; selection of some officials by lot; local control of many services; workplace democracy; and redesigning neighbourhoods to promote civic consciousness (Barber, 1984).

This research contends that participation, in some form or another, is the pillar of modern democratic government. Scholars such as Berry, Portney, and Thomson, 1993; Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs, 2004; Chaskin et al. 2001; Fung, 2004, emphasize that participatory structures foster democracy by assisting individuals in strengthening civic skills, growing awareness about civic problems, and fostering more educated and well-reasoned democratic decision-making. Walzer concludes that Barber's philosophy has undoubtedly had a major influence on the development of broad democratic theory.

He effectively identifies some of the liberal theory's shortcomings, especially its restricted universal access to government in a representative democracy. Self-government is a critical human responsibility that necessitates a wide range of skills and resources, and the perception of independence and accountability it brings is extremely beneficial. His theory includes the concept of transitory, variable, and changeable political knowledge, which is produced through a continuing machinery of democratic speaking, discussion, judgment, and participation (Barber, 1984:170). It implies a ruling that is not partial nor objective, but simply arises from

the kind of 'we' thinking that allows citizens to reframe. I conclude that Barber's theory of strong democracy is one of the most insightful alternatives to representative democracy.

2.7 Conclusion

The second chapter is centred on the theory that guide this research. This chapter begins by conceptualising democracy and its models, which will be important in chapter 4, when the researcher identifies which type of democracy is utilised in South Africa. Moreover, a detailed analysis of Benjamin Barber's theory was provided in this chapter. This chapter maintains the most powerful and compelling argument about strong democracy and thin democracy. Benjamin Barber's theory explains that citizens in a democratic state should partake in various activities, namely policy discussion, policy formulation, referendum involvement, assisting in the local and regional municipality and political bureaus, assisting and campaigning for political parties and interest groups. On the other hand, he highlighted that representative (thin) democracy shelters control, separates citizens, and restricts their input to the voting booth. Despite the criticism on his theory, the contribution of Barber's theory will be used in Chapter 4 by linking his theory with the realities of public participation in the IDP process in local government in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of the research discussed Benjamin Barber's theory of strong democracy, which guides the research. The previously outlined theory of strong democracy is divided into vital sections such as civic education, technology, and participatory institutions, including arguments on representative democracy. All these sections play a major role in the research and will be employed throughout the research.

In this chapter, the nature and scope of citizen participation in the IDP in local government will be examined in depth. The chapter will also provide a discussion of the mechanisms and procedures in place to promote citizen engagement in the local government IDP process. Moreover, the objective of the chapter is to examine the structures and processes in place to facilitate public participation in the IDP process in local government.

To categorize public participation in local government in IDP, the research employs Sherry Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation. In the process of categorizing, the researcher will still draw from Benjamin Barber's theory to support Arnstein. Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) offers this research the methods for measuring the level of participation through eight rungs: manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, collaboration, delegated authority, and, at the highest level, citizen control. This chapter also aims to draw attention to the connection between public participation and the IDP. Moreover, this chapter highlights the legislative framework and policies that influence citizen participation in South Africa, generally and specifically concerning the integrated development plan (IDP).

After more than 25 years of democracy in South Africa, the country is still struggling with unemployment, inequality, and poverty. As required by the White Paper (1998), the local government must play a developmental role in addressing these longstanding issues at the local level. To attain this, good governance is expected. The term "good governance" is defined by Sako and Olowu as a set of principles, laws, and structures by which a community governs its economic, governmental, and social matters involving communication in and among the government, local society, and corporate sector (2002:37). In this research, good governance is viewed as a democratic government's realization of its most important development policy goals: to build its people sustainably and allow public participation in the process. The value

of good governance in South Africa is highlighted by the accessibility of local government to the citizens: the nexus of service delivery. As outlined by the Constitution (1996) and the Municipal Systems Act, local sphere of government it is where the government interacts with the people directly and regularly by providing services. Citizens should therefore evaluate their municipalities based on their capacity to deliver essential services such as water, power, and sanitation, as these are tangible indications of service delivery contentment (Mbanyele, 2021). Hence it can be highlighted that a municipality serves a pivotal role in the development of its citizens and acts as the epicentre of service delivery. This is largely due to the fact that local government is arguably the branch of government nearest to the public (Schwella, 2019: 1). As a result, this research argues that for a municipality to be able to perform its developmental role as contemplated in the Constitution, local democracy is vital.

The term local democracy is seen as an extension of democracy to the lowest levels of government. Due to the fact that the local sphere brings government closest to residents, local democracy enhances public participation in political life (Muronda, 2007:26). It is worth noting that the concept of local democracy in the autonomy principle is not solely dependent on elections. The strength of local democracy relies on local residents' ability to partake in the municipal matters and to keep councillors and politicians accountable (Visser, 2005:98). The above implies that local democracy should be concerned with the basic aspects such as citizen participation, accountability, and transparency.

According to the researcher, public participation is a critical component of local democracy. In support, Draai and Taylor (2009:114) add that building local democracy should be a core function of the sphere of local government, as mandated by numerous statutory mandates, and municipalities should implement policies and processes to communicate with local residents, businesses, and non-governmental organizations on a continuous basis. Barber's (1984) Strong Democracy theory supports the statement, stating that to reside in a strong democracy, citizens must participate in all aspects of political life, primarily at the local level. He adds that, the citizen is by nature a we-thinker, and to think of the we is to constantly modify how interests are regarded and products described (Barber, 1984: 153). He implies that public engagement is important in the local sphere and for municipalities to stay in contact with the residents. Also, it improves local democracy, by continuously incorporating diverse interests, opinions, viewpoints, and perspectives into a municipal council's policy-making agenda (Mohanty & Tandon, 2006).

Adding to the above, municipalities have to play a key role as policymakers, leaders, and visionaries, as well as institutions of local democracy. Municipalities have to partner with the residents and organizations within the municipality to identify long-term solutions to address their economic, social, and material requirements and enhance their living standards. For local government to be functional, it is vital for local municipalities to effectively carry out their developmental mandate outlined in Section 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). To carry out this mandate, an IDP, amongst other means, should be adopted as a method for maintaining long-term service delivery.

The concept of local government was first introduced by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) Section 153 as an essential feature of the local system. According to the Constitution, Section 27 (1996), the government shall take fair measures to ensure that all South Africans have proper accommodation, health care, schooling, food, water, and social security, within available means.

Developmental local government is referred to as local government dedicated to collaborating with residents and organizations within the community to identify viable solutions to address their social, economic, and material concerns and to strengthen their living standards, according to the White Paper on Local Government (1998: 17). This implies that municipalities are required by law to include civil society in the creation of municipal budgets. At the core of this developmental local government is the need for citizen involvement in municipal processes. This encompasses mechanisms such as the integrated development planning (IDP) process, the budgeting process, and decisions about the provision of municipal services. Developmental local government entails that municipalities should become more proactive, innovative, and generally effective in the way they operate (Njenga, 2009:3).

According to Visser (2009:10), there are four interconnected features of developmental local government. The first one is to enhance economic growth and social development since the local government is required to exercise its responsibilities and duties in a manner that has the greatest effect on the community's economic prosperity and social progress. This stems from the fact that local government has a significant impact on the social and economic well-being of local communities through its conventional tasks (service delivery and regulation). To realize social and economic development, municipalities have to provide basic services such as water, sanitation, and housing.

The second feature is integrating and coordinating. This means that municipal officials should bring together and promote development carried out by either state or non-state actors in the municipality. Integrated development planning is among the most essential ways of obtaining enhanced coordination and integration. The third and most vital feature, according to the researcher, is democratizing development, and citizen participation. The White Paper (1998) states that in this feature, the local sphere should become an instrument in which people strive to realize their idea of the type of community they want to live in. Municipalities must take an integrative approach to facilitate public participation, particularly policies targeted at reducing barriers to and openly supporting the engagement of disadvantaged people in the local community. The above can be achieved if municipalities discover strategies to structure involvement in ways that benefit rather than hinder the delivery process. Lastly, leading and learning, states that municipalities must develop social capital, encourage, and develop learning and information-sharing opportunities.

Municipalities must establish participatory institutions such as ward committees and IDP representation forums (discussed in detail on pg. 52), among others, to make the above aspects a reality. Barber epitomizes this approach when he encourages residents and government leaders to establish institutions that expressly involve residents in decision-making. This will therefore integrate strangers into citizen-neighbors through collective dialogues and projects; these participatory institutions encourage people to imagine and define a common future in terms of really common goods (Barber, 1984).

Although the data above suggests that there has to be development in local municipalities and citizen participation, according to the researcher, power shortages and water supply failures have become regular events in various municipalities; a weak road, rail, and port infrastructure is stifling an already crippled economy. According to the literature reviewed above, a lack of public participation is a contributing factor to the lack of development in many local municipalities. The next section fully discusses the institutions in place to enhance participation in the IDP and its legislation..

3.2 Public Participation at Local Government

This section explores public participation in local government because it is critical for the democratization of social values, as well as proper planning and fulfilment of public needs. In support, Barber's theory, shown in Chapter 2, calls for public participation in practically all

aspects of government. Below is how public participation works in local government in South Africa.

Brynard (2009:40) defines public participation as a procedure in which the community's common amateurs exert influence on the decisions concerning the community's basic affairs. These common amateurs can be viewed as people who do not have a paid office, riches, particular knowledge, or any other official power source other than their own numbers. These common amateurs are non-elite citizens who obtain some power because of their engagement in the process.

In South Africa, municipalities are expected Municipalities in South Africa should generate a sense of municipal governance that shifts from rigid representational government to participatory governance, and has to, as a result, promote as well as provide possibilities for the locals, institutions, as well as other players in the municipality to take part in local matters (Von Lieres,2008:24). The statement stems from the fact that representation undermines independence, because it delegated and therefore alienated political will at the expense of actual self-government and sovereignty. For the transition to be visible, citizens must govern or, at the very least, be actively involved in government (Barber, 2004:144). After the transformation, municipalities should foster inclusivity, openness, access, deliberation, common decisions, and transparency, among other things (Oni et al., 2020:5).

A number of legislative frameworks and regulations mandate public participation in all municipalities (outlined on pg. 48). In this regard, it should be highlighted that it is an obligation for municipalities to involve the residents, and a legitimate right of all citizens to participate in the affairs of their respective municipalities. Participation also aids in creating a knowledgeable and competent community with a sense of control of government initiatives and programs (Nembambula (2014:149). Public participation, to a considerable degree, activates information flow across all interested parties in the planned development (the public, government, and non-government organizations), resulting in improved peaceful coexistence and relationships between the participants, as well as engrained support for the government and the proposed development (Barber, 1984).

Additionally, Malatji and Rogolane (2021:34) state that public participation requires the municipality to have the necessary public platforms for the communities to engage on, and the communities need to be capacitated on how they should get involved in issues that affect their lives. Public participation is important considering the number of priorities the communities

have. However, in the context of South Africa, the researcher argues that the democratic government has frequently misplaced the explanation of public participation or left it in the hands of consultants.

This means the citizens are left to understand on their own the way public participation in their respective municipalities operates. And if participation occurs, politicians often distort the notion of public participation to promote their own interests. Meaningful community participation may be jeopardized when participation is reduced to simply endorsing the municipality's predetermined objectives and programmes (Île & Mapuva, 2010:40).

Barber (2004: 17) argues that public participation is limited, because the representative democracy utilised in South Africa draws the power of ownership and self-rule away from those who by the very name of democracy should possess it, the citizenry. Furthermore, the representative elite reduce citizens to the masses, a mouldable political body which exists as an instrumental tool for privatised political ends. Arguably, representative democracy in South Africa, especially in local government, has led to inadequacy of participation, or municipalities' inability to satisfy community demands leading to a low degree of trust. This means that the greater the public's involvement in local affairs, the greater the public's confidence in the government.

3.3 Conceptualizing Integrated Development Planning IDP

In this section, the concept of Integrated Development Planning and its result, the Integrated Development Plan, are explored in the context of South Africa. The section demonstrates the extent to which both plans and processes are employed in South Africa to promote development and alleviate the injustices brought about by apartheid planning.

The Integrated Development Plan was introduced, which is an essential notion in municipalities in South Africa since it encompasses all of the components of developmental local government (Nokanyo, 2006:58). Scholars like Muronda (2017:50) and Asha (2014:808) allude that the IDP was introduced to also deal with service delivery issues. This is because, following the 1994 elections in South Africa, the local government's responsibilities grew considerably, and great emphasis was placed on the development role of local municipalities.

Integrated development planning is used as a tool to define and prioritise the mission and goals of a municipality over a span of 5 years through participatory processes and budget coordination (Mathebula 2018). The idea of the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) was first

adapted in 1996 as a developmental plan for local municipalities in South Africa. IDP is the primary planning instrument for all planning and decision in municipalities across the country. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act (2000) Section 25 stipulates that “each municipal council must, after the start of its elected term, adopt a single, inclusive, and strategic plan (Integrated Development Plan or IDP) for the development of the municipality which links, integrates and coordinates plans and takes into account proposals for the development of the municipality, and which aligns the resources and capacity of the municipality with the implementation of the said plan.”

There are various definitions of the IDP; the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000), for example, describes the IDP as the key strategic action plan, which directs and instructs all planning and development, along with all decisions with relation to planning, administration, and advancement in the municipality. According to the White Paper (1998), integrated development planning is a method whereby a municipality may prepare a development plan for the short, medium, and long term. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012) define IDP as a community-driven planning mechanism in which residents play a key role in the development of the overall plan that governs all municipal plans, budgets, and decisions.

The nature and structure of IDP is to ensure that municipalities fully communicate and comprehend the development and service delivery needs of the population for which they are responsible. Integrated development planning entails various players and sectors cooperating under a single vision and rearranging individual efforts to achieve a common goal. This means that the integrated development planning is a product of a co-operative procedure among the citizens, municipality, and other stakeholders (Muronda, 2017:50). This result is that local municipalities been able to recognize development projects that will directly have a positive impact on the community (Mojapelo, 2004:24). One of the characteristics of IDP is that it places a high emphasis on the connections between improvement and implementation of democracy (DPLG, 2005:141).

Craythorne (2003:151) highlights that IDP functions as the main strategic management and guideline for the local government. It is enacted by the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (MSA) and it overrules all other programmes that drive development in the local sphere. Legislation stipulates that every newly elected municipal council that come into office has to prepare its own IDP, which will direct them for the five years that they are in office. As a result, the IDP is connected to councillors' terms of office (DPLG, 1998/1999:6). According to the White

Paper on Local Government (1998), there are a number of motives for integrated development planning. These motives are founded on the acknowledgement by the White Paper (1998) that local municipalities face many obstacles and that an IDP will assist municipalities in meeting these obstacles.

There are six key explanations why municipalities should have an IDP: first, the IDP will assist the local municipality in focusing on the most pressing needs of local residents while considering the availability of resources at local government. Moreover, the local municipality must identify the most cost-effective options to provide services, and funds would be spent on addressing the root causes of issues in communities. For instance, a municipality may plan to spend money on constructing a canal that will protect homes from flooding during the rainy season. The budgetary pressure on the municipality's emergency care would be reduced as a result.

Second, the IDP determines the communities that are underserved and underdeveloped, as well as where local funds can be invested. Since all relevant parties are involved in the IDP process, implementation is made faster. The IDP offers an impasse resolution technique to assure that initiatives and programmes are executed effectively. Furthermore, the IDP assists in the creation of practical project plans dependent on resource availability. Third, the government departments and non-government sectors are ready to invest in local municipalities that have a well-defined developmental plan.

Fourth, Tau (2013:188) states that municipalities have should have an IDP as it strengthens democracy. Improving democracy does not imply voting every five years or whenever there is a by-election in a municipality, it also means that the communities must be involved in the decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation process. Decisions are taken democratically and transparently with the direct involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

Fifth, it helps to overcome the legacy of apartheid. This is because the apartheid era constructed municipalities in such a way that it was hard to develop them, hence the requirement to develop municipalities is influenced by skewed settlement pattern where bulk services cannot be supplied. Therefore, municipal funds are used to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas and to provide services to the vulnerable.

Lastly, to promotes co-ordination between local, provincial, and national government. According to the Constitution (1996:21) in South Africa, government is “constituted as national, provincial and local spheres of government which are distinctive, interdependent and

interrelated.” In chapter 7, it is stated that developmental role of municipalities is in the power of local government. However, the Constitution (1996) alludes that development is also duty of national and provincial level government, hence chapter 3 highlights the concept of co-operative governance. Tau (2013:188) states that stable relations across the three spheres of government are required for services to be given to the poor and marginalized in communities on a long-term basis.

An additional advantage of the IDP is that it guides and enhances performance and measurement and guarantees prioritization and adequate resource-sharing. According to the SAAPAM Conference Paper (2013:177), integrated development planning is a process that should be interpreted and carried out in compliance with the phases mentioned below.

The **analysis phase**: this phase mainly addresses and profiles the existing issues faces by the community. Basic services, criminal activity, and unemployment are examples of these concerns. Then, the listed issues are evaluated and prioritized in terms of what is urgent and what must be addressed first.

At the finalization of this process, the municipality must be able to provide in detail the key concerns and difficulties, as well as their roots and data on available resources (Mashamba, 2008). This understanding of issues permits the municipality to construct an accurate and most knowledgeable decision in identifying suitable treatments. The involvement of community members at this point is critical because without it, the municipality will misdiagnose the community's service delivery problems and needs (Mashamba, 2008). The IDP guide pack (2001:15) draws attention to the scarce resources in various municipalities and emphasises that municipalities are not capable of tackling each and every issue that is identified. Considering this, it is extremely critical to accurately identify and analyse the priority issues, the prioritisation process permits the municipality to distribute the scarce resources to the issues and concerns that have been identified as more essential or pressing.

The second phase is the **strategies phase**. In the progress of this phase, the municipality starts to work on the issues outlined in phase one (White Paper on Local Government, 1998). This happens after the municipality has addressed the inputs of various stakeholders in the community on the service delivery concerns and issues. The municipality then progresses to formulating a “strategic intervention” needed to address those defined problems and needs. After deciding where it wants to go and what it has to do to get there, the municipality must figure out how to get there (IDP Guide Pack, 2001:16).

This stage also entails debates on the importance and implementation of policy in the local sphere, in order to determine the best strategies (Dlamini & Reddy, 2008:8). Manyaka and Madzivhandila (2013:178) emphasize that the municipality should develop a vision which will outline what the municipality would like to accomplish in the long term after it has tackled the issues stated in phase one. Once the municipality has determined the best strategies for accomplishing its development goals, this results in the identification of specific projects (IDP Guide Pack, 2001: 16).

The third phase is the **project phase**. In this stage, the municipality puts emphasis on the strategic invention created during phase two (White Paper on Local Government, 1998). Following the definition of strategic developmental objectives, the development of strategies, and the identification of objectives as required by phase two, the municipality must properly structure projects for execution in order to achieve the strategic plans defined (Manyaka & Madzivhandila, 2013:178).

Mashamba (2008) highlights that this strategic invention should create projects that will solve the service delivery needs and issues of the residents. He emphasizes that every project that the municipality carries out has to be implemented by following funds, time, and costs, and who will benefit and who will manage this project. According to Dlamini and Reddy (2018:9), in this phase the main players are the IDP representative forum. The municipality must guarantee that the projects chosen are directly connected to the key problems and objectives stated in the previous phases. Furthermore, it must include the following information: who will gain from the initiative; how much will it be; how will it be financed; how long will it take to finish; and who will oversee the project?

To assess the performance and the impact of each initiative on the everyday life of the citizens, clear objectives and indicators must be established. The fourth phase is called the integration phase. This phase is vital as all the developmental plans are now integrated. All the identified projects from phase two will be checked again, to paint an overview of the development plans. Mashamba (2008) believes that this phase should also include the integration of other sector plans, including but not limited to the following: disaster management plan, integrated transport plan (ITP) and local economic development (LED) strategy.

The last phase is the **approval phase**. In this stage, the IDP is submitted to the municipal council for review and approval. Before accepting a finalized IDP, the council may approve a draft for public comment before approving the final document. Mashamba (2008)

acknowledges the importance of public involvement in the IDP process, noting that the municipal councillor should involve the community inputs and opinions before implementing the IDP. The IDP Guide Pack (2001:17) states; when the IDP is changed in response to public comments, the council shall evaluate the IDP for approval.

Below is the diagrammatic overview of the Phases of the Integrated development planning process:

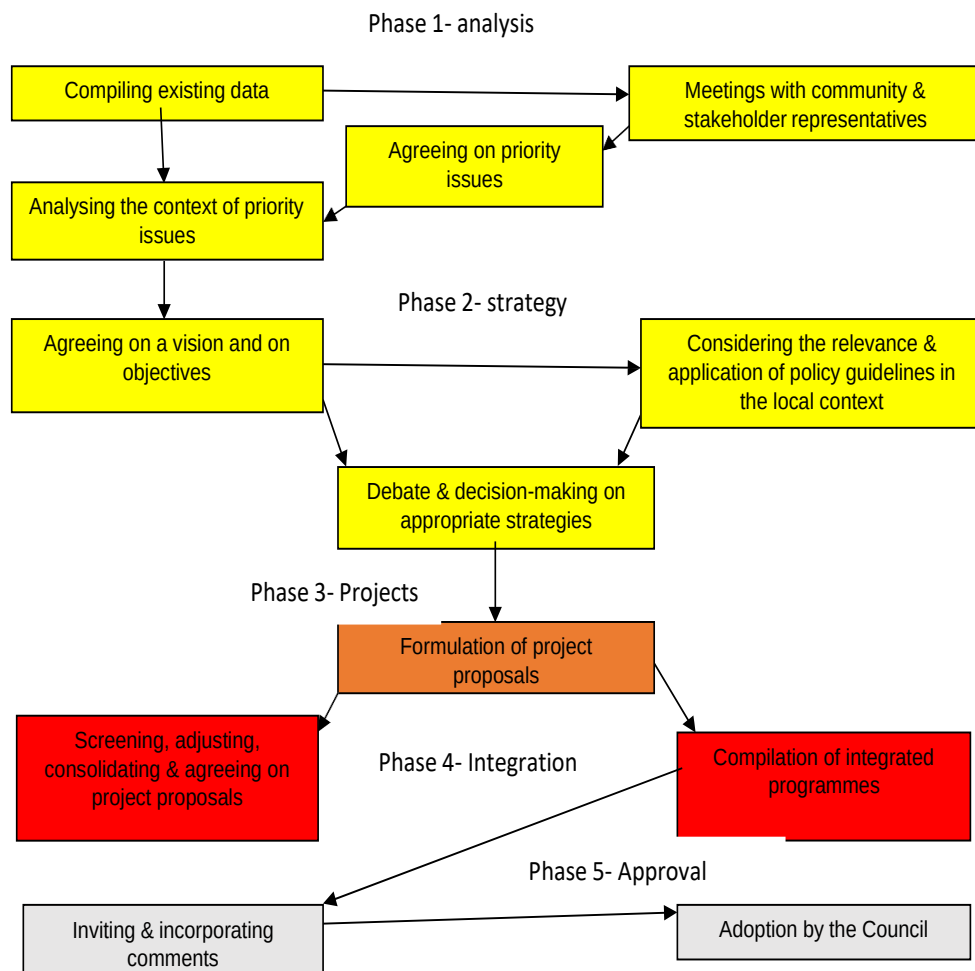


Figure 1: phases of IDP formulation process.

Source: (DWA, 2009).

The research establishes that despite the fact that the IDP was specifically designed to better municipal service delivery, it is important to note that several municipalities encounter an increasing imbalance between need and supply when it comes to services. This growing disparity can be ascribed to a variety of causes, such as the ineffective implementation of the

Integrated Development Plan as a service delivery mechanism. The African National Congress complained in 2019 that the IDPs had failed to meet expectations in terms of aiding local development (ANC, 2019). The research shows that the process is not as simple as the policy documents and the opinions of those who drafted the legislation suggest. Hence the next chapter of this thesis will focus on issues related to the execution of IDPs in South African local government.

3.4 Legislative Framework Supporting Participation in the IDP Process

This subsection gives a summary of several pieces of law in South Africa that pertain to community engagement and Integrated Development Planning. They provide guidelines on what is expected of municipalities, and how they should be managed; on how services should be planned, budgeted, and delivered to communities – including how the political and administrative leadership should conduct themselves and the businesses of municipalities – for effective, efficient administration and management in municipalities. This research is guided by the legislative framework stated below.

3.4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108 of 1996)

All constitutional rights that underlie the IDP and other legislation on public participation and engagement are found in Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, sections 152, 153, plus Chapter 2 sections 26, 27, 29, 30, and 32 (Dyum, 2020:25). According to Section 152 (e) of the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the main purpose of municipalities is to encourage participation of communities and community organizations in local affairs. To support the above-mentioned, Section 16 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that “*everyone has the right to freedom of expression.*” This implies that citizens have the right to express their opinions, whether or not they agree with the government's policies, as long as they do not do so in an unlawful manner by violating the limits set forth in Section 16(2) of the Constitution.

Section 152 of the Constitution (1996) states that the developing local government system should encourage community engagement in all of its acts in order to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of its citizens (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). People should be involved in the preparation, formulation, implementation, and monitoring of the IDP, thus encouraging, and empowering them.

Moreover, Section 153 of the Constitution (1996) posits that “each municipality should structure and manage its administration, budgeting, and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community.” The section also stipulates that the municipalities should promote citizen engagement in the matters of municipalities.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) clearly stipulates that municipalities must be accountable, accessible, and responsive in providing basic services to communities. A municipality should therefore make decisions about the community's most pressing needs in a participative approach. Unfortunately, data reveal that citizens have not reaped the benefits of the Constitution in a satisfactory manner, partially due to extreme poverty, but primarily due to the state's failure to provide essential services.

Arguably, the Constitution of South Africa establishes the foundations for a democratic government that is both representative and participatory. Representative democracy takes form when the residents elect representatives to embody their opinions. This means that the local residents render their power to the representatives, since they speak and act on their account. In terms of participatory democracy, the people are supposed to be involved in the decision-making process in the municipalities.

3.4.2 White Paper on Local Government – 1998 (WPLG)

The White Paper Policy Document aims to make up for historical injustices in local government caused by the apartheid system. The White Paper, according to Barber (1984), is virtuous as it explicitly tackles liberal anxieties. The notion of developmental local government and public participation will be used to achieve this. As a case in point, the White Paper lays forth eight principles that may be used to objectively lead public service institutions, not just in terms of service delivery standards, but also in terms of public engagement. These are: Consultation, Service standards, Access, Courtesy, Information, Openness and transparency, Redress, and Value-for-money (White Paper, 1998:35).

In doing so, municipalities should be accountable for fostering community engagement in topics that impact both society and local government. Moreover, Section B of the White Paper on Local Government (1998) proposes methods in which local government can include their people and civic groups in the matters of the municipality as voters. These methods encompass but not limited to IDP forums, Ward committees and budget consultations. It also obliges

municipalities to create legislation to guarantee community engagement in policy inception, development, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of programs (RSA, 1998:33).

It can be said that the White Paper on local government is informed by participatory democratic theory. This is because it aims at creating full participation of citizens, particularly in segments of society that are historically viewed as marginalised, in their self-governance. Moreover, the research argues that a stronger sense of civic effectiveness and empowerment can be experienced by people who actively engage in their self-governance if the White Paper would be followed in practice.

3.4.3 The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998

The Municipal Structures Act requires municipalities around the country to create measures to encourage community and civic participation in local government affairs. For instance, the local government: Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) make allowances for the formation of ward committees as a means of fostering community engagement in municipal operations and programmes such as integrated development planning.

According to Tau (2013:152), the Municipality Structures Act (1998) highlights the necessity for municipalities to legally provide for the right to: (1) “contribute to the decision-making process of the municipality; (2) be informed of decisions of the municipal council & (3) disclosure of the state of affairs of the municipality.” In addition, the Municipal Structures Amendment Act 51 of 2002 broadens participation to cover extraordinary instances where the community requests a specific service. Even though this may remain a major problem, Section 16 encourages all municipalities across South Africa to empower local citizens to play an active role in the municipality (Lekala, 2019:53).

3.4.4 Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000)

In order to enhance local governance, the Municipal Systems Act states that municipalities must develop and nurture a culture of public involvement in which communities are given platforms to voice their demands through their representatives (Tau, 2013:158). The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000), Chapter 4 (Section 16) stipulates that each municipality must provide a suitable space for local citizens to partake in the development and decision-making processes for development projects undertaken by the municipality. Theoretically, the local people should be involved in the development and enforcement of a municipality's Integrated Development Plan.

According to the Act's preamble, the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 was enacted to lay forth the key ideas, structures, and mechanisms that validate developmental local government and to allow municipalities to advance gradually into the social and economic progress of the citizens, and the supply of basic services to all people, particularly the underprivileged and the disenfranchised groups.

The Municipal System Act of 2000 (Chapter 4) promotes the establishment of a culture of municipal governance that is linked to formal representative government and a participatory governance strategy. Hence the municipalities are obliged to promote and provide opportunities for residents to engage in municipal activities, including the formulation, enforcement, and analysis of its Integrated Development Plan under Chapter 5. Furthermore, the Municipal Systems Act (2000) Sections 53 and 54 (Chapter 7) enables effective and open public administration in the municipalities. In brief, it can be argued that the Municipal Systems Act (2000) is the cornerstone of municipal procedures, ideologies, and governance systems in the local government across South Africa. As a result, it is reasonable to argue that it serves as the day-to-day policy document.

3.4.5 Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of (2003)

The Municipal Financial Management Act (2003) is by far the most relevant framework for regulating and managing financial issues at the municipal level in South Africa. The Municipal Financial Management Act (2003) was legislated with the overall goal of “modernizing budget and financial management practices in municipalities in order to maximize the capacity of municipalities to deliver services and ensuring transparent, sustainable, strategic, sound, co-operative, and accountable financial management in municipalities and related entities as listed in Section 3 of the Act” (Van der Waldt, 2014: 68).

Chapter 4 of the Municipal Financial Management Act points out that after the presentation of a yearly budget to a local council, the accounting officer of the municipality must (a) in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act (i) make public the annual budget and the documents referred to in Section 21 (ii) invite the local community to submit representations in connection with the budget.

Moreover, the Act highlights that when the annual budget is presented, the municipal council must consider the opinions of: (a) the local community; (b) the National Treasury, the appropriate provincial treasury, and any provincial or national organs of state or municipalities that submitted budget proposals. According to Tau (2013:189), it is evident that Financial

Management Act (2003) ensures municipalities comply to the principles of revenue and spending management. He maintains that for excellent handling of revenue and expenditure and resource allocation to be a practice, municipalities through their IDP must link budgeting and resources so that projects can be integrated.

3.4.6 Draft National Policy Framework

The Draft National Policy Framework for Public Engagement (SA, 2005:1) urges municipalities to utilise the types of public participation that truly liberate people, rather than being merely a sign of consultation or manipulation. It ensures formal construction of public involvement in local government. As a results, to enhance public participation, the policy framework outlines three techniques that municipalities can utilize. Firstly, it requires local municipalities to establish clear channels of communication between officials and their residents. The policy framework sets out that this should be accomplished by implementing a community complaints management system. This system will allow community members to voice their discontent with the way the municipality is operated (Ngwane, 2017:6).

Secondly, the framework requires municipalities to establish participatory institutions, such as ward committees, which are adequately constituted and nurtured to effectively contribute to the administration of the municipality on behalf of the community. Research shows that ward committees, when meticulously organized and properly funded, may be a highly effective means of involving residents in municipal affairs. However, studies show that there are several obstacles to the effective operation of ward committees. For instance, the ward committees can be areas of conflict caused by partisan politics, or they are under-resourced and under-capitalized. Chapter 8 of the policy framework give details on how ward committees can be resourced, and representatives capacitated.

Finally, the policy framework argues that municipalities should “empower and support Integrated Development Planning representative forums (IDP Forums) wherein they will be involved in municipal development planning, budgeting, performance management, performance assessment as well as service delivery” (Ngwane,2017). These platforms encompass civic groups, community development workers (CDW), traditional leaders, and more.

It is worth mentioning that the above statutory frameworks are informed by both representative and participatory democracy. However, in most cases, representivity overshadows participation. Hence many municipalities have failed to fulfil their responsibility to be

accountable and responsive in satisfying their constitutional obligations. The research highlight that for the failure, drawing from Strong Democracy, is that municipalities utilize democracy which is representative instead of participatory. The term representivity' refers to how well a cognitive decision-making procedure or body reflects various constituent groups. (Sheldon & Honeycutt, 2019).

The chapter highlights that, in theory, the role of public participation in integrated development planning is properly addressed in the majority of these legislative frameworks. However, the reality is that the legislations meant to involve the public are not being implemented satisfactorily, and municipalities are failing to entice public participation. As a results, the level of dysfunction and dissatisfaction with the sphere of local government has resulted in widespread service delivery protests, a sign of frustration by marginalized communities with poor service delivery.

3.5 Participatory Institutions to Improve Community Participation

Governments all around the globe have implemented institutionalised participatory institutions to allow citizens to engage in the governing and monitoring of governments, especially in the local sphere. These participatory institutions have been transformational, highlighting the growth of debates on participation and accountability. Commonly protected by the policies, these are structures where the people are encouraged to partake in the governing process. To support the above, the work of Benjamin Barber (1984) argues for institutionalised participatory spaces, which in return facilitate strong democracy. He argues that these spaces must be effective, in a sense that they are people-focussed.

Like Benjamin Barber (1984), Gaventa (2006:26) states those participatory institutions should give an opportunity for individuals to influence policies that impact their lives. Fung and Wright (2001:30) contend that well-formed and effective institutions should (i) involve the communities on the matters that affect them (ii) create a bottom-up participatory approach to engage the community directly; and (iii) develop a deliberative approach in which decisions are required on the basis of mutual access, participation, and impact on results. They also point out these participatory institutions should have the influence to make effective decisions, and this power entails state support to be effective and sustainable over time. Scholars like Cornwall (2002), Gaventa (2006) and Ballard (2008) have identified invited and invented spaces of participation.

In support of the arguments made by Barber (1984), Cornwall (2002) argued that to broaden participation, invited space should be established. He refers to the invited space as a place in which individuals are invited to engage by an extensive variety of authorities, whether they are states, international agencies, or quasi groups. As stated in Barber's theory, one can consider town hall meetings, neighbourhood-assembly, and referendums as invited spaces.

In the context of South Africa, the concept of invited spaces is shaped as a requirement which enhances community participation; it is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and codified in policies as participatory governance for local government (Piper, 2011:32). Theoretically, citizens have the right and responsibility to participate in local government decision-making, and they are encouraged to do so through sub-councils, ward committees, petitions, public meetings, written submissions, and online forms in order to influence the council functions and ensure that local government policies, by-laws, and projects are relevant to their needs (Pypers & Bassuday, 2016:3).

In reality, authors like Cornwall (2004) and Sinwell (2010) argue that the "invited spaces are pseudo-democratic in that they suppress certain voices while serving the interests of those in power: far from providing an arena in which all voices can be equally raised and heard, deliberative [invited] spaces are discursively constituted in ways that permit only particular voices and versions to enter into debate." Lemaski (2017) puts forward an argument that in various local municipalities, invited spaces are used to rubber-stamp decisions already adopted by municipal officials and promote political elitism. This results in residents resorting to invented spaces of participation such as marches, lobbying, and demonstrations, to make their concerns public and noticed.

As far as invented spaces are concerned, Benjamin Barber (1984) would question their existence, as he advocates only for invited spaces (participatory institutions), as he argues that in a state that practises direct democracy, conflict is resolved in the absence of an independent ground, but through a participatory process of continuous, localized self-legislation and the formation of a political community able to impact dependent, private persons into free men and fragmentary and private interests into public interests. As a result, the creation of invented spaces validates Barber's argument against the representative system of government as thin democracy. The reason for the creation of invented spaces, according to Barber, could be that

municipalities are ruled by self-interest, bargaining, and exchange, rather than the pursuit of the common good.

Invented spaces are those created by locals who have been marginalized, alienated, or left out of local government processes. The communities create these spaces in order to recoup their communities, give themselves a voice, and compel local government to pay attention to their needs (Brooks, 2015:105). Invented spaces are spaces where citizens and groups start activities and processes beyond the traditional channels (Donk, 2019:55). According to Cornwall (2002:25), these spaces emerge from collection of similar issues or identifications, and may occur as a consequence of organizations, such as around identity or issue-based concerns, or may constitute of spaces where common optical people join together in common activities.

As set out by Ballard (2008), the local citizens choose the invented spaces because it allows them to provide authority and control over the agenda. For instance, service delivery protests are a popular method of community involvement in the local administration, and they appear to be the most ideal type of participation for most residents (Cloete, 2012:60). Advocates of created spaces of participation consider government-initiated participatory spaces as simply a ploy to strengthen electoral democracy and those who are elected. Hence, some consider the formation of invented spaces symbolising the ascension informal politics caused by the incompetency of invited spaces of participation (Zantsi, 2020: 56).

Invented spaces in municipalities emerge in protests, rallies, boycotts, social movements, drafting of memorandums, looting, deliberately not voting, barricading roads, petitions, and burning tyres. These invented spaces tend to dissolve when the given community issue is solved, for instance, service delivery protests and a petition for the removal of a municipal official (Zantsi, 2020:56). Hence the researcher argues that this conveys a message that many of these invented spaces have no intentions of overthrowing the government and, in fact, many consistently vote for it, but they do not trust the venues it has created for them to interact with local officials.

According to Benit-Gbaffou (2012:103), although both invited and created spaces of public participation might be seen as venues of liberty and collaboration, they are also institutions in which political parties and state rituals of dominance are secretly and often obviously, expressed and established. She indicates that at local municipalities, politics overpowers other departments, and it is identified in what Habermas (1981) refers to as “colonisation of life

worlds.” The concept of colonisation of the lifeworld is defined as an impairment between these two parts in which the system is rapidly encroaching (colonizing) and degrading the lifeworld (Silva, 2019). This indicates a condition in which the party system infiltrates the public domain and the intellectual and cultural capabilities of groups or individuals. In terms of this section, politicians invade invited spaces for personal and party gains, hindering meaningful public participation.

It is worth mentioning that, in most cases, the above-outlined spaces of participation are spaces in which malicious, self-centred micro-politics and micro-economics rather than broad-based, social, and political transformations are sought by participants, especially those holding or aspiring to hold leadership positions in these spaces. These spaces mostly function as rites of passage for leaders and as spaces in which rituals of power contestations materialise at a micro-level (Katsaura, 2012:93). In terms of rites of passage, he points out that both invented and invited are used by both state and non-state actors as spaces to enhance their own gains (both political and socioeconomic). Thus, involvement in and being a member of these spaces turns into a rite of passage in the economic and political sense (Benit-Gbaffou & Katsaura, 2012). For instance, some ward councillors and committees are driven by hopes for personal livelihood, or gaining social status, and they have political ambitions. Therefore, it can be stated that these spaces operate as the participants’ gateway into mainstream politics and better livelihoods.

Also, the 2021 local government elections demonstrated that opposition parties were able to disregard even their most vehement ideological differences in order to spite the ANC. With regard to micro-level power contestations, Katsaura (2012:101) states that both invented and invited spaces of public participation are political battlegrounds for local authorities. Both invited and invented spaces leaders undercut and double-cross each other, whether in partnership or separately, as they compete and coalesce for followers, and material and non-material resources. Below are the invited/created space institutions which are used to hold local government accountable.

3.5.1 Invited Spaces

In this section the researcher demonstrates an understanding of relevant structures that facilitate public participation in the integrated development plans.

3.5.1.1 Ward committees

Ward committees are defined by the MSA (2000) as committees that are voted on by local residents who live in a specific ward but must be led by the ward councillor (Cloete, 2013:52). Participation in IDP procedures entails incorporating communities in their own development, and one method of doing so is by ward committees. This is because ward committees are required to hold frequent meetings during which a variety of matters are reviewed, the most significant of which is the IDP. The Ward Committees Resource Book (2005:20) defines the term ward committee as a means for community participation which operates as a connection between the community and the ward councillor.

Ward committees are community governance institutions made up of elected community members who act as a connector between ward councillors, municipalities, and citizens, as well as reporting community issues to elected councillors (Local Government Bulletin, 2021). They also function as a tactical mobilizing instrument for both the municipality and the community in the formulation and management of initiatives; develop partnerships for the growth of local programs; and connect with other key stakeholders of or on account of their local people (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2009:89). This implies that ward committee members and ward councillors are expected to act in the best interest of the communities they represent.

Putu (2006:14) highlights that ward committees are an essential element of local government and a mechanism to improve local governance and democracy. Their mission is to promote participatory democracy; spread data; aid with ward-level challenges; and revitalize partnerships for improved service delivery. The ward committees are constituted to enhance communication between the residents and local municipalities.

The Department of Provincial and Local Government (2004) argues that the ward committees should also foster participatory democracy by helping the residents and civic groups in the municipal process, for example in the “*municipal budget, IDP and review process, municipal performance management system, by-laws and provision of municipal services.*” Additionally, it can be argued that the ward committees are an appropriate venue for communities to air their grievances. The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 sets out that the key role of the ward committees is to provide proper and nonpartisan means of communication between the citizens and councils. Ward committee members’ responsibilities involve advising ward councillors on policy issues that impact their wards, recognizing the needs and difficulties that the wards confront, and distributing information to the residents who live in those wards.

Ward committees also serve as a strategic mobilizing vehicle for both the municipality and the community in regards of program formulation and construction, and also forging alliances for the development of local projects (Khawula, 2016:53). It is worth noting that the ward committees assume a prominent part in the Integrated Development Plan process (DPLG, 2001:38). The ward committees perform their duty and obligation of coordinating IDP participation process at the ward level, using the commonly known community-based planning. According to SALGA (2006:69), the ward committees are expected to play a key role in assuring effective community participation in the integrated development planning process. Ward committees collaborating with councillors and officials are accountable to ensure that the plans of the municipalities are responsive to the needs of their constituents, particularly those they lead (SALGA, 2006:63).

The researcher highlights that the ward committee system is theoretically viewed as providing a participatory democratic function, but the research has revealed significant flaws in practice, such as inadequate powers delegated to ward committees, unsatisfactory community education, severely restricted representivity, political party dominance and interference, lack of accountability to communities, and incapacitated ward councillors and municipalities. Ward committees, according to the research, are structured as representative institutions rather than participatory structures. Moreover, they are intended to serve as consultative bodies to the ward councillor, with no decision-making authority. It enables a process that is consultative (Zantsi, 2021).

3.5.1.2 Traditional authorities

Traditional authorities are regarded as invited spaces which the communities, especially in rural areas, can utilize to participate on the issues that affect the communities (Mayakiso, Taylor et al., 2013:64). Nyalunga (2006) emphasized that traditional leaders also have a significant role in participation and are a major aspect of a councillor's electorate. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) states that “traditional leaders and municipalities should establish protocols on how public participation in such areas will take place, and traditional leaders can also assist in providing access to remote communities.” The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (2003) acknowledges the tribal authorities and the relationship with municipal government. In contemplation of maintaining sufficient developmental governance in rural areas, municipal councillors and traditional authorities must

collaborate to ensure that the municipality understands the needs of the community (SALGA, 2013).

Mayakiso et al. (2013:64) emphasize that the duties of the traditional authorities entail promoting and engaging the residents in the development of a municipality's IDP. Moreover, municipalities must also guarantee effective participation by traditional leaders in council meetings, particularly on problems concerning the traditional community. The National Public Policy Framework (2005: 66) highlighted that “traditional leadership constitutes an important constituency and a key interest group in many areas, especially around development and service delivery issues. Hence traditional leadership should be part of the IDP forum, and ward committees must establish relationships with traditional leadership and their councils.”

3.5.1.3 Community Development Workers (CDW)

Introduced in 2003, the Community Development Workers (CDWs) programme was launched by President Thabo Mbeki, in which he highlighted that the government should establish a public service dimension of multi-faceted CDWs who would keep close communication with residents in their communities. Maphazi, Taylor et al. (2013: 63) state that Community Development Workers (CDWs) are grassroots level consultants who collaborate with community leaders to assist their fellow community members in obtaining information and resources from municipality. According to Piper and Lieres (2008:11), CDWs are intended to assist ward committees by keeping ward committees and civil society updated on affairs of government and urging both the ward committees and the community to participate in opportunities for consultation.

Moreover, CDWs are designed to help local needs to be identified, and community-based planning (CBP) facilitated at local sphere, aiding in the execution of initiatives and projects by the ward committees, giving technical assistance to ward committees in monitoring local projects, and reporting to public and municipalities. Baatjies and Hintsa (2005:10) highlight that the Community Development Workers (CDWs) programme is an attempt to deepen democracy at the local level, with the goal of providing residents with immediate exposure to government services. The key purpose of CDWs is to enable the community in gradually meeting its needs, assisting people in achieving their goals, realizing their dreams, and maintaining their general well-being. Furthermore, the CDWs are expected to educate the citizens about government policies in the language that they can understand (Baatjies and

Hints,2005: 63). Hicks and Hemson (2008:8) set out that CDWs enable communities in communicating their needs and providing guidance to the availability of resources.

Given the fact that they are supposed to work with councillors and ward committees, there are sometimes conflicts. Some of the friction stems from their differing service contractual terms. The conflict arises because ward councillors and ward committees are elected, while CDWs are professionally hired through a human resources recruitment process (Zantsi, 2021:135). This conflict is jeopardizing their ability to function, and it may be one of the contributing elements in the intensification of community protests.

3.5.1.4 Community Based Planning (CBP)

Under Barber's Strong Democracy theory, people are encouraged to be more than mere voters; by contrast, they should define themselves by being involved in the community excepting their self-interest. Hence the research sees Community Based Planning (CBP) as a participatory institution that enables municipalities to enhance the participative elements of their IDPs.

The Community Based Planning was introduced in 2009 by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (DCOGTA). It is a ward-based planning strategy that seeks to deconstruct the IDP at the ward level (Masilo,2020,87). The CBP strives to solve, first by enabling communities to plan for themselves, the second, assisting local municipalities in understanding and addressing service requirements, and the third, assisting local government in being accountable to the community (African Institute for Community-Driven Development,2021:5).

The object of this initiative is to capacitate local government to enhance local democracy by encouraging communities to be active participants in their own growth (Madlopa, 2016:102). Community based planning is a type of participatory planning tailored to foster citizen participation and connection with the integrated development plans of municipalities. The researcher highlights that CBP advocates for a bottom-up method for planning rather than the traditional top-down method. Similar to the theory of Strong Democracy, the CBP argues that residents of a community should have the power to direct the destiny of their neighbourhood. Hence, it fosters a sense of control in the delivery and growth of services. Community based planning as a participatory institution also makes sure that those with the most destitute and underprivileged social backgrounds participate in local governance (Maphazi, Taylor et al., 2013:63).

CBP is not an easy procedure; it involves training, creation of a ward plan, analysis of data for usage in the IDP, implementation assistance, monitoring and evaluation, management of the entire process, and coordination with actors both within and outside the municipality (Masilo, 2020: 86). The participation obligations of Section 29(b) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 are given significance when CBP is linked to the IDP (DPLG 2006:34). The researcher states that CBP as an institution of participation is arguably the only designed institution that embodies Barber's theory and enables public participation in the process of IDP formulation. As the CBP methodology was purposefully geared to make use of widely available participatory resources. It is worth emphasizing that the CBP procedure should preferably take place before the IDP planning and evaluation process begins in the municipal area.

3.5.1.5 IDP representative forum

The IDP forum is another mechanism that the municipality employs to increase community participation. According to SALGA (2013), local government regards Integrated development plans as pivotal; it is seen as the business plan, and it identifies the initiatives that the municipality intends to pursue in a particular fiscal year. As a result, the IDP creation process is obliged to be open and fair, and it must represent the needs and interests of the community in the municipalities. The IDP Guide Pack II (2006:24) states that the IDP Representative Forum is the mechanism that actively promotes and ensures representative involvement in the IDP Process.

SALGA (2013) alludes that the IDP representative forum should involve the community and function as a channel for the community to advocate and defend their involvement in the IDP. The forum is formed and enacted by the Municipal Systems Act (200), explicitly with the aim to include the Community in developing and examining the IDP of municipalities (Gumbi, 2014:55). The IDP forums are settings for consultations, debates, and shared decision-making, where participants are allowed to represent their electorate's needs (Morunda, 2017:51).

The IDP forum can also be utilized to "provide continued feedback to communities on the implementation of the service delivery & budget Implementation Plan on a quarterly basis, thereby ensuring continuous feedback to communities and regular interaction, thus not limiting interaction with communities to the IDP preparation process" (Draft National Policy Framework, 2005). Stakeholders who participate in the IDP forums include traditional leaders,

Community-based organizations, ward committees, representatives from non-state organizations, municipal officials, and community representatives (Morunda,2017:52).

Drawing from the above institutions, it is worth stating that an overuse of representation has weakened our democratic institutions and resulted in the current set of crises: mistrust about voting, marginalization, privatization, and the rising paralysis of government institutions (Barber, 1984). It is for that reason that IDP representative forums are failing to engage the public because their approach is “too bureaucratic, formalistic, and inflexible, and sometimes oriented at co-optation, as they simply tell communities of initiatives and request their approval” (Carrim, 2011:5).

3.5.1.6 Izimbizo

The *Izimbizo* initiative was launched in 2001, to improve the relations between the government and the people (Matshe, 2009:13). The word *Izimbizo* stems from a word in isiZulu, meaning a gathering or meeting. The *Imbizo* initiative was created to improve democracy by involving communities in the delivery of services. The government feels that an *imbizo* is an acceptable forum for connecting with the public and enabling them to express their complaints about service delivery, while the government observes with the intention of responding to those complaints (Mayekiso, Taylor et al., 2013: 197).

The main function of the *Imbizo* is to encourage the people to actively participate in the execution of government programmes. Maphazi, Taylor et al. (2013:64) posit that by using the *Izimbizo*, the government and citizens have face-to-face interactions. This means the *Izimbizo* offers the citizens the sense of hearing straight from the municipalities on what is being done to execute programmes that will improve everyone's quality of life. It is critical that communities are consulted and updated about decisions made by their municipal councils (Matshe,2009: 64). The research emphasises *Izimbizo* provide ordinary citizens with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage directly with the municipal official and confirm their IDP priority.

How effective are these invited participatory institutions in facilitating public participation in the Integrated Development Planning process? This question will be addressed in chapter four by drawing from various existing literature from different municipalities around South Africa.

3.5.2 Invented Space

3.5.2.1 Social movements

Kambala et al. (2012:68) the existing structures of public involvement established for by local government legislation, are mainly ineffective for supporting genuine and equitable expressions of voice, primarily for the poor and disenfranchised. For Barber (1984), they are inadequate because these institutions do not know the difference between independent participation and mere agreement, between frequent talk and simple elections, and between political consideration and mere plebiscitary decision-making.

Consequently, the people have created their own participatory spaces as a dependable means to advance their agenda. This space of participation includes social movements. According to Hickey and Mohan (2004), Escobar (1992) and Rahnema (1997), social movements are viable means of achieving or influencing public participation. They argue that “social movements are a way in which alternative visions of democracy, economy, and society and, consequently, a new social order can be created.”

Social movements are viewed as a practical solution, a beacon of hope for achieving participation and, as a result, the reform of oppressive systems. Like Barber (1984), Rahnema (1997) supports this, by stating that efficient participation is only possible if communities are liberated of exploitation and tyranny. For him, it is in social movements where the idea of participation is not dangerous and where the misconception of participation can actually turn into a boon. In South Africa, social movements which have taken place post-apartheid include: the Concerned Citizen’s Forum, the Landless People’s Movement, the Equal Education Campaign and the Social Justice Coalition, Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Anti-Privatization Forum, Abahlali baseMjondolo (‘shack dwellers’) (Ballard, Habib, & Valodia, 2006; Zuern, 2011).

According to Piper and Lieres (2016:319), the Treatment Action Campaign was the trailblazer between these social movements. This social movement was first started on December 08, 1998, by fifteen people who demanded medical treatment for HIV-positive people. It has since grown into one of South Africa's most powerful post-apartheid social groups. It organized citizens in a variety of venues, including the courts, the streets, the media, and international forums, and was successful in achieving significant revisions in national policy on access to

treatment, as well as an improved governmental response to citizens' requests (Piper & Lieres 2016:320).

After the TAC's triumph, the Equal Education (EE) movement arose years later as a second-generation civil society organization concerned with upgrading public education in South Africa and organizing youth (Piper, 2016:320). The Equal Education movement rapidly grew into a dynamic community-based movement, resolving and developing an education of active citizenship. The movement's first project was the *Broken Windows Campaign*, which aimed at fixing broken windows at local schools as well as contacting the provincial government, engaging with school administration, and distributing petitions. Consequently, the provincial administration decided to repair the windows. Similar to the TAC movement, the EE movement employed a different method, including the courts, protests, and trade union coalitions (Dube & Tschudin, 2021). It can be argued that the deep history of citizen participation through social movement can be utilized to construct an understanding of the significant of these created spaces.

3.5.2.2 Protests

Cloete (2013:60) set out that protests are also method of an invented space of participation. According to Ngcamu (2019), a majority of local communities prefer this method of participation since it allows them to demonstrate authority and they are the regulator of the agenda. This is because most invited spaces of public participation are not able to tackle communities' service delivery issues; rather they have become a "tokenistic exercise that reasserts partisan control of local resources rather than opening the space for different actors to debate how best to plan and distribute public monies that can bring about real change" (Barichiev et al., 2005; Bénit-Gbaffou, 2008; Habib & Kotze, 2003).

Researchers such as Marais, Matebesi, Mthombeni, Botes and van Rooyen (2008) and Atkinson (2007) posit that the protests are usually caused by the following: "i) failure and a lack of responsiveness to residents' demands; ii) the organisational culture of municipalities does not lend itself to effective service delivery; iii) the intergovernmental system does not favour local municipalities; iv) most municipalities are forced to carry the burden of failed policies; v) the reaction of the role-players to the protests has been mixed, ranging from an acceptance of responsibility, to a total disregard for the relevance of the demands made by protesters". Thompson and Nleya (2010) put forward that service delivery demonstrations have been worsened by insufficient lack of accountability, a scarcity of individuals with appropriate

skills to rule, underfunding, and the ANC's deployment policy. Service delivery protests can take place by toyi-toying, burning of tyres, blockading of roads, looting, and mass meetings (Akinboade et al., 2013:467).

Cloete (2013:61) highlights that the majority of these protest marches are violent in character. Violent protests are referred to by Karamoko and Jain (2011:10) as “protests where some of the participants have engaged in physical acts that either cause immediate harm to some person or are substantively likely to result in such harm.” Corruption and mismanagement are the root causes of violent service delivery demonstrations in various municipalities (Kroukamp & Cloete, 2018). For example, in 2018, two lives were lost amid violent service delivery demonstrations. One killed in Mitchells Plain in Cape Town on Jakes Gerwel Drive, and another murdered in Phuthaditjhaba in the Free State's QwaQwa.

It is worth noting that these service delivery protests normally get decent media exposure and result in municipalities being forced to respond or deliver services faster as demanded of the communities (Jain, 2011; Booysen, 2007). The trends of service delivery protests show Municipal IQ (2019) has documented an elevated level of service delivery protests in 2018, with 24% additional protests than the previous record holder from 2014. Allan (2019) writes that the year 2019 has seen a considerable number of service delivery demonstrations, significantly overtaking 2016 and the years before 2012. However, in 2020, service delivery protests plummeted to a nine-year low in 2020, partly owing to the countrywide shutdown due to the Covid-19 outbreak, according to the Municipal IQ.

3.6 Models Of Public Participation

Benjamin Barber's idea suggests that a country's democracy should be constructed in a manner which allows public participation empowered by self-government, which allows residents to participate in the shared works of democratic politics (Barber, 2004: 152). To measure the level to which the people are involved in the common works of democratic politics, as Barber stated, this section deploys Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969). Therefore, this section emphasizes the need for focusing, not just on the procedures employed by municipalities in the IDP process, but also on the nature of such engagement.

For Barber (1989), public involvement in the process of decision-making is an essential component of democracy. Yet, only a fraction of democratic states can portray their constituents as having political influence in the development of agendas in the policy

formulation process. Other democratic states overshadow public participation in common works of government with representivity. Thus, Arnstein's ladder is borrowed in order to evaluate the dissimilarity between participation goals and what is encountered during the IDP process.

Like Barber (1989), Arnstein (1969) pioneered an insightful discussion on public involvement by utilizing the analogy of public participation in the eight-step ladder, starting with manipulation at the bottom and progressing up through therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control at the top. This model can be used by community leaders, coordinators, and promoters who wish to grasp basic notions of public engagement and participation, as well as to understand how powerful public institutions and officials deny authority to citizens. It also provides a solid foundation for understanding the extent of community participation that is feasible in the 'formal process' of government/planning agencies (Swampan, 2016:71).

Author Sherry R. Arnstein published a Ladder of Citizen Participation in July 1969 in the Journal of the American Institute of Planners. She identified that, while there was a range of ways for the public to participate, the majority of them were false opportunities in which the community had no actual say in how decisions were made (McCoy et al., 2015:6). According to Arnstein (1969:216), citizen participation can be defined as a "redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes to be deliberately included in the future." Have-nots are people or groups of people who are typically excluded from decision-making processes, resulting in marginalization and poverty, such as Black people, Native Americans, and immigrants (Arnstein, 1969:216). Connor (1988:249) explains that, like Barber (1989), Arnstein emphasized the importance of public involvement, believing that participation in decision-making processes empowers citizens. Arnstein is interested in enabling the poor and weak to take control of their lives and circumstances. The former validates to the reader that Arnstein addresses same elements that Benjamin Barber's Strong Democracy theory address.

3.7 The Importance of Public Participation

Prior to discussing the challenges around the facilitation of public participation in the integrated development planning process, it is necessary to understand the importance of public participation and accountability in the local sphere. Benjamin Barber's attention has largely

been directed towards efforts to expand vigorous democratic participation in the formal political sphere, particularly at the local level. This goes to show how Barber views the concept of participation. Hence, it is of significance that the reader understands the importance of participation in a general view.

Public participation is a vital link from government to people and highlights that collaboration between the government and community stakeholders in the process of implementing projects enhances the lives of the people. Public participation is vital since it involves the residents in assessing their own needs and engaging in local project planning and monitoring. It is also essential for bettering public resource management and eliminating corruption by holding government officials responsible to the public (Burkey, 2012:35).

Marzuki (2015:21) highlight the importance of public participation in local government in the following: (1) the involvement of the community is vital for the democratisation of societal principles, as well as proper planning and meeting needs of the public (2) it may also be used to educate the public, particularly on government development programs. This will possibly have an impact on the social and personal improvements among the residents, which may subsequently be utilized to include various public interests and therefore provide individuals with the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Apart from acting as a way of teaching and raising awareness, public engagement is also playing a leading role in developing a more efficient planning framework due to a better knowledge of stakeholders' expectations and requirements, which leads to more effective resource planning and management. According to Glass (1979) and Cavric (2011), public participation promotes information sharing among all role players (the community, government, and NGOs), leading to an improved reciprocal understanding and collaboration between the stakeholders.

Midgley et al. (1986:34), adds that public participation is encouraged not merely because it streamlines service delivery and eases the process of implementation but because it promotes a feeling of belonging and integration of communities and enables local people to make a constructive contribution to domestic developments in turn. Reddy (2016:1) assert that the word service delivery is a globally used concept to describe the provision of fundamental community needs and services, such as housing, water and sanitation, land, power, and infrastructure, which local people have grown to rely on for their daily survival.

However, in various municipalities, the supply and continuous maintenance of these essential services has proven to be inconsistent at times, causing significant inconvenience and putting local people in risk. It is evident that a municipality that is more knowledgeable about community needs would be able to provide better services (Mosotho,2013:21).

Scholars, Cogan & Sharpe (1986:284) shows five advantages of public involvement in the planning process (1) “gaining information and ideas on public issues; (2) public support for planning decisions; (3) avoidance of protracted conflicts and costly delays; (4) reservoir of goodwill that can carry over to future decisions; (5) and a enhance the spirit of cooperation and trust between the agency and the public”. According to Fung and Wright (2001:67), more public engagement leads to increased accountability and responsiveness, and as a result, democracy will improve not only locally, but nationwide. In all that is said above, there is much reflection to what Strong democracy theory advocates for, in terms of public participation.

3.8 Public Accountability

The research takes a stand that public participation in representative democracy endorses accountability which ultimately leads to good governance. Also, that enhancing accountability in municipalities tends to be one of the most effective strategies to tackle significant challenges to the rule of law, like theft and clientelism. The abovementioned is supported by Barber in his theory of Strong Democracy, he states that civic virtue in representative democracy is accountability or reciprocal control. He posits that representation promotes accountability and private rights; however, it undermines participation and citizenship.

A contemporary researcher, Mkandawire (2007), states that original term of good governance was introduced by African researchers such as Claude Ake, Nakhtar Diouf, and Ali Mazrui. They identified three key aspects to good governance: i) “development, in a manner that enables the economy to be managed in a way that maximizes economic growth, initiates structural change, and makes responsible and sustainable use of all available resources in highly competitive global settings”, ii) democracy and respect for human rights and iii) social inclusion of all citizens in a manner that gave decent living to all and full participation (Mkhandawire, 2007:680). As a result, good governance should be measured by how successfully it maintains this trio.

Krishnan (2008:4) defines accountability in the context of local government in South Africa as the responsibility to account and defend acts and choices to constituents. The White Paper

(1998) defines accountability as being determined to explain for one's choices and actions. It also states that developmental local governance need leadership that provides chances for community to hold leader's accountability beyond normal elections.

Fourie (2009: 30) points out that accountability is critical in a public entity like a municipality, as well as in the leadership domains. The author maintains that accountability is vital as it enhances trust between the government and the community, increases performance by reducing reckless behaviour by officials because they understand they are accountable for every decision made, and it enhances ownership as it instils a sense of pride in their work. Boven (2006), highlighted three key questions which arise during the process of public accountability: *accountable to whom; for what; and how?* Considering Boven's key questions, the study postulates that the issue of 'when' and 'how' to account has become increasingly lacking in the South African local municipality setting.

Adding to the above literature, Sharma (2008:15) asserts that in an institution such as a municipality, accountability occurs in two ways. Firstly, the vertical (external) accountability-known as public accountability, which is imposed externally on governments, either officially through democratic procedures or informally through citizens and civil society, including mainstream media, in which external players aim to impose performance standards on officials.

Second, horizontal (internal) accountability, which is enacted from within by governments through governance frameworks for monitoring and accountability mechanisms and refers to the power and ability of governmental institutions to assess abuses of power by other public entities and arms of government, or the need for bureaus to report internally (Sharman, 2008:15). In the context of local government in South Africa, vertical accountability refers to accountability of the municipal council to local citizens, while horizontal accountability refers to accountability of municipal executives to the municipal council, electoral commissions, and the courts (Sharma, 2008:16).

Although public accountability is argued to be a mechanism for participatory local democracy, it can be stated that accountability continues to be a mere buzzword that is rarely considered to be important in most municipalities. To support the above assertion, Sikhakhane (2011) put forward that the ongoing protests by local citizens regarding the inadequate service delivery in numerous municipalities provide enough witness to the concept that public accountability has become a buzzword with few supporting measures.

According to Barber (1984:218), this occurs because accountability is thin itself, an institution that permits public watchdogs to spend most of their time pursuing their private business while functionaries and hirelings (delegates and representatives) minister to the public business. He strongly argues that the representative system holds leaders accountable to the people; however, it fails to turn people into citizens. Instead, people become passive spectators, distancing themselves from the government that representation is supposed to connect them to. Alternatively, people become passive citizens, distancing themselves from the government that representation is supposed to connect them to. Using Barber (1984), this research finds that democracy should be more than a structure of representative accountability to the public. It should be a citizen-to-citizen relationship, not a leader-to-follower one.

As a result, this chapter aims to establish that lack of public accountability in local government is the reason why various scholars have stated that public participation in IDP is questionable. In the course of this research, vertical accountability is presented as public accountability.

3.8.1 Arnstein's Ladder

Mautjana and Makombe (2014:55) outline that the idea of public engagement can be examined and comprehended using Arnstein's ladder of citizen engagement, which identifies eight degrees of participation. Arnstein (1969) created a ladder-like model of public involvement, with each rung equating to the degree of citizen control in the process of deciding on an agenda or policy (see figure 1). This ladder contains eight steps: two steps of non-participation (manipulation and therapy), three steps of tokenism (informing, consultation, and placation) and three steps of citizen power (partnership, delegated power, and citizen control). For Barber (1989), the non-participation and tokenism stages epitomise thin democracy, and citizen power represents Strong Democracy.

In this research, these eight steps represent the extent of involvement and level of power citizens have in influencing decisions affecting their wellbeing. It also discusses how the public institutions and politicians deprive citizens of power as well as how “citizen agency, control, and power may be expanded” (Connor, 1988:250). Arnstein (1969) used the ladder to talk about social hierarchy and the various means which people and government entities can use to engage. She highlights that the ladder serves as a metaphor for determining whether or not public engagement is real, honest, and efficient. The eight steps of participation indicate a range of levels of participation, from high to low. Each rung represents the degree to which citizens have control over the final result (see diagram below) (Arnstein, 1969).

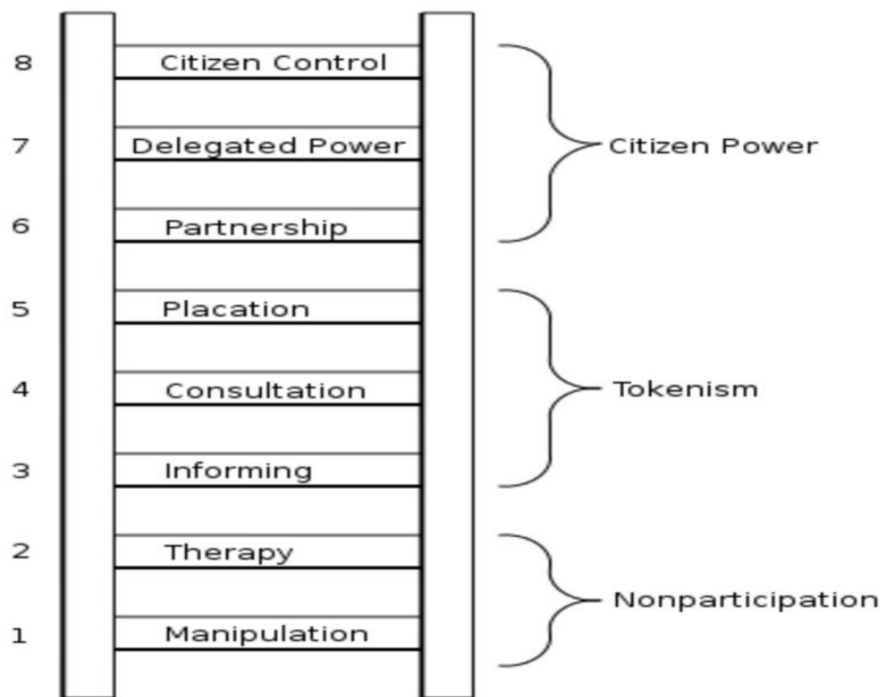


Figure 2: *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*

Source: S. Arnstein, 1969, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*.

To fully understand the Ladder of Citizen participation by Arnstein (1969,) a brief description follows:

The lower steps of the ladder, (1) manipulation and (2) therapy are labelled by Arnstein as non-participation. Non-participation is introduced when the those in positions of authority either educate or cure community members instead of permitting them to engage in designing or implementing agendas. As Barber (1984) puts it, in this stage the leaders expect the worst of men and women: it considers them incompetent to make choices on their own and they need to be saved from themselves.

It is worth noting that this is a top-down method. In Arnstein's words: "*in the name of citizen participation, people are placed on rubber stamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of educating them or engineering their support.*" This implies, according to Barber, that public involvement and citizenship is stifled while promoting passivity among people who hand over their autonomy to representatives. Instead of genuine citizen participation, the bottom rung of the ladder signifies the distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle by powerholders (Barber, 1984). Seitholo (2016:31) uses the example of a

community that is educated about a project that has previously been negotiated by the powerholder, and the community's feedback is then utilized to forward this agenda.

On the middle rungs of the ladder are (3) informing, (4) consultation, and (5) placation: Arnstein named these rungs tokenism. She refers to tokenism as a type of participation whereby the have-not have no voice, albeit they are seldom allowed to directly influence decision-making (Cardullo & Kitchin, 2017:2). When they do influence the decision-making process, Barber (1984) alludes that public engagement is restricted only to voting, and that is motivated by deceptive advertising strategies primarily funded by corporations.

Unlike Barber (1984), Arnstein (1969: 219) sees the tokenism stage as a first step towards participation, for instance, the informing stage, whereby information passes from civil servants to the residents with there is no way to offer input, and there is no power to negotiate Carpentier (2016:75) sets out that Arnstein defined informing as a type of one-way communication that, while vital, provide individuals little chance to influence decisions. At this level, the instruments utilised as participation are flyers, brochures, and news media. For Barber (2004:57), throughout the initiative and referendum participatory modes, the electorate does not have a fair opportunity to participate; instead, they are subjected to individualism.

In consultation, there is two-way movement of information using gatherings, debates, and surveys. Also, in this stage, information obtained at this stage is hardly considered. It is at the stage of placation that the community members start to experience some sort of influence. Placation is viewed as a higher level of tokenism in which a small group of have-nots are authorized to participate, but powerholders retain the final say (Lilja, 2017:17). It can be concluded that the first and second rung of participation is at the peak of searching for great leadership. However, the hunt is turning people into submissive watchdogs (Barber, 1984)

Containing characteristics of Strong Democracy, the last steps, citizen power consists of (6) partnership, (7) delegated power and (8) citizen control. Rung six is called partnership since power is dispersed through dialogue between residents and powerholders. Residents can form a relationship with conventional powerholders that allows them to bargain and participate in debates. Arnstein (1969:222) notes that this partnership can happen through structures such as joint policy boards, planning committees, and mechanisms for resolving impasses. At the highest stages, (7) delegated power and (8) citizen control, the have-nots have full managerial power, and they obtain the majority of decision-making seats. In reference to a delegated power, the community gets control over decision-making power for a certain policy or

initiatives. Lastly citizen control further increases the power position of citizens, although Arnstein warns against faith in a situation of full control (Lilja, 2017: 18-19). For Barber (1984), this rung provides an opportunity for the revision and re-creation of modes of society fit for democracy in the 21st century, especially in the local sphere. It makes communication, listening, and shared judgement the associates of community and intellectual integration.

After examining Arnstein's (1969) ladder of public participation, it can be argued that public participation in the IDP process falls under the tokenism stage, which is the middle rung. Theron (2009) adds that local communities are subjected to the informing, placation, and consulting modes of participation. In these stages, municipalities would set up spaces for public participation, but they would limit or control the agenda and community participation.

In most cases, public feedback is utilized to legitimize choices that have already been made. This is apparent in most municipalities as they struggle to adhere to the standards of the IDP, which is intended to be the epitome of public engagement. The community members could participate in various participatory mechanisms like the IDP representative forum and ward committee meetings; however, they frequently limit the ability to influence decisions.

Modumo (2014:134) points out that the limitation of this stage is that the community have minimal power to ensure that their problems and interests are included in the decision-making process. It focuses on a one-way flow of information with few or limited methods to ensure feedback. The author calls this phase a window dressing. In addition, Phendu (2019:12) sets out that municipal officials' dump information on citizens, and normally it is technical jargon that restricts local people to engage. He concludes that what citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have participated in participation (Phendu,2019.:13). A case in point of tokenism in South African local municipalities, as stated by Thornhill and Modumo (2011:141), ward councillors usually use ward committees as emblems of conformity with the legislation.

Mchunu (2012:53) emphasizes that this phase poses a threat to the culture of public participation. He contends that Arnstein's citizen power stage in local government in South Africa only occurs through invented spaces, since the community earn some influence in decision-making. This is because the people are fed up and take advantage of invented spaces to forcibly advance to the citizen power rung. It can be concluded that the use of informing, consultation, and placation as public participation mechanisms in the IDP have been unsuccessful at promoting meaningful community involvement.

It can be indicated that the inputs carried out through public participation at various phases of the IDP process failed to ensure effective participation, thereby acting as a barrier to meaningful participation. In this regard, it can be stated that the mechanisms utilised do not reflect the ideas of Strong Democracy of Benjamin Barber (1984).

3.9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to examine the structures and processes for community participation in the IDP processes in local government. This was done by investigating public participation and models involved in public participation. Arnstein's ladder of participation was utilised to highlight different models of public participation. Information was provided on who should participate in the IDP process. These participants include people and structures. Moreover, the chapter provided an overview of the legislative and policy framework that governs public engagement in government in South Africa in general, and in the IDP process in particular. The chapter went into detail on the different mechanisms and forms for public engagement and how they should be used in the IDP process. It is worth noting that the above-stated mechanisms, acts, rules, and policies stress the need for community engagement in specific municipal matters.

CHAPTER FOUR: Exploring the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government.

“Autonomy is not the condition of democracy; democracy is the condition of autonomy. Without participating in the common life that defines them and in the decision-making that shapes their social habitat, women and men cannot become individuals. Freedom, justice, equality, and autonomy are all products of common thinking and common living; democracy creates them” – (Barber, 2003:8).

In other words, the quote means that residents can best understand themselves as autonomous creatures through engaging in their community's political life; for Barber, direct democracy is the strongest kind of political body for them to do so. In this research, autonomy is intricately linked to participating in an institution of politics. For Barber (1984), while personal autonomy is psychologically important, it is earned in the context of a political community of other people, not in seclusion.

In the previous chapters, the research sought to inform the reader about the nature and scale of community involvement in the IDP processes in local government, and the structures and processes for community participation in the IDP process in local government. It also discussed Benjamin Barber's theory, which informs community involvement in the Integrated Development Planning processes in local government. Chapter 3 serves to justify the theory adopted for this research.

This chapter explores the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government. The research draws attention to the fact that, despite policy commitments and legislated mechanisms, the system of participatory democracy in post-1994 South Africa is largely considered to be failing. Considering the above, the goal of this chapter is to address the primary question of this research, concerning the reasons why public participation is questionable in the case study of the sphere of local government – the IDP process. Research papers and articles that already exist on public participation in integrated development planning are being studied to answer the abovementioned questions.

4.1 Introduction

South Africa is a representative democracy. This means citizens do not govern the country themselves, they elect (vote for) leaders to represent them in government. Over the years it has become evident that representative democracy in South Africa – a system characterised by regular, free, and fair elections in a multi-party environment does not satisfy the public's want

to be more involved in the decisions which influence their everyday lives (Piper 2014:51). The system of representative democracy tends to homogenise intra-group difference in the interest of manageability. This political system therefore makes it difficult to find effective ways for the public's voice to be heard and give them freedom of expression of their own varied interests despite their differences (Carrim, 2001:107). Arguably, this form of democracy contributes to the failing of attempts at participatory democracy. This research further sees this kind of democracy as a terminus for democracy. This boils down to Benjamin Barber's theory of Strong Democracy, which sees representative democracy as a thin democratic system.

Importantly, it should be mentioned that, although South Africa is a representative democracy, the Constitution of South Africa (1996) declares public participation in all three spheres. Which the Strong Democracy supports the declaration of public participation in all spheres. For instance, in the national and provincial spheres, public participation take place in the process by which the parliament/provincial legislature consults with the people before decisions are made. In the local sphere, there are various mechanism to facilitate public or limitation of public participation despite the enunciation in the Constitution. Despite this however, research reveals that in the *real-world* there is a lack or limitation of public participation despite the enunciation in the Constitution.

Looking at the degree of participation in national, provincial, and local spheres of government, the research posits that it falls under the tokenism stage; consultation and informing found in Arnstein's ladder of participation. This is because in reality, there is no guarantee that public concerns and suggestions are considered after the consultation process. To support the above statement, the research of Mogoba (2012:78) reveals that, in Makhuduthamaga local municipality the degree of public participation in the procedure of IDP is restricted to mere consulting and informing and there is an absence of meaningful community inputs.

Overall, this research puts forward that public participation in local government is mainly confined to methods of informing, and consultation in the absence of the guarantee that the community input would be considered in decision-making. Mechanisms used for consultations include attitude surveys, neighbourhood meetings, and public enquiries. This is considered a weak form of participation, and is often another window-dressing exercise (Masiya et al., 2021:335). To add to this, Hemson (2007) points out that participation by consultation is mainly concerning the needs, instead of empowering and educating residents about political decision-making or implementation. In most cases, it is a one-stage process. In terms of

informing, the Department of Local Government (2005) point out that the community is only informed about the initiative, for example, through gatherings or pamphlets. It should be emphasised that even though the community members may be asked for inputs, their views may not be considered (Ssekibule & Okafor, 2014:3).

With respect to the electoral system, the local sphere of government utilizes a proportional representation system (PR) whereby the constituents are represented by their desired representatives in government. The local sphere of government employs a hybrid electoral system, with half of the councillors chosen by local representation at the ward level (a constituency system) and the other half using a closed-party list PR system (Gumede,2020). Ward councillors are directly elected by the people, whilst PR councillors are elected from party lists (Amtaika,2013). This implies, in representation terms, that ward councillors must represent the community's interests in municipal councils, while PR councillors must represent political parties' interests in municipal councils (Ndim, 2012:102).

In this regard, the study claims that the PR system has an enormous influence on the political parties in determining which representatives are voted in, and the system fosters adherence to the party, so they gain a centrist place on the list. Moreover, the Inclusive Society Institute (2021:12) argues that the PR system in South Africa works against accountability, this is due to the fact that proportional representation gives authority to party elites while disenfranchising voters. It is realised that those in power do not always serve the best interests of the population.

Even though local government has a hybrid electoral system, party officials have extensive influence over who is on the list of nominees (Gumede,2020). In addition, research also emphasises that the difficulties posed by a proportional representation system are rather clear, since voters elect a political party, but their representatives are nominated from a party list that supporters did not certainly aid create. In support, Ngamlana (2015:24) highlight that those voters cannot choose their representatives on a closed party candidate list, as is the case in the existing electoral system, which weakens participatory democracy.

As a result, the concern of whose interest's ward councillors serve in municipal councils arises. Arguing against a PR system, both Barber (1984) and Rousseau (1762) stated that elected representatives should not determine the General Will of the people, so they advocated for a direct democracy where people chose to voice their general will and create laws of the land.

Factors That Limit Public Participation in The IDP Process

In municipalities, there are ward councillors & committees, municipal official and also community members who have a legislative mandate to work together to achieve local government constitutional mandate of ensuring that residents have access to clean drinking water, electricity, sanitation, houses, and internal roads (SALGA,2019). As noted by several researcher in this research, public participation in the IDP process is exceedingly difficult to fulfil. Resulting in South Africa witnessing a rapidly growing backlash against ‘protocol’ participation (UN, 2015). In making this case, my research begins by outlining the failure of formal participatory governance in municipalities in South Africa due to poor institutional design and de facto capture into other informal political logics. Then further explain other challenges and issues that are normally highlighted as factors that limit public participation in the IDP process.

4.2 Factors That Limit Public Participation In The IDP Process

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4.2.1 Weak Participatory Mechanisms

Drawing from Chapter 2, (see, section 2.4.1) Barber (1984) argued that the community members and government officials need to develop institutions that would explicitly engage residents in the decision-making process. These institutions must protect the community, the minority and mainly their liberty that dominant parties may often violate in the name of the good of the community. Barber (1984) considers the creation of organised and regulated frameworks as a way of attaining an effective and lifelong mode of public participation (DPLG,

2019). The South African Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) is liable for observing and facilitating procedures in local government. Has the creation of structured and institutionalized frameworks in local government in South Africa attained an effective mode of public participation? The question will be answered below:

In the case of South Africa, my research argues that the created local participatory institutions have failed to fully involve community members in decision-making processes. It alludes that in many cases municipalities are hesitant to permit public participation as they remain with the top-down method of planning. In support, Zantsi (2021) states that ward committees and councillors, as participatory institutions, have failed to involve the community in the IDP formulations. Hence, arguably, the research highlights that both institutions are established, not as participatory institutions but as representative institutions, which in most cases are politicized.

Previous and contemporary researchers like, Piper, Von and Lieres (2008), Zantsi (2021) and Zulu (2020) found that some ward committees and councillors serve as political agents, facilitating political parties' agendas. This can be influenced by the fact that ward councillors do not canvass for themselves but for the party, and as a result they cannot be independent. Also, in some cases, it is because of the African National Congress (ANC) or any political party dominance in wards lead to politicization of ward councillors (Zulu, 2020).

In addition, the research found that these institutions are also a breeding ground for party rivalry between political elites. For a case in point, there are political rivalries in most KwaZulu-Natal local municipalities between various political parties. For example, three councillors were shot in a small shop in the Ibisi village in the UMzimkhulu Local Municipality on the 13th of July 2017. In Richmond Municipality, Councillor Sifiso Mkhize was murdered on the 2nd of June 2017, in what the news reports labelled as 'hail of bullets' (IOL, 30 June 2017). In 2016, Badedile Tshapha and Phatheni Ngubane from Emalahleni Local Municipality were shot after a ward council meeting (Phakathi, 2019:106). These killings in KZN show that ward committees and councillors are indeed breeding grounds for political rivalry. Also, that the contestation for political office as a means of having power over state resources and as a means to hoard resources for their personal benefit is extremely high (Calderon, 2018).

In a report written by Lauren October (2018) of the Mail & Guardian, she emphasized that both institutions are more faithful to a political party than to their office; this results in other parties' issues being overlooked purposefully, and everything related to local government becomes a

party process instead of a joint one. However, this is particularly the case in ward committees, since they are usually seized by parties, or have become identified as battlegrounds for local rivalries. This politicking of councillors and ward committees leads to both inter-party and intra-party tensions.

This is not a new issue; in fact, it has been previously discussed by Piper and Deacon (2006), who revealed that in uMsunduzi municipality the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) ward committees exhibited symptoms of the dominating party syndrome because ward committees were considered as appendages of party branches. In Piper and Deacon's (2008:41) research of the municipality of uMsunduzi, they discovered that ward committees were politicized in three ways: first, the interparty competition which is a struggle for power over the committees among political parties. In the context of uMsunduzi municipality, inter-party competition, as reported by Piper and Deacon (2009:424), primarily includes the ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party, but is not limited to them as also the ward committees of the Democratic Alliance (DA) tend to be under the authority of their parties during the agenda-setting and formulation of policies.

Second, intra-party competition. within political organizations (often the ANC), ward committees have been entangled in internal strife, with one or more parties using ward committees to obtain more political influence (Mongale, 2022:160). It is worth stating that the findings from SALGA's investigation refute intra-party rivalry, however, it verifies intra-party assassinations and intimidation of councillors and ward committees take place (SALGA, 2019). As an example, according to one respondent in the SALGA research, some political leaders are involved in intra-party rivalry, since power struggles begin in the wards, and as he put it, there is always a danger when there is competition (SALGA, 2019: 68).

Finally, Piper and Deacon (2008) and Smith and De Visser (2009) state that there is a term-policy rivalry, in which the function of ward committees is dictated by the political party instead of just the statutory framework. As a case in point, ward councillors in uMsunduzi municipality from the Democratic Alliance (DA) Party often rejected the municipal ward committee initiatives, insisting on doing things their way. Also, the DA tends to show reluctance to comply with ANC-aligned policy efforts on the ward committee structure (Piper & Deacon, 2009:425). Up to so far, it is worth stating that the core value of the ward committees and councillors as institutions of public participation is politics, instead of Strong Democratic institutions.

Continuing this line, Mantzaris and Pillay (2017:96) mentioned that when the Democratic Alliance (DA) took office in most municipalities in Cape Town, it instituted a contentious policy of terminating the employment contracts of senior municipal officials from the previous ANC administration and introducing a temporary policy for senior managers that declared that such positions should be occupied by people who are “politically suitable and acceptable” to the party in power. Naidoo and Rampal (2018) put forward that this is due to political factors, where ward committees select individuals based on their party allegiance. As a result, ward committees tend to favour political parties, and most members of the community withdraw from participating in programmes like the IDP because they feel marginalized.

Furthermore, Malabela and Ally (2011:4) demonstrate how the ward system is entangled in party politics and other political structures that significantly restrict its usefulness as a method of participation in the IDP process. Firstly, due to the heavy centralisation of authority by the municipal mayor and mayoral committee, ward councillors and committees have minimal impact on decision-making in the council. The decision-making process in municipalities is severely reduced to the party structure of the local council, meaning the ward councillors from opposing political parties have less power to influence decisions.

Secondly, Malabela and Ally (2011:5), citing Benit-Gbaffou’s (2009) research on wards in the City of Johannesburg, state that she learned that ward committees and councillors, surprisingly and of great concern, created space for political clientelism, in which the delivery of public services was traded for public support. Lastly, she indicated that during the process of selecting a candidate to run for councillor for a specific party, which was often the ANC, the candidate recommended by the ward may be disregarded if the party's branch or regional level finds them unpopular. Rather, party allegiance or favouritism is frequently used to determine who is elected to run for office. She sees the ward committees and councillors as weak, as they are utilised to honour faithful party members and penalize non-loyal party members, instead of providing the residents a voice and facilitate participation in the IDP process.

Likewise, Smith and Visser (2009) carried out a study on the effectiveness of ward committees by studying six wards in the Northwest Province. The research also revealed that ward committees often disregard the information and objections provided to them by ward committees, which is a cause for worry. In addition, they identified three impediments faced by the ward committees: 1) the politics of representation, 2) structural limits to power, and 3) the ‘notions of councillor and party politics. They argue that representation is the main reason

the facilitation of public participation in the IDP process is exceedingly difficult to fulfil. This is due to the fact that ward councillors are using their power to influence the decision-making process to work in support of the terms of the political party they represent, and not the expectations and needs of the local residents (Smith & Visser, 2009:16).

That ward committees as an institution to facilitate public participation in the IDP are weak, points to the limitations of ward committees' powers. These constraints are mandated by legislation; for example, the Municipal Structures Act limits the authority of ward committees to just offering recommendations to ward councillors and obtaining feedback from communities (Zantsi, 2020).

This leads to ward committee recommendations not being included or embedded into the local municipal IDP process, hindering the efficacy and execution of it (Zantsi,2020). Moreover, they claim that ward committees are deeply flawed in operation. Smith and Visser (2009:20) add that ward committees are not functional because of the weak communicating techniques in municipalities and unavailability of information sharing, particularly in municipal planning procedures, where ward committees might possibly play an essential communication role. Arfesis-Corplan (2015) state that without a strong understanding of the aims and objectives for development as stated out in the IDP, the capacity to evenly divide these to their particular ward areas is critical.

Piper and Deacon (2008), in their study of uMsunduzi municipality, revealed that party politics plays a significant role in the inefficiency of ward systems as a tool to facilitate public participation. They observed that ward committees are appendages of the local party branch and hence mirror the illnesses linked with the dominant party syndrome. They conclude that dominant party hegemony affects the functionality of ward committees and councillors and restricts the ability to hold the local officials accountable.

Consequently, ward committees cannot be viewed to be reflective of the broader community's interests. The study of Piper and Deacon (2008) on the uMsunduzi municipality in the Pietermaritzburg region supports the assertions made above. Their study discovered that there was an unusual partnership between ward committees and branches of political parties. They noticed that both institutions were identical, and ward committee meetings were occasionally merged with ANC branch meetings, presumably to reduce antagonism between the two organizations.

Putu (2006) also conducted similar research on the Rustenburg municipality. He revealed that public participation in the IDP process through the ward committees and councillors is just an informing and consultation process. He adds that in Rustenburg municipality there is an increase in the number of disputes between ward councillors and ward committees, as ward councillors are more concerned with fulfilling their political mandate than with improving the lives of constituents.

Consequently, this resulted in the control of ward committees and the participation process in the IDP, where the agenda for meetings was often politically influenced in the hands of politicians who came to signify barriers for effective involvement of ordinary citizen (Mbhele, 2017: 75). It can be concluded that the politicisation of ward committees weakens their supposed autonomous role and also openly deteriorates civil society's ability to participate in municipal councils and the very essential fair representation of the communities. It can be argued that the formal routes for municipal engagement, the ward committee and ward councillor systems, are believed to have been tainted by politicization in certain spaces, limiting engagement to tokenism. In reference to the above arguments the dissertation participatory institutions are made ineffective in RSA by representative institutions.

4.2.2 IDP representative forum

The IDP representative forum is one of several mechanisms used to enhance participation and accountability during the IDP formulation process. These meetings should include all role players in the ward, and act as a channel for them to advocate for and protect their interests in the IDP (SALGA, 2013:8). However, Ngamlana (2015:3) argues that these forums are generally not well-publicized, leading to low attendance, and they are often without adequate preparation. The gatherings are largely about municipal officials instructing local citizens about *what they plan to do*, without any significant engagement or debate.

Ngamlana and Eglin (2015: 8) underline that community participation in IDP process have 'too often become formulaic and symbolic' and that the local sphere of government must improve its consultation, communication, and feedback methods. Moreover, Hicks (2003:5) indicates that the other issue of the IDP representative forums is the nature of their structures, which necessitates the involvement of recognised structures. Basically, this criterion prohibits less-organized community groups as well as people who might be interested in participating. This approach has been criticized by academics such as Habib et al., who argue it is not likely that community groups with fewer resources will be well-organized (Ngamlana & Eglin, 2015:8).

It can be stated that the IDP Representative Forums demand for participation through recognized groups hampers participation, particularly among disadvantaged communities.

In addition, according to Njenga (2009:60), the IDP representative forum lacks decision-making powers which lie with the various stakeholders. This is abundantly demonstrated in Todes' (2002: 19) research of the Ugu District Municipality. This type of involvement is referred to as a token by Arnstein (1969: 216), as opposed to genuine engagement, which provides individuals the authority to influence outcomes. Looking at the obstacles connected with IDP Representative Forums, it is possible to assert that meaningful participation in IDP Representative Forums, where residents may influence choices, is hampered (Njenga, 2009:61). Similarly, IDP steering committees limit public involvement in the IDP formulation as they are made up entirely of officials and councillors, not community representatives.

4.2.3 Sector-planning processes are poorly aligned to IDP processes

According to Ngamlana and Eglin (2015:7), citizens can also indirectly participate in the IDP process through sector plans, which are a legally mandated method. Most of the time, sector plans are created on an ad hoc basis, with minimal citizen engagement. This is supported by Afesis-Corplan's study of public participation in sector planning. He shows that municipalities rarely hold public meetings during the development of new sector plans, and normally very few people are present for these meetings. However, these meetings are not part of any continuous and formal planning and evaluation process. Furthermore, because sector departments are not accountable to the municipality, they are not obligated to submit or consult with the community with regard to their developmental plans. It can conclude that the frail development planning capability has stemmed in municipalities being incapable to develop excellence sector plans which are a keystone for the development of quality five (5) year IDPs.

4.2.4 Low Civic Education

Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote: *“Plants are shaped by cultivation and men by education. We are born weak, we need strength; we are born totally unprovided, we need aid; we are born stupid, we need judgment. Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown is given us by education.”* To explain, psychology has revealed that the “habits of mind as well as the habits of the heart – the dispositions that inform the democratic ethos – are not

inherited” (Lamons, 2012). Hence, civic education should play a critical role in educating young South Africans about citizenship and civic life.

Drawing from this quote, Barber (1984:234) wrote knowledge and the quest for knowledge tend to follow rather than to precede political engagement. The concept of civic education is critical to participation and also promotes the process of involvement. However, Barnes (2011:45) argues that in South Africa, when municipalities promote or fund civic education, it only educates the citizens on how government is structured and not how this structure affects people’s daily engagements with the municipality and how they can engage with government in accessible ways. In this way, only the government appears to comprehend where collaboration rests in the concept of cooperative governance, as the community members continue to be shuffled back and forth, while government systems remain improperly calibrated and fragmented (Afesis-Corplan, 2015:24).

Ngamlana (2015:24) note that municipalities only emphasis voting as a main form of participation. However, they simply teach people why they must vote, not how the voting process affects voters' everyday life — the why of voting, the IEC, and other emphasis on how to vote. As a result, public participation in the IDP process is compromised, as the citizens are not well informed about public participation in the IDP process.

In addition, Williams (2006) states that when local residents participate in meetings, they are usually not well informed or are uninformed participants, leading to a gradual decline in community participation in meetings. Not much has been done to empower the community members to engage actively and meaningfully in the municipal projects (Mosotho, 2013:5). Municipal officials usually avoid clarifying the state of service delivery to communities, the purpose and how the IDP would progress, its advantage and the impact if community members are not engaged in the planning process.

The above arguments are justified by Molale’s (2014) study, which concluded that to maximize the value and meaningfulness of public participation in IDP, the local residents must be proficient in recognizing their complicated role in the IDP procedures. Hence this study inferred that a lack of civic education leads to a lack of required knowledge, information, competence, and capacity to effectively engage in the IDP process, particularly in decision-making.

4.2.5 Poorly Skilled Municipal Officials

The majority of the barriers to public involvement in rural areas are that ward committees have low levels of education and skill, and that there are power disparities that make effective engagement hard (Ragolane & Malatji, 2021, 34). Hence, saying *a fish starts to rot from the head to the bottom* appears to be common, particularly in rural areas when compared with a lack of skills, qualification, competence, and expertise in all three spheres of government. The facilitation of public participation, especially in local government tends to be complicated and generally requires variety of skills, knowledge, experience, leadership, and managerial skills (Smith, 2008:14). As stated above, if the community have poor civic education, it becomes difficult for them to make significant contributions, to debate and ultimately lead to citizens disengaging from participating. In the same manner, when local officials lack planning skills and experience, they become an obstruction to more meaningful participation. Overall, this leads to lack of participation in the IDP process (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999).

Theron (2005:137) adds that the IDP implementation process also continues to fail because municipal officials who are intended to execute the IDP with local community engagement do not properly comprehend the principles, aims, and tactics of development planning and project management. As a case in point, Smith and Visser (2009:18) indicated that the skills audit of 373 ward committee members in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality conducted by the Project for Conflict Resolution and Development in 2008 revealed that just 34 members (9%) had any post-matric training or qualification, while 59 members (16%) did not have a matric qualification.

Similarly, Piper (2009), in his study of uMsunduzi municipality managerial roles have merely a general education between Grade 1 and Grade 9 as their top qualification. Moreover, a skills audit at uMsunduzi municipality showed that 46% of the municipal officials had only a matric certificate as their highest qualification. This was criticized by former President Jacob Zuma when speaking at a South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Conference. He advised municipalities to hire qualified employees and stated that officials' credentials should not be compromised. He chastised municipal officials who recruited unqualified relatives or friends, stating, *don't hire individuals because you feel sorry for them or because they are your cousin or friend* (Reddy, 2016). The North-west and Limpopo municipalities have been named as municipalities having the worst deficit of skills.

According to Munzhedzi (2016: 292), this is a common issue in rural municipalities, owing to their inability to address scarce skills and limited income sources. Moreover, rural municipalities are unable to establish sufficient community participation strategies in order to increase participation in their communities. This contributes to various municipalities being turned into cash cows by municipal officials. Khawula (2016) states that this is a present situation in Umzumbe municipality, where municipal officials are unable to establish sufficient community participation strategies, and officials are the only actors in the development of the IDP.

Venter (1998:208) explains that municipal management and administration need a high level of financial knowledge. With lack said expertise financial mishandling becomes expected, thereby worsening an already complex matter. In most municipalities, municipal officials have a tendency of not explaining the status of service delivery to community members, the aim and how the integrated development planning process would progress, its advantage and risks, if residents are not involved in the planning process. This has been attributed to uneducated officials who have poor required skills and knowledge base in public and development management methods to perform effectively (Masango, 2002:55).

As a case in point, in another municipality in the Eastern Cape, the panel tasked by the District Council to appoint a Municipal Manager was told by the ANC Regional Executive who should be appointed. This candidate was far less qualified and experienced compared to all the other candidates the panel had short-listed. Additionally, in their study, Visser and Smith (2009:18) showed that several ward committee members were unsure of their tasks or how to perform their responsibilities.

Furthermore, Bogopa (2016:115) points up that, in the guise of cadre deployment, most local municipalities hire officials in top positions who lack the necessary skills, knowledge, and qualifications. The approach of deploying cadres allows the party in power to reinforce its grip of most councils with submissive and weak administrators who are advocating their parties' interests (Williams, 2006). In his research of the public participation in ward committees in Rustenburg municipality, Putu (2006:28) concludes that there is no suitable outline of democracy at local sphere of government and basically local people are not well informed on how to positively engage with local government.

4.2.6 A Lack of Access to Information

According to Zantsi (2021:160), the ease of access of essential information is a pillar of public engagement in local governance. Smith and Visser (2009:19) reported that the competence of

ward committees to facilitate community participation in the IDP process is hindered by the lack of access to information at ward level. The limitation relates to the function of ward committees in conveying municipal budget information, which is typically only accessible in highly technical, is unreadable and is seldom presented in a manner that offer relevant information on ward budget allocations. More than that, no member of the community can make a meaningful contribution in the IDP formulation unless they have access to accurate and up-to-date information (Khawula, 2016:70). Most communities are not well-informed about the IDP process and hence cannot engage constructively.

4.2.7 A Lack of Resource and Time

Public participation in the Integrated Development Planning process has challenges due to lack of resources (time, money, and location). According to Smith (2010:505), lack of these resources contributes to the decline of public participation in the IDP process. During the community meetings, decisions are often made hastily without enough time to allow all the community members to participate. This results in many community members being excluded or not represented in the process of decision-making (Van der Waladt, 2007:166). Researchers Theron, Caesar, and David (2007:7) also write that local municipalities lack resources and competence to execute and maintain participatory development initiatives like the IDP. To support the above assertion, Williams (2006) adds that scheduled meetings of municipal councils are being marred by lack of the requisite facilitation or coordination infrastructure and skills to optimise community participation; lack of public transport to and from the venues of the meeting; and lack of logistical capacity and human resources.

Mosotho (2013:55), in her study of Capricorn District Municipality, reported that access to transportation has been highlighted as one of the elements influencing community turnout and involvement in community meetings. She revealed that residents of Ga-Maleboho village, in Aganang and Blouberg municipality, claim that they are unable to attend municipal meetings because the municipality does not offer transportation. Diedericks and Seithloho (2018:8), in their study of Tlokwe Local Municipality, pointed out that in some wards meeting places were few, therefore meetings were held in people's backyards or garages, which posed a significant difficulty. Moreover, in uMsunduzi municipality, ward councillors complained about being forced to pay their own travelling expenses in order to attend meetings and that they lack such basic materials as stationary (Zulu, 2020:120).

In addition, Khawala (2016:69) points out that some community members are usually occupied with making a living and are therefore unable to attend meetings. Usually, women and unemployed people in the community are amongst those people. For instance, the study by Piper and Chanza (2006) of uMsunduzi Municipality discovered that young people were under-represented and ‘under-participated’ in ward committee processes. Similarly, Piper and Deacon (2008) revealed that in uMsunduzi Municipality there was limited participation of women in municipal processes. In addition to that, most municipalities, after securing funds, usually prioritize the community needs that are identified by the sponsors (sectoral departments or donor organisations), with insufficient attention given to the needs identified by the community in the IDP formulation process. As a consequence of lack of resources, ward councillors encounter difficulties in keeping community members actively engaged and enthusiastic.

4.2.8 Outsourcing

Outsourcing is one of the New Public Management (NPM) principle. The New Public Management is a collection of concepts divided into two sub-categories. The first sub-category is the implementation of private management concepts such as more responsive and efficient services, performance agreements, and increased managerial autonomy and flexibility. The last sub-category is more often used in South Africa, as it necessitates a wider use of market mechanisms to deliver services like privatization and public–private partnerships (Van Riet, 2017:69). Outsourcing is defined as the shifting of operational rights and duties, along with service-providing operations, from government institutions to suitable private-sector businesses, primarily for non-core services (Munzhedzi, 2020:7). However, this research emphasises that the argument of non-core services is hardly applied, since many municipalities usually transfer their main responsibilities to the private sector.

The research found that in South Africa, municipalities are rapidly outsourcing municipal services, particularly essential services found in the IDP such as water, housing, and sanitation. The main limitation of outsourcing the mentioned services is that accountability, participation, transparency, and affordability are compromised. This is because the municipalities are no longer in direct contact with their citizens, and they are distant from providing genuine services to the people. This presents a serious danger to the community's interests, for which the municipality is responsible (Cloete, 2012). The danger is potentially bigger if a municipality decides to outsource, for example, due to a skills deficit. Due to a lack of expertise to provide

the service adequately, the municipality may choose to remain silent and let the external body complete the task without further intervention (Munzhedzi, 2020:7).

In terms of public participation, confidentiality agreements in outsourcing processes (contracts) usually create barriers to public participation. As a result of an outsourcing contract, communities frequently end up paying vastly higher tariffs or being subjected to unduly onerous credit control measures. The term 'affordability' is used in this research to refer to the affordability of tariffs rather than the overall cost of the contract to the municipality (Johnson, 2004:140).

Strangely, government policy continues to encourage outsourcing as a valid solution for municipalities' service delivery. For instance, the White Paper on Local Government (1998) emphasizes the need for municipalities to modify their service delivery approaches, and especially advises municipalities to explore outsourcing as a possible service delivery strategy. Unfortunately, compliance with the White Paper, amongst other regulations, has become excessively costly.

Additionally, the research also identified the limitation of New Public Management in brushing aside the people by outsourcing many services to consultants. Tsakani Maluleke, the Auditor-General, has expressed worry about municipalities spending R1 billion on consultants when they already have personnel in their finance divisions doing the same work (IOL, 2021). The South African Municipal Association (SALGA) also expressed its disappointment. It posits that municipal officials need to be careful not to use consultants unnecessarily in their respective municipalities. For instance, the South African Human Rights Commission (2021) outed Northwest province municipalities for being dependent on the services of consultants. The organization emphasized that this has been going on for 5 years, with at least 91% of the municipalities utilizing the services of consultants.

It must be emphasized that the aforementioned obstacles in the facilitation of public participation in the IDP formulation cannot be overlooked and should be addressed. This includes the detrimental impact of party funding. The ruling party, whether it is the ANC nationally or the DA in the western cape, fails to promote a sufficiently transparent, non-partisan participation environment. This has left the community members voiceless, not because they lack the ability to speak, but because the mechanisms through which they participate and make key decisions about their own development have been significantly

lowered to politically manipulated processes rife with coercion, with citizens only participating to vote to approve the government's pre-planned activities and projects.

It can be stated that the above challenges have resulted in the public losing faith in public institutions. To substantiate the above argument, the research looks at a recent South African public opinion survey. The research reveals that the political terrain surveys of current levels of public trust show a dreary picture. The SA Reconciliation Barometer (2021) public opinion survey demonstrates South Africa's trust in public institution and representatives is higher than it was in 2019. According to Hofmeyr (2021), satisfaction with democratic governance in South Africa has declined from a peak of 60% to a minimum of 31% between 2008 and 2021. This percentage has dropped by 17 percent over the period of just ten years. The research states that these results do not come as a surprise, looking at the above factors that limit public participation in the IDP process.

4.3 Linking Benjamin Barber's theory with the realities of public participation in IDP process

In line with linking the theory of Barber (1984) to this study, the researcher points out that the type of democracy utilized in South Africa can be viewed as thin. It limits full and meaningful public participation in the IDP process in local government. This is because in this type of democracy used in South Africa, *"citizenship is only a legal matter; people are bound together by self-interested contracts; and they are politically passive"* (quoting Barber). The research contends that the fundamental challenge of this form of democracy is the lack of public participation as seen in most municipalities in the IDP process in South Africa; it also hinders the quality of democracy, since only a minority of the community can fully participate in the decision-making process that impacts their standard of living.

In his study, Barber (1984) contends that representation is contradictory with autonomy since it delegates and therefore risks alienating political will at the expense of true self-government and sovereignty. For example, in the context of local government in South Africa, Molale (2021), in his study named A framework for participatory communication in the IDP context of Ward 31 in Rustenburg Local Municipality revealed that party politics plays a major role in the inefficiency of ward systems as a tool to facilitate public participation.

Cloete (2012:72) also identified the disadvantages of representation. First is the availability of municipal councillors and ward committee members. The research states that, in most cases,

ward councillors fail to attend the ward committee meetings, despite the fact that they are the chairpersons. This complicates public participation in the IDP process since ward committee members and ward councillors are both community representatives, and if they do not collaborate on policy issues, there will be no consensus on how to build communities. As a case in point, research done by Raga and Taylor (2005:249) discovered that ward committee members did not work effectively with their respective ward councillor on policy concerns.

Second limitation, according to Sekgale (2016), is the degree of representation by ward representatives. This is connected to the proportional representative electoral system used in local government. This shows that the existing election system and the structure of the party system give political parties far too much influence in deciding who is qualified to represent the community, and these restrict and incapacitate the power that citizens have over representatives.

Thirdly, Cloete (2012) maintained that, in general, the degree of representativeness in local government is weak. This is mostly visible as most municipal officials are not “representative of the broader community and this poses a challenge for inclusive decision-making.” Given these limitations, it is evident that local government in terms of representation has to be altered. The above substantiate why Barber (1984) argues that in representative democracy there are only “leaders and followers; the efficiency of representation is dependent on this clear definition of functions. Lead or follow or get the hell out of the way.

Supporting the above assertions, contemporary scholars such as Piper (2010), Molale (2021), Cash and Swatuk (2010), Mogoba (2012), Masuku and Molohe (2020) have revealed that the facilitation of public participation in municipal programmes like the IDP is weak and not working optimally. The participatory mechanisms limit adequate and meaningful citizen participation and if they do allow participation, the residents are only informed or consulted. Additionally, politics becomes a profession which accumulates the power of the masses or constituents and pursues them at their pleasure. Arguably, municipalities do not protect the community, especially the minority and mainly their liberty, which dominant parties often violate in the name of the community and service delivery promises.

This was evident in the recent (2021) local government local elections, where the ANC visited poor and underdeveloped areas to promise them services that will never be delivered. This habit is intended to offer some token gestures in order to obtain political votes. This is undeniably a self-interested and avaricious practice that further marginalizes constituents.

However, Chelin (2021) commented that the 2021 polls marked the lowest voter turnout in post-apartheid South Africa. This reflects that electorates have lost trust in the political leadership and are rejecting empty promises.

Fourth, the institutions are unable to manage the obstacles that the contemporary world seeks to erect in the way of participation, such as scale, technology, complexity, and the dilemma of parochialism, as Barber wanted. Fifth, they are also not practical or realistic. Sixth, they don't convey the unique claims of robust democracy as a philosophy of discourse. Finally, they fail to tackle societal problems like bias, homogeneity, and prejudice.

Wampler (2000:14), citing Barber, states that if participatory institutions are set to Barber's standard, they have the potential to produce social capital, empower individuals, and make government more accountable. Participatory mechanisms in local government are mainly representative; however, according to Barber, when we delegate, we not only cede authority, but we also undermine the fundamental understanding of our citizenship. In addition, Barber proposed that governments' funds be invested on reviving public thinking and civic education platforms. However, in local government, not much has been done to empower the community members to engage actively and meaningfully in the municipal projects.

4.4 Public accountability in South African local governance

South Africa has experienced several accountability challenges since 1994, including “Mbeki-era AIDS denialism; the arms deal scandal; the decimation and looting of state-owned enterprises; the weakening of functioning government institutions; gross violations of procurement policies; the capture of the state resources to enrich private interests; deficits in public health systems directly responsible for human tragedies; and the failure to meet basic socio-economic rights, giving rise to service delivery protests and obstructing millions from living a life in accordance with their right to basic human dignity.” Local government has not been spared from lack of accountability. President Cyril Ramaphosa has stated that the deterioration of accountability in local governments is alarming. Public services are not delivered, yet none of the government officials are held accountable.

The launch of the Batho Pele principles – a Sotho phrase for putting our people first – was intended at recognizing the need for service delivery and to enhance a culture that would improve efficiency and accountability. Nevertheless, as seen by the prevalence of corruption within the public sector, this endeavour appears to have failed to take root or produce

substantial effects in altering the politico-administrative culture (Franks, 2014:50). The research emphasises the argument that the integrated development planning process, public participation and accountability of the municipal officials are important, and ultimately lead to the delivery of services to the public. Hence, municipal officials as the representatives of the community must explain their decisions and be accountable for the repercussions (Williams, 2009:22).

Accountability is seen as a critical prerequisite for preventing abuse of power abuse and malfeasance, as well as helping to ensure that power is aimed toward achieving responsiveness, effectiveness, transparency, and efficiency. It is a significant feature in local governance since it encourages public participation. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that accountability is rooted in the principle of *citizens have the right to know and to receive information*, thus multiple legislation supports the concept of accountability (Sikhakane & Reddy, 2011:85). Below, the research briefly mentions the legislative framework that guides accountability in municipalities.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) Section 152(1)(a) highlights the significance of accountability in the local sphere. It states that various municipalities should enable democratic and accountable local government. The White Paper (1998) further highlights that beyond voting, developing local government necessitates political leadership that generates chances for community to hold representatives accountable. The Municipal Structures Act (Section 19 (3)) asserts that in fulfilling its tasks and executing its powers, the municipal council must devise means to consult with the community and community organizations. The Municipal Financial Management Act Annual Report (56 of 2003) requires municipalities to produce and adopt annual reports to enhance accountability to the local community for choices made by the municipality or municipal entities during the year. The preamble of the Code of Conduct of Councillors has outlined that municipal councillor are selected to lead local communities on local bodies, ensuring that municipalities have organized systems for local community accountability. Municipal chief officials, as well as municipal councillors, are accountable for making policy decisions and allocating scarce resources. Despite the mentioned legislation, accountability in municipalities continues to fail. Public participation is frequently overlooked, and authorities are not held accountable when they fail to conduct their legal obligations. In most municipalities municipal officials are not normally held liable and accountable to the public (Ababio, 2004:278).

Kanyane, Zikhali et al. (2020:13) highlight that for accountability to be deemed efficient, a bottom-up approach should be utilized to provide the community and community organizations with the means to monitor their representatives. They also maintain that engaging citizens in local governance improves accountability and the ability of local authorities to solve problems, creates more inclusive and cohesive communities, and increases the number and quality of initiatives made by communities. Moreover, citizens' participation in local government promotes accountability and the power to oversee problems, builds more inclusive and healthy communities, and boosts the quantity and quality of community projects.

Even with the assertions of Kanyane et al. (2020) the present weak and inefficient public engagement channels in the local sphere in South Africa make it difficult for municipal officials and politicians to be held accountable by the people. In other words, in defiance of various introduced laws and policies aimed at fostering purposeful public participation, the deployment of these policies and legislative frameworks has been unable to achieve substantial outcomes in cases of accountability, responsibility, transparency, and consultation in the management of local government affairs.

To link accountability with public participation in the IDP in local government, the study will use the Municipal Systems Act (2000), which states that the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is an instrument to be created by all municipalities to render services. Ngamlana and Eglin (2015:4) further indicate that community are expected to be capable of influencing the nature of the IDP and hold the government to account through institutional structures such as ward committees, sector forums, IDP representative forums, and project steering committees. The municipality specifies its aims and development ambitions during the construction of the IDP (Nyawo, 2017:63). Thereafter government funds are subsequently distributed to municipal projects and agendas. It is at this stage where public accountability is necessary, by allowing community contributions, recommendations, and suggestions (Piper, 2010:16). In this dissertation, IDP is used as a facilitator for mutual accountability on the agreed-upon initiatives and resource allocation to contribute to the municipality's long-term growth.

However, the thesis argues that community members are unable to use the existing above-mentioned institutions as they are weak and inefficient. Municipal representatives are accountable to the political party whose interests are usually more represented. Based on Sekgala's (2016) investigation, most ward committees are seized by political parties to accommodate the expectations of the political party, not of the public. In addition, Dube,

Mnguni and Tschudin (2021) set out that ward committees have become extremely politicized, due to the competition for dominance and control over municipal institutions. This shows that ward committees are not accountable to the community as they are 'captured' and utilized to promote certain people's or groups of interest's material and/or political goals. Members of the community reported when they attend meetings at their respective municipalities, they are only told what their representatives have covered, as well as what is planned to be accomplished (Van Rooyen & Mokoena, 2013).

Friedman (2013) draws attention to the fact that ward councillors have little incentive to feel accountable to their local constituency because of political behaviours in South Africa, which have been explained more as a marker of identity than as a rational choice between various candidates, policies, or programmes. They know that deficient performance may result in lower turnout (or other indicators of dissatisfaction and pessimism) rather than a change in party support (Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, 2009:32). The study conducted by Sekgala (2016) revealed that the predominant partisan nature of ward committees weakens their responsibility as representational institutions in facilitating accountability. It also goes beyond weakening their independence; it also has a direct impact on civil society's ability to participate with local government. It is worth mentioning that lack of accountability on the local level in South Africa undermines the legitimacy of municipalities and offers space for political interference (see above).

Cloete (2012: 77) states that the electoral system is the main instrument for holding municipal officials accountable. She posits that regular elections are a vital accountability technique for government performance by enabling constituents to vote on whether to prolong a government's term. Moreover, for elections to function as a meaningful accountability mechanism, electorates must be prepared to penalize bad governance by retracting their support and voting out the municipal officials based on their prior deficient performance.

In practical, using elections which occur every four years as a main instrument to hold municipal officials accountable is slow. Numerous civic groups have complained that using the elections to keep the municipal officials accountable is wasteful, as they must wait for four years (Pote, 2021). Moreover, Sikhakhene (2011) points out the electoral imbalances in the party system, and its static and predictable nature of voting outcome have raised concerns about the depth and quality of South Africa's democracy. Also, because the ineffectiveness of elections does not hold government officials accountable. This results in political parties in

municipalities taking the community members' votes for granted as they are questioned during elections.

It should be noted that lack of accountability is a transmissible flaw from the PR electoral system. The existing electoral system limits accountability in local government, as it mainly stresses the significance of political parties in choosing ward candidates. This is not an old problem, in fact Mbandlwana and Mishi (2020) criticized the existing electoral system. They argued that this electoral system denies the citizens the opportunity to pick their favourite representatives to serve them. For instance, ward councillors are elected using a mixed PR system; other councillors are directly chosen by the community, but PR councillors are elected from a party list, according to Cloete (2012:12).

The disadvantage of proportional representative is clear in that the communities they choose their preferred political party, and representatives are chosen from a party list that taxpayers did not necessarily help construct. Community members have little or no ability to remove them after they are in office. Ngamlana (2017:24) highlights that under the current legislative framework, community members do not have the ability to remove their PR ward representatives. The member of the provincial executive makes the judgement. The Municipal Structures Act dictates that only a MEC taking responsibility for local government in a province has the authority to dismiss or remove a councillor following multiple investigations and submissions. Hence, ward councillors have little motive to account to community members since they are not subjected to being removed by them and have political ambitions. It is worth stating that also those who are voted for by the community are accountable to political parties instead of the community. Because their political career is reliant on the political party. One can conclude that the way the electoral system works at the local level does not fully reflect the people's will.

In addition, Cloete (2012:20) adds that project leaders and councillors utilize political gatekeeping to control the flow of information to the community at large. He realizes that "accountability flows upwards to the project as leaders are held accountable to the project and not to the community, and that it is difficult to gain access to information by external members of the public" (Cloete,212). It is evident that the existing measures are primarily intended to legitimize the project rather than anything else.

On top of that, Heller (2009) put forward that there are poor channels of communication between the municipal officials and their constituents, leading to the community failing to fully

utilize available accountability procedures, and the unavailability of municipal mechanisms which were formulated to evaluate council decisions. In addition to the aforementioned issues, the privatization or outsourcing of numerous government operations, as well as a greater dependence on consultants, has effectively pushed out community structures. As a result, key community services and functions are delegated to external organizations that are unfamiliar with local communities (Heller, 2021:15).

Ngamlana and Eglin (2015:8) put forward that the majority of municipalities in South Africa have poor project management systems, which impede the involvement of the residents in overseeing the implementation of the Integrated Development Plan and its related initiatives. Considering that the communities usually do not know who is accountable for what initiative and to which level, the municipality and other role players can pin the fault elsewhere, leading to the absence of accountability. Throughout the years, projects have been conducted with no accountability for poor delivery. When individuals are held accountable, they are seldom prosecuted, nor are they subjected to condemnation or punishment for their poor delivery (Ngamlana, 2015:30).

In many circumstances, lack of accountability in municipalities stems from the inability to comprehend ‘who, for what, how, and when’ municipal officials must account to achieve openness and democratic developmental local government (Mfene, 2014:29). Also, to Memela et al. (2008:7) most municipalities lack a solid performance monitoring mechanism, making it difficult for councillors and CSOs to track progress and, as a result, hold the administration accountable.

Authors Mautjane, Nzo, Memela, and van Hoof (2008:8, highlighted that most municipalities lack mechanisms for residents to examine council decisions or file complaints. If such mechanisms exist, they are ineffective because grievances are not managed in a systematic manner. The researchers argued that community members are unaware of the quality standards to which they are entitled, making it harder for them to hold the service provider accountable. Furthermore, community-based organizations are also at fault, since they do not fully utilize available institutions to keep the municipal officials accountable; this is because most have a humanitarian goal and are weak in campaigning and lobbying.

On the other hand, Mukelani (2016:33) indicates that the lack of accountability during the implementation of or the review of the IDP is due to the hierarchical character of the state, particularly relating to tender deals with the corporate sector. Also, most municipalities are

brimming with blatant theft of government finances. It is worth noting that most IDP projects in the communities are implemented or delivered through tenders and authorities often take advantage of this procedure to conspire with private sectors to splurge state funds. This is substantiated by the substantial number of corruption charges recorded against local government officials (Public protector, 2013). Moreover, most municipalities have a tradition of patronage and nepotism. The study concludes that because of lack of accountability, the financial status of most municipalities in South Africa continues to crumble.

4.4.1 Lack of Accountability Shown in Auditor-General Results

In the post-apartheid era, more than R200 billion has vanished from South African municipalities. This money could have helped underprivileged South Africans, who today do not have proper housing and water supply. This shows that the problem of accountability is not new in the sphere of local government. The office of the Auditor General is responsible for ensuring that public sector organizations are held to a high standard of accountability. The Auditor General is particularly concerned with two types of accountabilities: financial and performance accountability.

Looking at the Auditor General's 2011-12 report, just 5% of municipalities received a clean audit report. The 2015/16 Auditor General's report revealed that only 33 local municipalities were found to be in compliance with essential regulations, resulting in a clean audit. The Auditor General's 2019-2020 report revealed that only 27 municipalities out of 257 in the country obtained clean audits. Worryingly, Auditor General Tsakani Maluleke (2020) stated that R26 billion was lost in irregular expenditure and became wary about the continuing usage of consultants. This is said to be a tendency in several municipalities in the North-West Province. Adding to the above reports, twelve municipalities in the province failed to submit financial accounts. The level of irregular spending continues to rise, and nothing is being done to recoup or hold people accountable (Makinana, 2020). These statistics are frightening, and they demonstrate that local accountability is failing.

Bogopa (2016:116) presents an argument that the employment of municipal officials who do not have the needed skills and capability inside the municipality continues to be the largest underlying reason for municipalities having unclean audit results. Also, the Office of the Auditor General acknowledged this problem, stating that some chief financial officers had matric as their highest education level. These CFOs usually struggle to prepare financial statements in time for audits. Consequently, municipalities spend millions of rands on

consultants to assist them with the preparation of financial statements. In particular, the municipalities in Northwest have exhausted R29m on consultants in past years.

Considering the above-mentioned it can be stated that municipal financial issues have worsened due to a lack of accountability. Municipal officials are well-informed that holding them accountable is impossible, therefore they loot without fear of being caught. Most municipal officials have big man syndrome, as they know that they have political protection, and they are untouchable. One can say that in most municipalities there is a culture of no consequences. As a case in point, the Mbhashe Local Municipality intentionally appointed Siphiwo Sohena as acting municipal manger, even though he was a manager who left a trail of corruption and mismanagement in the two municipalities where he previously worked (The Weekend Post, 2012).

This demonstrates that city officials plainly neglect controls (including excellent record keeping) and adherence with crucial legislation, as it created an environment conducive to fraud. In this regard, the Auditor General's Office has no teeth to bite; instead, it only detects irregularities, misappropriation of public funds, and misuse of public property in municipalities. It also lacks the authority to ensure that audit findings and recommendations are implemented (Mashamaite, 2013:95). Open to debate, the lack of accountability results in municipalities failing to meet their IDP goals, which has a detrimental impact on the lives of the communities.

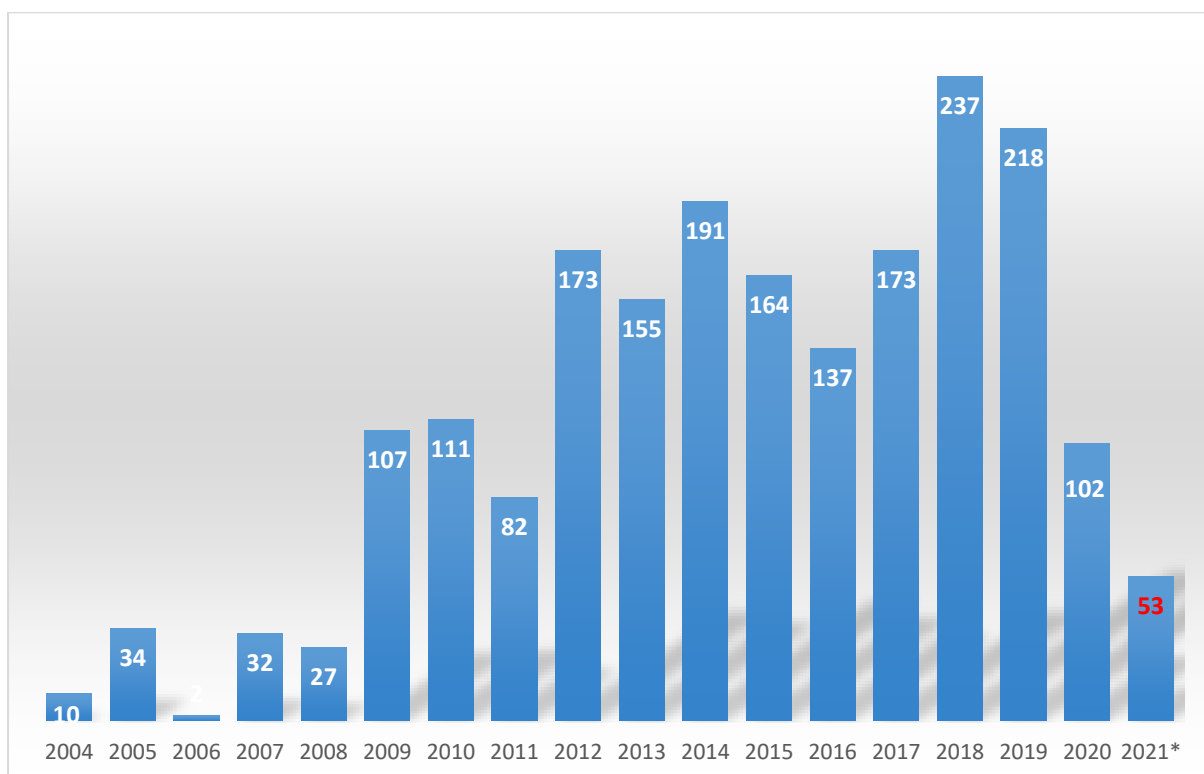
Owing to lack of useful accountability procedures, corruption has reached worrisome levels in local government. Currently, just one third of South African municipalities are functional in terms of meeting the minimum threshold of efficiency demanded of them. This means, among other things, that local government programs like as IDP are in jeopardy, and service delivery is jeopardized (Afesis-Corplam, 2015:23).

Briefly, it can be argued that the policies, legislatures, and mechanisms in position to deter municipal officials from abusing public funds have failed. Disappointingly for the community members, municipal officials who fail to perform their responsibilities face no significant consequences (Neves, 2021). Considering the mismanagement of public of funds and the overall inefficiency of local government, the rising number of service delivery protests are reasonable. It is important to note that these protests are mostly about poor delivery of water, sanitation, housing, and electricity (Jain, 2010:31).

To show the increasing number of service delivery protests, the thesis will look at the municipal IQ reports from various years. In 2018, the Municipal IQ reported that there were 237 major service delivery protests held throughout municipalities, a major increase from the number of service delivery protests in 2017. What is more concerning is that they were 94% more violent compared to 76% of all service delivery demonstrations documented since 2004. Moreover, the Municipal IQ highlighted that in 2020 there was a considerable number of service delivery protests, surpassing the number in 2011.

However, the dissertation emphasized that the decrease of service delivery protests in 2020 was because South Africa went on a lockdown for months, and public gatherings were outlawed. In 2021, however, service delivery demonstrations have begun to escalate in frequency and severity. Drawing from the results provided below, it shows that community members are not involved in the Integrated Development Planning process, so they resort to invented spaces of participation to demand services. It can be concluded that lack of public accountability leads to service delivery protests. As the graph below shows, the ongoing institutional collapse of several of the country's municipalities, as well as the broader on-going service delivery-related protests (see Figure 3), are damning enough.

Figure 3: *Service delivery protests, by year (2004 –2021)*



Source: **Municipal IQ** Municipal Hotspots Monitor (Jan-May)

4.5 Overall Assessment of Public Participation in IDP Formulation at Local Government Level in South Africa

Considering the above discussion, it can be stated that in South Africa, a challenge for municipalities remains to find ways to engage with the communities during the drafting stage of the IDPs. Most of the research revealed that local communities in South Africa are still not fully engaged in the municipal Integrated Development Planning process. It should be noted that community participation in the formulation process of the IDP in most local municipalities is still a ceremonial procedure, and community members' voices are notably absent. It is worth mentioning that local municipal IDP public participation processes usually take a top-down approach rather than a bottom-up approach, or a mixture of the two. It can be argued that the fortunate few have exposure to a wide range venue of participations that are not adequately promoted or open, especially to underprivileged groups. It can argue that community participation in IDPs in most municipalities is pre-determined, providing a brief time for the community to comment or air grievances, and hence they have minimal impact on IDP formulations. This is in contradiction of the White Paper on Local Government's (1998) demand, that this approach be community-driven and community-capable.

The key challenges to effective public participation within the IDP include a lack of a culture of public participation, a lack of information, inadequate skills for public participation, population diversity, negative attitudes and perceptions towards public participation, and the cost of public participation. Existing studies show that ward committees and other participatory mechanisms (chapter 3) of local governance are not responsive to the needs of local communities, as these structures tend not to represent the interests of all community members. In many municipalities, ward committees are not fully functioning, lacking clarity on their role and function, plagued by political manipulation, under-resourced and lacking secretariat support, requiring capacity-building interventions, and convened only at the whim of the ward councillors. Despite one of the key roles of ward committees being to drive community-based planning as part of the IDP process, this has not taken off in a satisfactory manner, and ward committees have frequently been overlooked by municipalities in this regard. Moreover, the capacity of councillors and officials is sometimes a further impediment to public participation in the IDP.

In addition, another reason municipalities fail to involve communities in the IDP formulation, is that they present budget information in a non-technical and accessible format to the public, as one of the barriers to the participatory budget process is the highly technical nature of much of the content of the IDP, which to the average member of the public can be inaccessible and alienating. As outlined above, the state has failed to introduce adequate policy frameworks and practical guidelines for public participation and endow established units with sufficient authority and resources to drive the public participation processes.

In South African local government, the privileged – those who are organized and have control over resources, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), enterprises, and other related interest groups – have dominated such spaces because of the lack of availability of information on government decision-making, and the limited resources and talents expected to participate in participatory processes. It is difficult for individuals with limited resources to influence government processes. As a result, protests have emerged as the only vehicle accessible to the public that yields outcomes in the shortest timescale, merely because the legal redress processes are either ineffective or unavailable. When relied upon, institutional structures like petitions committees, oversight committees, municipal councils, and so forth have all miserably failed to offer real remedies for communities. Moreover, it is worth stating that the issue with these institutions is mostly one of capability and political will.

4.6 Conclusion

Chapter four aimed at exploring the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government. Identified factors are the low level of civic education, weak participatory institutions, a lack of resources and time, and lack of access to information. The chapter showed that ward committees and councillors are more accountable to their political parties rather than to the community they should serve. The chapter posits that the electoral system in South Africa is the main limitation of public participation in IDP formulation and accountability in local government. Also, that public participation in local government in South Africa is mainly confined to methods of informing and consultation, in the absence of the guarantee that the community input would be considered in decision-making. Using the theory of Benjamin Barber, this chapter alludes that representative democracy limits public participation in local government. The chapter has revealed that participatory local governance in South Africa is weak and is not working optimally.

To address the problem statement: why public participation in IDP is questionable, the chapter looked at public accountability in local government. It established that there is a lack of accountability in various municipalities caused by: (1) the present weak and inefficient public engagement channels in the local sphere (2) the electoral system (3) the Big man syndrome (4) Political interference (5) the lack of a good performance monitoring system (6) lack of or limited of mechanisms for residents to examine council decisions or file complaints and (7) the hierarchical character of the state and the culture of patronage and nepotism. The chapter used the Auditor General's reports to substantiate the claims of lack of accountability in various municipalities. The chapter also revealed that participatory institutions have been ineffective so far, and this has resulted in communities protesting for better service delivery. In a nutshell, the chapter draws the conclusion that local governance needs be reformed in terms of representation, participation, and accountability, to enable it to be more responsive to the needs of local communities.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

As pointed out before, the purpose of the study is to examine public participation in the Integrated Development Planning process in the local government sphere in South Africa. The previous chapters focused on the following objectives of the research; to align Benjamin Barber's theory with community involvement in the IDP process in local government; to investigate the nature and scale of community involvement in the IDP in local government; to examine the structures and processes in place to facilitate public participation in the IDP process in local government; and also to explore the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government.

Chapters 1 to 3 have done an excellent job of delving into the said questions. Hence, the preceding chapter was all about presenting and discussing the study's findings. In this chapter, the research will summarise the key issues and arguments outlined in Chapter 1 to Chapter 4, then a conclusion and recommendations will be provided concerning how local government can improve public participation in the IDP formulation.

It is reasonable to conclude that South African municipalities have embraced representative democracy over participatory democracy. As a result, municipalities' public participation policies and initiatives are founded on an instrumental reasoning that seeks to obtain public credibility for policies and initiatives while limiting the public's ability to debate and potentially modify policy goals. Hence, a considerable amount of literature on public involvement in South African local government concedes that, while the concept is sound on paper, it is poorly implemented (Friedman, 2006; Brooks, 2017).

Drawing from Barber (1984), the research emphasises that democracy in South African municipalities would fade away from the political landscape unless it becomes a Strong Democracy with a participatory nature. To achieve this, there need to be a reorganization of South Africa's political structure and a cautious shift from representative to direct democracy. Also, the research proposes a gradual change in party realignment, electoral reform, and institutional change that promote greater public participation. Moreover, the research

highlights that to accomplish what Barber speaks of, municipalities in South Africa must implement a self-regulating mechanism of democracy. Benjamin Barber (1984) states that the autocorrecting method is not limited to public will, it also comprises of the institutions of the Bill of Rights, adherence to the rule, the engagement of the highest court with democratically elected representatives, and constitutional review processes. Overall, if South African municipalities can boast that they no longer require great leaders, they would have restored the power of public participation in South Africa and re-entrusted the public participation institution to its participants.

5.2 A Summary of Chapters 1 – 4

Chapter 1 presented an orientation on public participation in the Integrated Development Planning process in the local government sphere in South Africa. In the chapter, a discussion around the concept of public participation during the Apartheid era and the view of public participation post-Apartheid was briefly elaborated. It highlighted that there was no culture of public participation in the white ruled municipalities. Overall, the growth of South African local government from and during the years of apartheid has had a considerable impact on the functioning of local government processes, notably the competence of participatory procedures.

Moreover, chapter 1 introduced the concept of integrated development planning, and public participation, and made the argument that public participation in the IDP has shortcomings. The chapter highlighted that local municipalities are extremely fragmented, with strong partisanship and a minimal culture of public engagement in local government systems. Moreover, the chapter provided a brief analysis of the literature to be analysed when conducting this research, including the research methodology and designs to be adopted for this study.

Chapter 2 was centred around Benjamin Barber's theory on strong democracy which guides and criticizes public participation in the IDP process in local government in South Africa. The chapter put into context Benjamin Barber's theory on public participation, who influenced Barber and how Barber has been criticized. It demonstrated the epistemology which emanated from his perspective. It emphasized, in details, why and how Barber is a good fit for this study. It is worth mentioning that Benjamin Barber rejected representative democracy and formulated a theory that he argues is a more participatory type of democracy intended eventually to replace the representative democracy which is used in South Africa.

Moreover, according to Barber, representative democracy is basically irreconcilable with freedom, since the citizens freely surrender their freedom to selected representatives and the administrations they established; it is conflicting with equality, as persons with the most possessions regularly win the elections and participate in legislative politics; and it is conflicting with social justice, as actual justice only exists in a participatory setting whereby citizens make well-versed decisions as equals in a deliberative setting. Moreover, this chapter was important because themes stemming from Barber's work were used in chapter four.

Chapter 3 focused on examining the nature and scope, and mechanisms and procedures in place to promote citizen engagement in the local government IDP process. This chapter was important as it was a stepladder to chapter 4, which will deeply analyse how effective are the examined nature, mechanisms, and procedures in place to promote citizen engagement in the local government IDP process.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description on the perspective on local government in South African policies and legislative frameworks. It identified the invited and invented spaces of participation as followed: invited spaces are ward councillors, ward committees, community development workers, community-based planning, *Izimbizo*, IDP representative forums, and traditional authority. Invented spaces are social movements and protests. However, the chapter contended that invited spaces are exploited by many local governments to rubber-stamp already established municipal decisions and encourage political elitism. The chapter emphasized the need to focus not just on the procedures employed by municipalities in the IDP process, but also on the nature of such engagement. Utilizing Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, this thesis argued that the modes of participation employed for involvement can also impact the nature of participation.

Chapter 4 of this study examined the existing factors that impede public participation in the IDP process in local government. The chapter identified the factors as follows: weak participatory institutions, poorly skilled municipal officials, a lack of access to information, a lack of resources and time, and outsourcing. In examining and exploring the mentioned factors, the study highlighted that political interference, electoral and political systems play a major part in limiting the function of the participatory mechanisms in local government. For instance, ward committees and councillors as participatory institutions are politicized. The chapter also addressed the primary question of this research, concerning the reasons why public participation is questionable in the local sphere of government (case study: the IDP process).

The chapter put forward that lack of accountability is the reason why public participation is questionable in the sphere of local government. Municipal officials are well-informed that holding them accountable is not easy, therefore they loot without fear of being caught. Most municipal officials have big man syndrome, as they know that they have political protection, and they are untouchable. To substantiate this assertion, the research used the Auditor General's Reports to analyse various municipalities' financial status. The reports revealed that municipal financial issues have worsened due to a lack of accountability.

Chapter 4 also pointed out that the lack of accountability results in municipalities failing to meet their IDP goals, which has a detrimental impact on the lives of the communities. As a result, the lack of service delivery results in service delivery protests. Chapter 4 also linked Benjamin Barber's theory with the realities of public participation in the IDP process. In linking the theory with reality, the study revealed that South Africa utilizes a thin democratic system, which has countless limitations as seen in section 4.3. In a nutshell, the chapter concluded that during the formation of the IDP, community members are just consulted or informed.

5.3 Overall Conclusion

After having studied and analysed the existing literature on the nature of public participation in Integrated Development Planning in local government the research has made the following conclusion.

The dissertation concludes that indeed there is a lack of public participation in the Integrated Development Planning process. While the IDPs are made to enable collaborative governance, a sizeable percentage of municipalities use a top-down approach while developing the IDPs. Residents are arguably relegated to being passive beneficiaries of government assistance, which usually fails to materialize. This is clear, since underprivileged individuals in many municipalities are not actively engaged in the development of their own municipality, which needs to be remedied. It can also be concluded that consulting and informing the public as a means of involving them in the IDP process is ineffective and meaningless. For the IDP to be functional, all participants should be taking part in the decision-making process rather than being consulted or informed, according to the findings of this study. Members of the community should be included in IDP decision-making from start to finish, providing them with a sense of belongingness and responsibility.

The findings of the study allude that the key factor limiting public participation in the IDP formation process is political interference. This is due to municipal confusion over how to interpret and implement the separation of powers principle. In a municipality, the power that pertains to each domain (political and administrative) is not appropriately employed, preventing the principle from being implemented. As a result, many municipalities have been engulfed by politics, particularly by the dominant party inside each municipality. Councillors, for example, use ward committees to gain political favour.

Furthermore, using affiliation to the ruling party as a factor for hiring municipal personnel has harmed public involvement, because the officials deployed or employed are typically uneducated, unskilled, and incompetent. The study emphasizes that local governments will continue to deliver substandard services to the people if municipal councillors make politically motivated and unethical decisions. To summarize, if local municipalities are to achieve the developmental local government goals outlined in the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, effective public participation in local governance is vital.

5.4 Recommendations

Public participation in most municipalities in South Africa appears to have reached a dead end, and unless drastic measures are taken, vulnerable and excluded populations will continue to withdraw from government programs. The following suggestions will assist in resolving them. The researcher recommend that the ward committees and councillors should sign a performance contract with the municipality which will bind them with their key performance indicator. This will enable the municipality/ the office of the speaker to review their performance regularly; this will eventually improve public participation in municipal procedures (IDP). Currently, the ward committees and councillor do not sign any performance contract under the existing legislation. Moreover, it is proposed that municipalities' performance management systems be expanded to better serve as monitoring and evaluation tools for public engagement during the IDP process. Also, the municipality must establish strategies for assessing the progress of the IDP processes. The municipality must implement such strategies, particularly in the rural areas, to ensure that they are efficient and that changes are made when necessary.

The utilization of technology is required to increase public participation in various initiatives, namely the IDP. To communicate information and enhance citizen participation in IDP

processes, the government and citizens must create excellent usage of local community radio, newspapers, cell phones, and other media. We live in an information and technological age, in which technology advances at a breakneck pace and becomes increasingly reachable (Castells, 2010).

For example, social media has been interwoven in our lives and is gradually one of the most widely used communication tools. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn are just a few of the social networking platforms that have millions of users (United Nations, 2014). If South African local government adopts social media, it will be engaging citizens in an environment that they are comfortable with and knowledgeable about managing, which has been cited as a key component in e-participation. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of social media in public engagement has become even more critical (United Nations, 2020).

According to Barber's Strong Democracy theory, the use of technology (social media) has the ability to bridge the gap and bring people together in the kind of contact required for direct democracy. He believes that the effectiveness of digital technologies may be used to improve public participation, ensure equal access to information, and connect people and organizations to platforms that allow for true participatory discourse and interaction from afar.

The top-down method needs to be reconsidered in most local municipalities. This methodology is egotistical, entitled, and dismissive of public input. Moreover, in local municipalities, education should be a top focus. Municipal officials should be encouraged by SALGA to continue their education, and municipalities should only allow those with the necessary qualifications to run for office. As a result, the issue of many councillors perceiving their position as a political career trajectory will be addressed. Also, the community voice should be strengthened through training citizens' representatives in leadership skills, establishing democratic, accountable community groups, and instituting information-sharing protocols.

Additionally, the result recommends that participatory techniques that foster public participation in the IDP process be updated and upgraded. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the IDP representative forum, ward committees, and councillors have failed to present significant opportunities for public participation in the IDP. To improve the effectiveness of local government and boost public participation, the government should assess or re-examine the electoral system at the local level. Further, through enhancing community involvement in

the annual IDP evaluation and budget allocation, the connection between communities and municipal officials will be enhanced.

The final recommendation is to engage residents' voices in the decision-making process: gather all the information, create debate by providing feedback, and integrate suggestions into policy as needed. The public wants to know that their opinions are acknowledged, even if they are not eventually adopted into policy, therefore flexibility is essential. In essence, it is critical to make all communication language understandable for the results to be easy to comprehend.

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