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Introductory Note

Goonasagree Naidoo

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In the 1801 Presidential inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson stated that “I deem the diffusion of information an essential principle of a government and consequently that which ought to shape its administration.” [sic] For the publication of this journal entitled Diversity in Public Administration Research, the notion of diffusion of information has guided the UNISA Department of Public Administration and Management in the compilation of these articles. A cursory review of the following titles reveals diversity in the general subject area and each article in some way has a connection to Public Administration and Management. Thus there is a diffusion and dispersion of thought pertaining to the multiplicity of sub-topics associated with the discipline. Not surprisingly, the notion of diffusion of information and the man Thomas Jefferson himself came out of an age of reason and enlightenment. Paradoxically, modern public administration credits Woodrow Wilson as a founding father. Further investigation reveals that before Wilson, there was Morris Cooke, Frederick Taylor and many others who should be considered as contributors to Public Administration. Looking further back, one would be hard pressed not to credit the Prussian Electors of Brandenburg (1701) for introducing the most formal form of centralized government for the administration of the state. Within the Prussian centralized state, there existed a specialized corps of individuals referred to as civil servants dedicated to achieving the administrative objectives of the state – the state being the King. The notion that the civil servant was truly a servant of the people was only confirmed through the instrument of the French Revolution. From then on, civil servants would truly be accountable to the public as opposed to any monarch. That transformation of public administration was no less one of the many new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things, resulting from an age of reason and enlightenment. It is then said that South Africa, the government and public administration are undergoing a transformation, a period of enlightenment and a period of reasoning. The ability to embrace diversity, using it advantageously and diffusing knowledge and information will be the foundation for future successes. For
these reasons, this journal focuses on diversity in research with the aim of influencing public administrative thought.

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Frederick Taylor as a Contributor to Public Administration

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Abstract

Seventy-five years after his death, a question remains as to whether Frederick Taylor’s scientific theories of management have made a significant contribution to Public Administration. Taylor’s theories focused mainly on increasing productivity in industrial manufacturing environments. The primary concern was for a pragmatic approach to efficiency where planning and standardisation aimed to optimise the human element in production. The article examines how practitioners of Public Administration have adopted and implemented Taylor’s theories. Evidence was found in the work of Morris Cooke, a Taylor disciple who focused on public sector oriented approaches to management and political economy. Taylorism was apparent in the public sector in the years after World War II, a turning point and period when Taylorist theories were humanised. The aim of the article then is to examine how Public Administration has drawn from the field of industrial psychology, towards improving operations in public organisations. The key question is: to what extent has industrial scientific management principles been adopted in the discipline of Public Administration? In light of poor service delivery in South Africa, it is a relevant question that has implications for improving operational efficiency. A historical literature review was undertaken to determine the influence of Taylor’s scientific management theories on Public Administration. The findings drawn from this review and analysis will serve to inform the need for more orderly scientific approaches to service delivery.

Keywords: Frederick Taylor, Morris Cooke, Scientific Management

1. Introduction

Offering an alarming perspective on The New Public Management, Ewalt (2001) commented that if Weber, and Woodrow Wilson the father of modern Public Administration were to appear, they would hardly be able to recognize the discipline. Such a profound statement is a reflection of the times. Rapid technological change, for example, has touched every fibre of society; the discipline of Public Administration is no exception. While use of information technology is certainly one of the many characteristics of the New Public Management (NPM), other characteristics such as change management, personnel management through the use of incentives, freedom and flexibility to manage, rationalising and streamlining administrative structures are all indicative of the notion of scientific management of which Frederick Taylor is proclaimed to be the founding father (Gruening 1998, 5-6). This article examines the extent to which Taylor has contributed to the discipline of Public Administration.
Moreover, the article goes further to identify The Psychology of Public Administration. What is the mindset of Public Administrators?

Taking a social-scientific approach, there are two points in time that demarcate a more scientific, even psychological approach to Public Administration. The first point in time must be the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century with the establishment of the Bureau of Municipal Research (Hopkins 1912, 235-244). Decades later, the second point in time must be the post World War II years when the likes of Marx, et al. (1946) and Appleby (1949) endeavoured to humanise the discipline of Public Administration and for that matter Taylor’s scientific management theories. Whether they could be considered to have been “Taylorists” in their defining the elements of Public Administration is a matter to be examined in the subsequent pages of this article.

While Frederick Taylor may not have purposefully set out to influence the course of Public Administration, the strive for alternative systematic management approaches to address foreman specific difficulties spilled over from the shop/production environment to the office environment. Looking beyond the characterisations of Taylor being the ultimate reductionist and mechanistic management engineer, Schachter (1989, 6) encouraged going back, reading and keenly understanding Taylor’s original works – his strange yet provocative works. With his work being misunderstood, Public Administration itself might be held to blame for the provocation, failing to reinterpret his authoritarian approaches in an alternative light, thus revealing the more human aspects of Taylor’s work.

Interestingly, early practitioners of Public Administration drew on business concepts without thoroughly considering the needs of the public sector (Waldo 1948, cited in Schachter 1989, 15). This, no doubt, contributed vis-a-vis political science to the difficulty in Public Administration evolving to become a discipline unto itself. Yet as early practitioners struggled to draw from business best practices that might be employed in the public sector, that same struggle took place in the latter part of the 20th century and has carried over into the 21st century in the guise of, for example, notions of a New Public Management. The task here is to take up the challenge of reinterpreting Taylor and to explore how managed workplaces, for example, resulted from his early work on approaches to motivation. The key aim of this article, therefore, is to consider Frederick Taylor as a contributor to the discipline of Public Administration and whether Public Administration has drawn from the discipline of Industrial Psychology, towards improving operations in public organisations.

2. Scientific Management and Public Administration

Blessan (2010) noted that while Public Administration has passed the fad stage of scientific management, many activities such as office management, accounting and control are still subject to scientific principles. The essence of those principles, scientific management, entails systematic adoption of methods of science to
problems of management in the interest of higher industrial efficiency. As such, management is regarded as a true science, resting upon clearly fixed laws, rules and principles.

Measuring work (performance measurement), time and motion studies and cost accounting, as examples, contribute towards solving administrative problems. The origins of these activities can be traced back to the latter part of the nineteenth century when Frederick Winslow Taylor first began to determine the amount of time workers needed to produce and manufacture items. Interest in establishing a “science of work” had evolved over time, as progress was made from being a lowly journeyman, to an operations engineer, to a plant manager and ultimately to a researcher. This evolution or transformation could be assumed as having been natural and inevitable. Notedly, Taylor had come from a family of intellectuals – coming from an affluent Quaker family and a father who was a lawyer and graduate of Princeton University. Taylor was to attend Harvard University but opted for a far less glamorous medium of education as a production journeyman and labourer. This, however, did not extinguish inquisitiveness, a pursuit of rationality and a sense of equality. The transformation and evolution culminated eventually in advocating for systematic adoption of scientific methods to solve management problems to achieve higher industrial efficiency (Manithaneyam 2012).

In those early days, the founding principles for Taylor’s Scientific Management Theory were information management and knowledge transfer to inform machinists on how they would benefit from improved productivity. Managers, as well needed to know the acceptable production rate for piece work to preclude resorting to irrationally dismissing and firing a machinist for not achieving piece work targets. Taylor took to using a stopwatch to time production activities, to record motions and moments of lapses in production. The earliest time and motion studies were conducted with the assistance of Henry Gantt as well.

Thus the essence of Taylor and for that matter Taylorism was that of experimentation, evaluating problems and choosing an appropriate solution. For the late 19th century, this was novel. The managerial practice was merely to maintain the status quo, emulate the work style and mould of the previous foreman, and drive labourers to work fast to increase the amount of piece work produced (Schachter 1989, 24). As an operating engineer, Taylor’s changing tools and dies in the manufacturing process exemplifies the earliest venture into “experimentation” as a form of scientific management.

Nevertheless, there was a curious link that sowed the seeds of Taylorism as a contributor to Public Administration. It was his link, or rather association, with Henry Metcalfe of the United States Army Ordinance Department. As early as 1880, Metcalfe established the written order card system and advocated the practice of two way communications – that is, job order cards with written instructions from administrators and report [progress] cards written by workers. Interestingly, Metcalfe argued for distinguishing between the private and public sectors and came to be
widely read by early writers on Public Administration. At best, Metcalfe came before Woodrow Wilson, the proclaimed father of modern Public Administration. What Taylor and Metcalf had in most in common was the management of information for production output. Both came to know each other and it is dared to say respect each other, both being members of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. With that in mind, Schachter (1989, 30) noted that (Taylor and Metcalfe) as proponents of the engineering management tradition professed that there were indeed differences between the public and private sectors and that efficiency was not always the single most important goal of the public sector. It might be suggested then that Taylor’s inadvertent contribution to Public Administration was the result of his interaction with Metcalfe. Furthermore, scratch the surface of Taylor’s radical (for the time) ideas, there was a realisation that it was futile to force workers to go against their will, in the process of motivating for efficiency and increased productivity. As stated previously, this was novel for the time.

3. Reinterpreting Scientific Management

It is now necessary to note that while Taylor was experimenting and developing a science of management, Public Administration was more a less a sub-field of political science. As a sub-field, its evolution towards becoming a discipline can be said to have begun, at least in the United States, with the codification and collection of labour information and census data, necessitating the establishment of government departments and bureaus. The New York Bureau of Municipal Research (Hopkins 1912, 243), for example, was regarded to be a pioneer (the organisation that is) in government administration, establishing the first National Training School for the Public Service. The training school had been established in the Taylorist tradition of collecting and managing information with the aim of improving municipal government affairs. What the Bureau possessed most of all was a vast amount of information pertaining to business conducted in New York City. It is within that framework that a business-like approach was taken to analyse teachers’ salaries, with the objective of standardising pay grades and managing the provision of educational supplies.

From this point there are only indirect links and unfounded assertions that Taylor in some way proposed that scientific methods should be applied to the public sector. On at least two occasions (1912 and 1915) the journal *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* had requested an article for publishing in their journal. Unfortunately, Taylor never submitted an article to be published by the journal. For a fleeting moment during the Watertown Arsenal Strike (Managing Metrics 2012), Taylor suggested that worker satisfaction was the solution to the labour action. Emphatically, Taylor never published any of any scientific theories for application in the public sector.
The most definite link between Taylor and Public Administration will be found in the work of his mentored disciple Morris Cooke (Cooke 1915). Like Metcalfe, Cooke was an active member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and there is no doubt as to Cooke’s interest in Taylor’s scientific management theories and subsequent application to Public Administration. Embracing the application of Taylor’s principles, Cooke approached the analysis of work by purposefully differentiating between public and private goals; as for being heralded as a disciple of Taylor, personal correspondence between the two substantiates a mentor/mentee relationship (Stevens Institute of Technology Online).

Towards reinterpreting Taylor’s work, from the earliest days of Taylor’s experimental approach to motivation, Taylor’s portrayal as a cold, authoritative, scientific motivator overshadowed any hint of a humane dimension to scientific management. The humanisation of Taylor and Scientific management will only come about in later decades in the works of Marx and Appleby.

3.1 Marx and Appleby

Fritz Marx was one of a number of scholars who emerged after World War II to profess a more humanistic and inclusive approach to Public Administration – inclusive stressing that the discipline had evolved by drawing on psychology, anthropology and sociology, just to mention a few contributing disciplines. Marx had taught at the Pennsylvania School of Social Work, New York University (NYU) and Harvard. Being one of the lead authors in the seminal work *Elements of Public Administration*, the text was a turning point in time on the matter of scientific management theory and its application in Public Administration. Although Frederick Taylor is not referred to in that seminal work, Chapter 5 in the text is entitled “Administration: Art or Science,” and the discussion is reminiscent of the early experimental Taylor, referring to *The Aims of Scientific Research and the Science of Administration*. It is not surprising that that particular post-war text noted that:

*Administrators are interested in the techniques of systematizing the process of securing and sifting through relevant information so that the factors involved in arriving at a policy decision can be stated and the consequences of alternatives can be analyzed and balanced. [sic]*

This certainly sounds Taylorist, akin to that early quest to manage the dissemination of information to all stakeholders involved in the production process (Schachter 1989, 26). Further to the immediate quest to determine to what extent scientific management theory (Taylorist thought for that matter) has permeated into Public Administration, Appleby (1949), in *Policy and Administration*, alluded to the importance of information management and noted that: “Administrators blur the politics-administration distinction, in their withholding or giving only selected
information to legislators formulating public policy." [sic] The relevance here is to further emphasize the value and importance of information management. While information management is an example of scientific management, there remains the potential for information to be used to the detriment of public policy when it is purposefully and nefariously withheld.

With Marx and Appleby in mind, there seems to be an advancement of the notions that information should be valued and managed as part of the science of management. The concern is not merely for scientific [Taylorist] management principles and mere focus on motivational theory and organizational development. Early on, Taylor was concerned with information presented to workers that would motivate them to be productive. Timed piece work production information was presented to the production foreman, in order to have reasonable production expectations of subordinates’ production output. In the post-World War II period and into the 1950’s period of the military industrial complex and post-modern era, Taylor’s scientific management was part and parcel of the “inclusive approach” to post-modern Public Administration. In the reinterpretation of scientific management, the focus is on information. It, nevertheless, is debatable whether Marx and Appleby were Taylorists in their practice of Public Administration but there are hints of an awareness that the discipline needed to draw from other disciplines and relevant sources (Chandler & Plano 2012, 19-21). The science of management came to be valued in the public sector as much as it was valued in the private sector.

4. Industrial Psychology in Public Administration

The application of Industrial Psychology in Public Administration will be most apparent in the area of Human Resource Management (Unizulu: Online). This would not be unusual, considering that Taylor’s Principles of Scientific Management (1912) deals with motivating workers. Industrial (Organisational) Psychology is the scientific study of the workplace, where rigor and methods of psychology are applied to issues involving personnel management, coaching, assessment, selection, training, organisational development and performance (SIOP 2012). In answering whether Public Administration has drawn from Industrial Psychology and whether scientific management theories have found their way into Public Administration, Pitts (2003) studied diversity, race and performance in public organisations. The research studied and evaluated whether an organisation in the public sector, specifically a department of education, indeed had a Representative Bureaucracy that matched the general population to which it provided public services. As it relates to a motivated workforce, the general theory that was being tested was that passive representation (meaning a matching bureaucracy) will lead to active representation and the formulation of policies that would benefit the interest of diverse groups. In short, a bureaucracy of colour would be more likely to service and represent the preferences of citizen/stakeholders of similar colour and background (Selden & Selden 2001). In
this study, the units of analysis were the relationships or significance between diversity, representation and performance among teachers, administrators and students, while segmenting variables heterogeneously by Black, Latino, White, Asian and Indian races. Variables were constructed to test the impact of diversity on organisational performance and the statistical technique used was multiple regression. The relevance here to the discussion and Taylor is that a scientific approach was taken to measure the effect of diversity on motivation and performance.

Although the formulation of the variables and the regression model for the study is not discussed in depth here, the most significant finding resulted from an examination on how managers (shop foreman) and employees (machinists) contributed to achieving organisational outcomes. What was indeed found was that management representation (the shop foreman) contributed positively to performance. In other words, when managers matched a targeted population by race, the organisation did perform better. However, racial representation, in many instances, did not figure significantly towards achieving outcomes. In other words, matching race and representation did not assure achieving an outcome of quality service delivery.

As in Taylor’s early experiments and attempts to disseminate and manage information to the machinist and the shop foreman, Pitts’ research involved measuring the impact of the supervisor towards achieving outcomes and the impact of line employees on achieving outcomes. Importantly, this was done in terms of race. Taylor’s approach of informing the machinist of the benefits on how improving productivity would be in their best interest and informing the shop foreman of the optimal amount of piece work to expect (determined by experiment, measurement and timing) for his day was no less scientific than running regression or using linear programming to measure relationships. Admittedly, it is not known whether Pitts had Taylor in mind while conducting the matching bureaucracy study. However, the use of a scientific method to study and model a public organisation does, at best, reveal the permeation of Industrial Psychology and a social scientific approach to managing the public organisation.

5. The Psychology of Public Administration

At this time, studying the minds of practitioners (supervisors, line managers and workers) involved in public administration is a limitation and constraint. It would be necessary to study their behaviours, as they move in and about government departments performing the wide variety of tasks that characterise a bureaucracy. Still, there is a desire to understand those involved in public administration, especially to determine the extent to which scientific [Taylorist] management principles influence public servants – line workers through to senior managers. Recognising the many sub-fields or schools of thought of psychology (clinical psychology, pseudo
psychology, or positive psychology), functional psychology is used here as a framework to discuss *The Psychology of the discipline Public Administration*. The aim is discuss the mindset of the public administrator, in terms of scientific Taylorist theories.

Functionalist and early psychologists such as William James (1842-1910) noted that the mind, in its state of consciousness would not exist if it did not serve some practical, adaptive purpose. Assuming, Frederick Taylor would have been an advocate of functionalism in his motivating and experimenting to achieve the greatest highest production output and motivating workers to do so.\(^1\) The challenge would have been to persuade workers to adapt to serve a practical purpose – albeit, seemingly to the benefit of the business/factory owner. Of course, the workers reward would be wages earned.

In keeping with scientific management, functionalism involves empirical thought and research. Like most functionalists, Taylor would have been interested in the conscious states of the supervisor (shop foreman) and the worker (machinist), with a goal of improving thought processes. Although he never went as far as to study the conscious state of mind of workers, his concern over worker’s anxiety exemplifies some reverence for their mental well being (Schachter 1989, 44). Certainly, there was a desire to provide workers with information to inform them of the benefits of being productive. Additionally, information was provided to the production foreman to enable him to make informed decisions relating to the expected maximum output for piece work. What can possibly be said of the functionality of today’s public administrator, and is there acceptance or resistance to scientific methods and principles?

There is school of thought (Walden University) that professes to use psychology and Public Administration to promote social justice. Undoubtedly, select South African government departments are involved in promoting social justice – e.g., the South African Department of Social Development and the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. Without being specific, psychological theories and skills (referring to psychologists as part of the planning process) assures more humane social strategic planning and developing management programmes aimed at changing and impacting whole communities – that is, to achieve social justice. Indeed, this is public administrative management that places emphasis on social organisations. Without a doubt, the field of health care lends itself to a social (psychological) approach to public administration and service delivery. While planning for service delivery, the behaviours, responses and motivations of communities will be anticipated to achieve an improvement in performance (Batalden and Stoltz 1993). Similarly, the desire to improve performance was the corner-stone of scientific management in those early days of experimentation on the shop floor by Taylor.

\(^1\) Schachter (1989, 41) noted in the discussion of Taylor’s Scientific Management: Functional management is needed, with each worker receiving daily orders.
Thus the Psychology of Public Administration is best exemplified by considering Psychology in the Public Interest (Mitchell 2012). In the process of applying scientific management theories, practitioners in public administration will use social science theory and methods to analyze and address social and organisational problems. The psychology of public administration embodies behaviours, state of mind and processes towards an orderly and pragmatic way of managing and achieving objectives. Additionally, the psychology of public administration in a Taylorist tradition will engage in preventing, evaluating, intervening in and developing the workforce, using and adapting technology, and empowering workers, groups and communities. Action oriented methods will be used pragmatically to produce knowledge and solutions that serve the public interest. The psychology of public administration in the 21st century is definitive and purposeful in its use of scientific principles in the public interest. This mindset is in contrast to the early days of Taylor when scientific principles were in their infancy and use in the public sector (Schachter 1989, 76).

6. Conclusion: Implications for Service Delivery

The initial aim of this article was to investigate the extent to which Frederick Taylor (Taylorism) had influenced public administration by way of scientific management theories and principles. The investigation soon turned to validating that Morris Cooke, a mechanical engineer and early practitioner of modern public administration was truly the missing link between Taylor and public administration. This was unexpected. Although Taylor could not be directly linked to the evolution of public administration and its ascension from political science, Taylor’s interaction and influence on Morris Cooke were the foundation for pragmatic approaches to government and public administration in an age of discovery - the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As a link between scientific management and public administration, Morris Cooke precedes Woodrow Wilson as the ultimate proponent and perhaps founding father of public administration. Indeed, Cooke is an unsung hero who, by reinterpreting Frederick Taylor, is rediscovered and warrants further investigation of his contribution to the discipline. For that matter, as it relates to South Africa, Morris Cooke was a pioneer in the electrification of the rural areas in the decades following the U.S. civil war. The electrification of the rural areas, that is the provision of electricity to South Africa’s townships, locations, informal settlements and squatter camps is still a burning issue that calls for a modern day “South African Morris Cooke.” Nevertheless, the question remains as to whether scientific management has had a significant impact on modern public administration. Unequivocally, the answer is “yes.” This is substantiated by the practice of work design, work measurement and work study. Indeed, before scientific management, specialist departments dealing in personnel issues did not even exist. The U.S. Federal Work Study Programme is Taylorist in principle, albeit targeted at post-graduate students. In and of itself, work
study is the systematic examination of the methods of carrying out activities in order to improve the effective use of resources and establishing standards of performance activities to be carried. The implementation of performance measurement and management in the public sector does exactly that – examining methods and managing performance. Conclusively, there is a need, as noted earlier, to go back, read and keenly understand Taylor’s original work. Consequently, it will be found that the notions of performance measurement, performance management, work study and the like are not all that new. Doing so, going back, furthers the aim of reinterpreting Frederick Taylor as having been a humanist as much as pragmatic and authoritative production manager.

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Perceptions on the Institutionalization of Public Participation in South Africa

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Abstract

In democratic systems, public participation is understood to be complementary to representative democracy whereby regular parliamentary elections are held. The elected representatives are expected to engage the public in decision-making processes to enhance transparency and trust. Representative democracy additionally calls for the establishment of public participation platforms for engaging the citizenry in all public affairs. Moreover, the rationale for public participation advocates for the public to actively participate in the development of plans at the formative stage, rather than after officials have committed to particular choices. A self-administered questionnaire survey was conducted to assess the perceptions of the Members of the Provincial Legislature, Parliamentary Constituency Officers and administrative staff on how public participation has been institutionalized in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature. The results of the survey show that the Gauteng Provincial Legislature is not adequately engaging its people in decision-making processes as per the constitutional mandate as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The research supports the notion that a direct democracy is not feasible in modern nations, but it is important to have a model of democracy that will provide the best possible degree of direct popular public participation.

Keywords: Decision-making, democracy, Legislature, public participation, public policy, transparency, trust.

1. Introduction

The evolution of public participation in the Legislature of the Province of Gauteng focused on the development of appropriate mechanisms to enable the public to actively participate in the processes of government in line with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Such mechanisms included: petitions, public hearings and public education. Public participation is defined by Creighton (2005) as “… a social process through which people exercise their collective initiative in an organised framework to promote their self-perceived interests through a means over which they can exert effective control”. Public participation should play an important role in governance (Bauer 2009; Young 2002). In South Africa, it has literally become synonymous with legitimate governance (Williams 2006).
Furthermore, public participation gets renewed interest due to the presence of a perceived democratic deficit (Nkuna 2007); to enhance the legitimacy of decision making; to improve public delivery system; and to allow citizens, especially the disadvantaged and marginalized to have their say in issues that affect them.

Public participation is a subject of importance in democratic and participatory governance. It attracts attention in academia, among practitioners and most importantly the members of the public (citizens). For example, Eversole (2011:53) stressed that "... the idea of participatory governance has become a key policy aspiration: by involving the insights and energies of diverse actors, participatory governance arrangements bring the valuable agency communities to energize and inform the ongoing business of government". Kalema (2007:250) wrote that "... public participation has featured prominently in the debates on transition from autocracy to democracy, from one-party or military dominance to multipartyism". However, despite its popularity, the practice of public participation remains poorly understood and ineffectively applied in many countries and provinces alike. On the one hand, it is predominantly approached from a broad perspective. In fact, it appears to be of little use to public administration practitioners. On the other hand, it is construed in technical narrow terms, so narrow that it in fact blurs the deserving public. Such unbalanced approaches imply that there is a need for a review of the public participation approaches, to make them more transparent and understandable to the public. Research on public participation has largely concluded that public participation and/or community engagement is often conducted in a manner that fails to meet the public’s real needs (Mowbray 2005; Taylor 2007; Teague 2007). Furthermore, Bauer (2009:31) argued that "... a direct democracy is not feasible in modern nations, but it is important to develop a model of democracy that will provide the best possible degree of direct popular public participation".

In the context of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature (the Legislature), the role and business of the Legislature is often not understood by the public. Thus it is necessary to contextualise the role of the provincial Legislatures. While the National Parliament is responsible for making national legislation, provincial Legislatures are responsible for specific areas ascribed to them by the Constitution. The Legislature is characterised by the lack of effective engagement with the citizenry by the public, it is expected to serve. In other words, the Legislature is not viewed as being transparent in carrying out its constitutional mandates of law-making, oversight, public participation and cooperative governance. Williams (2006:197) argued that "... it would seem that most community participation exercises in South Africa are largely spectator politics, where ordinary people have mostly become endorsees of pre-designed planning programmes, are often the objects of administrative manipulation and a miracle of reconciliation in the international arena of consensus politics whilst state functionaries ... ensconce themselves as bureaucratic experts summoned to ensure a better lives for all”. However, there are success cases of effective delivery on constitutional mandates, although they are often clouded by failure to communicate
or keep the public abreast of the developments. A democratic deficit is then experienced, wherein there is a gap between governing bodies, institutions and the citizens’ beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and actions. Eversole (2011:53) explained that “... the question, seen from inside institutions of government, thus becomes how to reach communities, engage them, work with them and encourage their participation”. But before going to study the public’s perception on the Legislature’s public participation initiatives, it is important to determine how the institution itself perceives its strides of carrying out its constitutional mandate of public participation.

To fully understand the perceptions of the Legislature on its streamlining of public participation, a survey was conducted by the Legislature to study the effectiveness of its existing public participation mechanisms. The focus of the survey was on Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs), Parliamentary Constituency Officers (PCOs) and the administrative staff. The article seeks to communicate the findings of the perception survey and to recommend the use of alternative means of addressing the perceptions of the Legislature on its institutionalisation of public participation. The legal framework that informs public participation in the South African legislative sector provides a basis for anchoring this study.

2. The Legislative Framework For Public Participation

In South Africa, the nature and focus of public participation has changed dramatically with the adoption of Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution). In terms of Section 195(1) of the Constitution, public administration must be development-oriented, which means that the public must be involved in the government processes. The requirement has a direct bearing on the extent to which the public is involved in the decision making processes of the government. Decisions about what services should be delivered and which ones need improvement should be made through public participation.

The Constitution guarantees the public a commitment to an open and democratic form of governance. To this effect, Chapter 2 of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights. Burkey (1993:56) stated that “... participation by the people in the institutions and systems which govern their lives is a basic human right and also important for realignment of political power in favour of the disadvantaged groups and for social development”. In addition to the right to elect their representative, the right to exercise influence over decisions made by government is clearly stated in the Bill of Rights. Section 59(1) of the Constitution stipulates that “... the National Assembly must facilitate public involvement in the legislative processes of the Assembly and its Committees”. In terms of the Provincial Legislatures, Section 70(b) provides that “... the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) must facilitate public involvement”. The Constitution mandates the three spheres of government, (the local, provincial and national spheres) to be transparent and engage the public in decision-making and oversight processes.
The Constitution is not the only legal document that informs public participation, especially in the local government context. The Constitution is supported by a number of Acts of parliament. For example, Section 19(3) of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) posits that a municipal council must develop mechanisms for public participation. In promoting trust and accountability, the Act further stipulates that “... a community’s executive has to give an annual report on the extent to which the public has participated in municipal affairs”. Furthermore, Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) stipulates that a municipal council must develop a culture of participatory governance and must, for this purpose, encourage and create conditions for communities and other stakeholders in the municipality to participate in local affairs.

In terms of the financial imperatives of public participation, the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003) encourages the participation of communities in the financial affairs of municipalities, including the development of municipal budgets. Additionally, the Municipal Property Rates Act, 2004 (Act 6 of 2004) stipulates that “... the public must participate in the determination of municipal property rates”. However, sporadic law-making (policy development and implementation) and service delivery related protests in South Africa, especially in the Gauteng Province, suggests that the public is not adequately involved in decision making and related democratic processes. Perhaps a consideration of a theoretical framework will assist in understanding the basis of involving the public in the government’s decision making processes.

3. Theoretical Framework For Public Participation

In line with the legal framework, the theoretical premise for public participation is based on the view that legitimate governance is subject to the will and consent of the governed, that is, the public. Public participation is not a once-of event that only occurs during the electioneering period, but should be based on regular interaction between the citizenry and those tasked with governing. A further understanding is that public participation should be conceived as the nexus between the electorate and the decision makers. From this perspective, Young (2002:268) cautioned that “... only in a democratic political system do all members of a society in principle have the opportunity to influence public policy”. Effective public participation marks a shift from techno-bureaucracy towards techno-democracy.

As a vital component of democracy, the concept of public participation has received considerable attention. Public Administration scholars such as Booysen (2009), Creighton (2005), Green (2004), Mafunisa (2004), Nkuna (2007) have written about the vexatious democracy-public participation relationship. Booysen (2009:3) stressed that “... public participation and democracy are often intricately linked”. Public participation allows for diverse views in governance and policy processes,
according to Booysen (2009), Green (2004), Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005), Mafunisa (2004). In this context, Green (2004:70) has elaborated that “… not only do citizens have to be interested and mobilised to practice democratic participation as citizen-activists, but governments also need to provide space in which civil society might influence policy making”. Booysen (2009:2) has argued that “… public participation in the process of policy and governance in democratic South Africa could be regarded as a cornerstone of society”. It can, therefore, be deduced that the process of public participation is an important variable in the policy making process. As such, effective policy making cannot be fully achieved without sound public participation. Creighton (2005:25) stated that “… public participation creates a new direct link between the public and the decision makers in the bureaucracy. Potentially, it sensitizes experts and bureaucrats on the real needs of the communities”.

Development study scholars such as Burkey (1993), Chambers (2005), Davids et al. (2005), Gibson (2006), Mogale (2003), Williams (2006) have also contributed extensively to the various forms of public participation. Mogale (2003:225) explained that “… public participation leads to the expectation that transformation in the system will take place to benefit those whom development projects target”. Accordingly, from the Public Administration perspective, Ballard (2008:170) elaborated that “… where citizens themselves are able to influence decisions, the imperative is to address suffering which becomes far stronger and more direct”. Public participation should contribute to a transparent, effective, efficient Legislature in its quest to deliver on the mandates of law-making, oversight and cooperative governance. In other words, public participation lends legitimacy to the governance exercise. The process of policy initiation, lawmaking, oversight and governance should not be a solely bureaucratic affair but should be co-owned with the public. Another Public Administration scholar, Nkuna (2007:237) wrote that “… public participation can take different forms depending on its application”. The categorisation of public participation was first developed by Pateman in the 1970s.

Pateman’s (1970) categorization of public participation into three levels remains classical. Pseudo participation, referring to a situation where the concern is not about creating an environment where decisions are finally made, but rather to create a feeling of participation; Partial participation which involves a process in which two or more parties influence each other in the making of decisions but the final power to decide rests with one party only. This level of public participation leverages on the distinction between power and influence, for instance, workers are in a permanent subordinate position unable to exercise power but can only influence the final consequence; and Full participation where each individual member of a decision making-body has an equal power to determine the outcome of decisions. While the Legislature may be seen as utilising all three levels of public participation to a certain extent, it is also important to consider the typology of public participation.

Pretty (as cited in Davids et al., 2005:114) identified the following seven typologies of public participation:
• Passive participation: People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. Participation relating to a unilateral top-down announcement by the authority or project manager. Information being shared belongs to outsiders and/or professionals.

• Participation in information giving: People participate by answering questions posed in questionnaires or telephone interviews or similar public participation strategies. The public do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings as the findings of the research are neither shared nor evaluated for accuracy.

• Participation by consultation: People participate by being consulted as professionals, consultants and planners who listen to their views. The professionals define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of the people’s response. The process does not include any share in decision making by the public, nor are the professionals under any obligation to consider the public’s view.

• Participation for material incentives: People participate by providing resources, such as labour, in return for food and monetary reward typically takes place in rural environments, where, for example, farmers provide the fields but are not involved in the experiment or learning process related to production or marketing. The people have no stake in prolonging the activities when the incentives end.

• Functional participation: People participate in a group context to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. This may involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisations. This type of involvement tends not to occur at the early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather once the important decisions have already been made.

• Interactive participation: People participate in a joint analysis, the development of action plans and capacity building. Participation is seen as a right, not just a means to achieve project goals.

• Self-mobilisation: People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. The bottom-up approach allows people to develop contacts with external institutions for resources and the technical advice they need, but they themselves retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated bottom-up and self-reliant mobilisation and collective actions may or may not challenge an existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.

To simplify the above seven typologies, as well as to relate them to the South African context, Booysen (2009) has presented a summary format as detailed in Figure 1 hereunder.
**Figure 1:** Typology of public participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Participation</th>
<th>Illustrations – actions, institutions, organisations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation through representative democracy and resultant institutions</td>
<td>Participation in elections; representation by elected public representatives; acceptance of electoral outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the core institutions of democracy, including Chapter 9 institutions</td>
<td>Constitution of South Africa’s requirement of opportunities for public participation; constitutionally established institutions facilitating participation through, for example, public submissions and hearings, outreach programmes of national, provincial and local government; reviews of effectiveness in engagement with public institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative engagement directed from the centre</td>
<td>Presidency and Cabinet Clusters for government management; direct opportunities for consultation and public engagement in government processes; centre-need defined consultation with civil society enclaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil society action in advocacy and challenge</td>
<td>Anti-privatisation Forum, Treatment Action Campaign, strikes, civil society petitions and campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended engagement, access and participation</td>
<td>Ward committees, Izimbizo/Community Meetings, Community Development Workers, Project Consolidate, Thusong/Assistance Services Centres and e-Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct action and protest participation</td>
<td>Protest against lack of ‘service delivery’ and government performance in areas such as housing and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative participation</td>
<td>Dissemination of information by government; coverage of policy and governance by electronic and print mass media; formation and expressions of public opinion, with implications for other modes of participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Booysen (2009:9)

Although not universal, the above table offers a brief synopsis of what mechanisms and modes are used in the South African context. This self-reflection by the Legislature follows the theoretical underpinnings of constructionism. Schurink (2009) stated that “... constructionists believe that there is no truth ‘out there’, but only a narrative reality that changes continuously”. Thus, this study has adopted appreciative inquiry (AI) as a constructionist paradigm that could lead the Legislature to the
desired outcomes. It is from this understanding that the following section focuses on public participation mechanisms used by the Legislature.

4. Overview of Public Participation in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature

From the above typology of public participation as presented by Booysen’s (2009), it is important to provide an overview of public participation in the Legislature. Committees of the House are regarded as the engine of the Legislature. The general requirement for house committees in performing their work is that, there must be meaningful public involvement that influences decisions of committees. Therefore, public participation has been included in all the committees’ terms of reference. All committees are required to involve the public in all the processes of law making, oversight and cooperative governance. Committees undertake “Bua le Sechaba” (talk to the nation) campaigns on matters that affect them most. Bua le Sechaba is a vehicle that the Legislature uses to engage the public on issues such as Health, Education, Housing and Social Development. The results of the engagement inform service delivery challenges in terms of the oversight role of the Legislature. While the Bua le Sechaba is an important public participation mechanism, its popularity and effectiveness is not yet felt by the people of Gauteng, since the campaign is generally not known to the people of Gauteng.

The Legislature has registered both successes and failures in the involvement of the public in governance processes. The successes include amongst others, the introduction of an effective petitions system, and the education of petitioners with regard to the petitions processes and the establishment of strategic relationships with the Department of Education in Gauteng, particularly the School programme. Petitions are an integral part of the public participation process of the Legislature. A dedicated petitions standing Committee is established to receive and deliberate on the issues raised in the petitions received. Furthermore, the Legislature undertakes sector parliaments as part of ensuring that issues of community sectors are considered in the legislative processes. Sector parliaments include among others, A Women’s Parliament; Youth Parliament; Senior Citizens’ Parliament and Persons with Disabilities Parliament. However, the Legislature does not have a mechanism to assess the impact of its public participation mechanisms. Therefore, the visibility and access to the Legislature by the public, both physically and electronically is blurred. In other words, public participation is not transparent or clear. Arising from this observation, it was necessary to conduct research on the effectiveness of the Legislature’s existing public participation mechanisms and processes.

5. Research Method

In recognition of the above stated shortcomings, a study was conducted to investigate the perceptions on the extent to which public participation is embedded
in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature's processes in accordance with its constitutional mandate. A quantitative research method was adopted for this study. An electronic survey method was adopted as the targeted participants had access to electronic business tools. The selected data collection instrument was a Questionnaire which consisted of 25 questions. The target population was the Legislature administrative staff, Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPL) and the Parliamentary Constituency Officers (PCO).

The Legislature has 83 MPLs, 40 Committee Support staff and 45 PCOs, which means that the target population was 168 participants. The limitation of this study is that it did not include the political administrative staff members, the Provincial Premier and the Members of the Executive Council (MECs) who are political representatives. The rationale for this exclusion is that, the excluded parties are accountable to the Legislature through the portfolio committees and political parties respectively. In other words, the Executive is accountable to the Legislature.

The survey process was designed and managed by the Research Services Unit, located in the Parliamentary Business Directorate, which is responsible for providing the Legislature with administration support to enable it in carrying out its Constitutional mandates. The questionnaire sought information on the perceptions of the members of the Legislature on the extent to which public participation has been incorporated in the process of the Legislature. The survey also attempted to determine who the Legislature consults and how often, the matters it consults on and, the perceived benefits of, and obstacles with regard to involving the public.

6. Results and Analysis

Responses were received from the Administrative staff (38), PCOs (40) and (22) from MPLs. A total of 100 completed questionnaires were received electronically. 58 of the respondents were females and 42 were males. Figure 2 below, presents the perceptions of all the respondents on the involvement of the public with the Legislature.
Although 69 (69%) respondents indicated that the Legislature has effectively mainstreamed public participation, it is noted that 42 (42%) respondents were of the view that no good relationship existed between the Legislature and the public. This might be explained by the prevalence of ineffective communication of the Legislature’s affairs and activities to the public; inadequate public involvement in the work of the Legislature; as well as a lack of robust feedback mechanisms as was indicated by 19 (48%) PCOs, 22 (56%) Administrative Staff members and 13 (68%) MPLs. This could be also due to the fact that there is no collaboration of various units of the Legislature, in enhancing effective public participation as was indicated by 38 (38%) of the respondents.

Figure 2 illustrates that all the respondents are of the opinion that the public is not effectively involved in the legislative process, all registering a negative impression. The survey revealed that 13 (59%) MPLs are of the view that the public was not effectively involved. Two thirds (75%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the Legislature’s existing public participation mechanisms such as Imbizos (public meetings), public hearings, Bua le Sechaba (talk to the nation), public education programmes and the preparatory workshops held during the budget and annual report processes, are effective and have a potential to yield positive results. However, poor implementation of these mechanisms and programmes seems to be rendering the whole process of public participation process ineffective as was indicated by 53% of the respondents (that is, 53 out of a population of 100 respondents). The perceptions of the
respondents can be altered by among others, maintaining effective interaction with the public, and the provision of regular feedback.

7. Maximising Public Participation In Gauteng

The study has revealed that the Legislature’s business units dealing with public participation do not have a joint and integrated public participation action plan. The units are working in silos instead of cohesively streamlining their public participation processes. Furthermore, within the context of a diverse public, the existing public participation initiatives do not cater for all groups of the people of Gauteng. The question is: What can be done to improve the Legislature’s institutionalisation of public participation? The findings of this survey provide the Legislature with the opportunity to re-look into how public participation can be maximised to enhance transparency and trust.

The study on the effectiveness of existing public participation initiatives suggests that the Legislature is not fully engaging the public in its processes of law-making and oversight. The role of the Legislature is often not understood by the public. As such, the Legislature is not seen as doing enough to educate the public about its activities and processes, particularly on how the public can fully access the Legislature. The lack or rather little use of appropriate public involvement mechanisms and inefficient post public participation feedback feature prominently in the results of the study. Mattes (2006) earlier on noted that “… direct participation and contact with the representatives is quite low while the so-called unconventional political participation is high in South Africa”.

Whilst the survey had revealed shortcomings of the existing public participation initiatives of the Legislature, the opportunities for improving are equally in abundance. There is an opportunity to improve the current public participation initiatives. The benefit of improving such initiatives is that, it will enhance public confidence in the Legislature. Firstly, a well-informed citizenry will assist the Legislature in taking pride in its democratic processes. Establishing a good working relationship with all Parliamentary Constituency Officers, Community Development Workers and the public is but one example of promoting effective relationship between the Legislature and the public. That will increase avenues of public participation in Gauteng. Secondly, another opportunity that this study recommends is fully exploring the effective use of ICT and social networking, for example, the use of SMS’s, Twitter, Mixit Instant Messenger, Skype and Facebook to reach out to the connected public. The use of popular social media can increase participation by a large segment of the people of Gauteng, more especially the youth. Thirdly, tapping on the public participation resources available in the province such as higher education institutions and institutions supporting democracy should be explored. This approach might complement the Legislature’s strategy to forge relationships with institutions supporting democracy (also referred to as Chapter 9 Institutions).
A lack of effective feedback mechanisms has featured prominently in the responses. The Legislature should develop and implement robust feedback avenues to keep the public abreast of the developments in government matters. A robust form of public participation may create confidence, trust, and understanding between the citizenry and the government, and help to clear the existing misconceptions. Another possible dividend that can be gained through meaningful public participation includes increased electoral participation. One of the most far reaching public participation dividends is the trust it builds between citizens and government. The more the citizens know about what is happening in government, the more they understand the limitations of government and the role they play in it.

8. Conclusion

The importance of public participation cannot be overemphasised, particularly in the democratic states where the public is expected to be involved in the matters that concern it most. In the South African context, the need for public participation is enshrined in the Constitution. This paper has acknowledged the existence of various public participation modes in South Africa, with special reference to the Gauteng Provincial Legislature. However, the existing modes have proven to be less effective as the results of the above mentioned study has indicated. The paper has argued that the public is not adequately involved by the Legislature. The outreach programmes do not reach all the citizenry in the Gauteng Province as they are mostly targeting organised groups.

The article has recommended an increased engagement of communities and other stakeholders in all the legislative processes in the Gauteng Province, and mainstreaming public participation across Committees alongside the mandates of law-making, oversight and cooperative governance. The development of a well coordinated and integrated public participation programme, a sound feedback system, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, are among others the mechanisms that the Legislature should employ to maximise public participation, transparency and trust. The implementation of a robust Public Participation Action Plan finds direction from the Public Participation Programme Strategy. In conclusion, this paper recommends that the Legislature should keep abreast of the technological developments such as the use of SMS’s, Mixit, Facebook and Twitter, among others, to engage a broader citizenry, thereby maximising transparency and public trust.

References


Supporting Small Medium and Micro Enterprises in South Africa

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Abstract

The Local Government sphere in South Africa faces several cogent developmental challenges. Several interventions have been introduced to confront these challenges, which include poverty, unemployment and skills shortage, with partial success. In this article, a conceptual framework is proposed for small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa. The literature review includes an analysis of documents issued by four municipalities as well by the former national Department of Provincial and Local Government. In this regard, an explanation of the concept of SMMEs is provided so as to contextualise the study. Apart from the lack of funding, SMMEs appear to suffer from a lack of information, efficient production technologies, and the inadequate use of management and control systems. To further contextualise this study, the debate on local economic development (LED) in the South African local government sphere is presented to highlight the current challenges. Common characteristics of LED and SMMEs are also enunciated so as to establish the nexus. Finally, drawing from the above context and discussions, a conceptual framework is articulated and presented, which is intended to assist municipalities to ensure that viable SMME strategies are developed.

Keywords: municipalities; local economic development; small, medium and micro enterprises

1. Introduction

The challenges of developing countries, including South Africa, centre on how to ensure that development interventions are effective so that the majority of citizens benefit from the economic activities of the country. This is because sustainable economic activities are necessary for the wellbeing of society. South Africa has provided numerous initiatives in response to developmental challenges. Interventions to promote local economic development include initiatives such as public–private partnerships as well as the promotion of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs). In this article, only the concept of SMMEs receives attention. The purpose of this article is to propose a conceptual framework for municipalities in supporting SMMEs. The article is not intended as an analysis of whether SMMEs are successful as service providers, but rather, on whether a conducive environment for SMME success has been established. Municipalities such as the City of Tshwane Municipality and the
Amathole District Municipality have established sections/departments/units that administer SMMEs as a sub-unit of LED and, alternatively, as an economic development department. Nel (1998) notes that the term ‘economic development’ is used in preference to LED, which may confuse the actual understanding of LED as a supported national programme that municipalities are required to adopt, customise and implement. The description is necessary as the concept of SMMEs is used in the context of LED implementation.

The concept of SMMEs is explained to clarify the point of departure. Since SMMEs are embedded in LED, it becomes the responsibility of municipalities to ensure that the economic development challenges are responded to within a regulated and supported framework of SMMEs. In this regard, an LED strategy is formulated by municipalities to support the establishment of SMMEs within and by municipalities. The common characteristics of LED and SMMEs are also explained. Finally, a conceptual framework for SMME establishment and support is provided to indicate what municipalities should consider when adopting and implementing an SMME strategy.

2. Local Economic Development in South Africa

The establishment of an LED strategy by the former Department of Provincial and Local Government as an overarching policy framework is necessary for the development of local communities (DPLG 2006). In this strategy, reference is made to the Constitution of 1996 and the White Paper on Local Government of 1998. The implication of this legislation is that the LED function of municipalities is not to create jobs directly, but to facilitate an overall economic and social environment that promotes the creation of job opportunities. In response to its provincial economic challenges, the Gauteng Provincial Legislature has passed the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller Act 5 of 2005, which provides provincial stipulations to tackle issues relating to small enterprise support in Gauteng province. This has led to the establishment of the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP) as a provincial agency to give effect to this ordinance. The GEP, like the municipalities, serves as a facilitator in supporting sustainable small enterprise development, establishing guidelines for SMME development as well as providing advice, information, analysis and support for SMME policy implementation among other things. However, the establishment of the GEP has not been linked directly to the municipalities in Gauteng to ensure that LED and SMMEs become functional areas. The management of GEP therefore requires more attention to facilitate the way municipalities assist SMMEs in Gauteng. This discussion is intended to help provide a context for the understanding of the concept of SMMEs in South Africa.

To understand the role of municipalities in LED, the White Paper on Local Government of 1998 puts forward four interrelated characteristics of developmental local government, namely, maximising social development and economic growth;
integrating and coordinating; democratising development; and leading and learning. While there is a close relationship between these four different characteristics, it should be emphasised that social development and economic growth, as well as the democratisation of development, should be regarded as key SMME features for sustainable LED. The White Paper also provides a framework within which municipalities must develop their own strategies for promoting the social and economic development of communities. Developmental outcomes as mentioned and identified in this White Paper include the provision of household infrastructure and services; creation of liveable, integrated cities, towns and rural areas; local economic development; and community empowerment and redistribution.

Local economic development (LED) is a policy for economic development that allows and encourages local people to work together to achieve sustainable economic growth and development. This policy should be aimed at bringing economic benefits and improved quality of life to all residents in a local municipal area. Frieda Human, Lochner Marais and Lucius Botes (2008) view LED as a function of local government in an economic sense, which is required to create viable conditions conducive to the success of business activities.

LED is concerned with the creation of an environment that will engage stakeholders in implementing strategies and programmes. LED policy should be aligned with the country’s macroeconomic strategy, which is focused on re-entering the global market, providing a climate which is amenable to international investments, enhancing the role of the private sector, and reducing the role of the state. The word ‘local’ in local economic development points to the fact that political jurisdiction at local government level is often the most appropriate place for economic intervention as it carries the accountability and legitimacy of a democratically elected body. LED is about communities continually improving their investment conditions and business—enabling environment to enhance their competitiveness, retain jobs and improve incomes. This is essentially what the understanding of the democratisation of development should be about. To ensure that LED policy may be translated into deliverables, the development of LED strategy within municipalities with a provincial and national alignment is imperative.

Frieda Human, Lochner Marais and Lucius Botes (2008) promote a strategic approach to the development of local economies and a shift away from narrow municipal interests focused only on government inputs into ad hoc projects. In effect, strategic planning ensures that priority issues are addressed and limited resources are utilised to the maximum. Once an LED strategy has been initiated, there is a need to ensure that its implementation is realised. In the context of this article, how SMME initiatives thrive will depend on this LED strategy.

In supporting the above notion, the five-step planning process as developed by the World Bank is detailed below, in which an attempt is made to apply the context to the concept of SMMEs in South African local government:
2.1 Stage One: Organising the Effort

A community considers the LED policy planning process by identifying the local people, local public institutions, local businesses, local community organisations and other local groups of interest in the local economy that could establish and run SMMEs. The skills and resources that each one of these stakeholders brings to the strategy process provide a critical foundation for success. A resource audit is a necessary input to the strategy, and should include the identification of financial, human and capital resources that can contribute to LED strategy.

2.2 Stage Two: Conducting the Local Economy Assessment

The aim of the local economy assessment is to identify the local community’s strengths and weaknesses, including its human resource capacity, local government’s friendliness to all types of SMME activity, and the opportunities and threats facing the local economy. The goal of assessment is to create an economic profile of the communities and other regional, national and international competitors within the local economy.

2.3 Stage Three: Developing the LED Strategy

Most importantly, the LED strategy and action plans must be finely assessed against the staff resource capacity to carry them out, as well as budgetary constraints. The strategy’s action plans should be incorporated into the work and budgetary programme of the local government and other stakeholders. The aim is to leverage strength, overcome weaknesses, exploit opportunities and deal with threats to SMMEs.

2.4 Stage Four: Implementing the LED Strategy

Strategy implementation is driven by the LED action plans. Ongoing monitoring is provided through formal structures identified and created in step one. Evaluation of specific project outcomes ensures that the strategy continues to lead to the achievement of the LED vision, goals and objectives through SMME activities. In undertaking strategy implementation, it is important to identify and establish the appropriate institutions SMMEs may use to carry out the plans.

2.5 Stage Five: Reviewing the LED Strategy

Effective monitoring and evaluation techniques could help to quantify outcomes, justify expenditures, determine enhancements and adjustments, as well as develop good practices. The LED strategy should be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it
remains relevant to the various LED options including SMME initiatives. It may be that the initial conditions have changed or that the assessment was incorrect for the local conditions. The LED strategy that is intended to address SMME needs should evolve continuously to respond to the ever-changing competitive market environment.

According to Rogerson (2008), LED needs to be seen as having the following dimensions in order to evolve sufficiently and respond to the SMME approaches:

- Existence at the policy level, that is, the municipality’s decision to be more businesslike, or to encourage procurement and investment.
- Existence at an institutional level, that is, having a job centre or being a Section 21 company in terms of the Companies Act 71 of 2008.
- Existence at the project level, that is, it should operate as a defined, focused undertaking. For example, the establishment of a chicken cooperative company could be ideal.

Organising LED within the different spheres of government listed above is intended to give meaning to the way the concept of SMMEs could be expressed in municipalities. It is necessary to highlight that, since the SMMEs are embedded in LED, municipalities would require innovative approaches to satisfy the economic developmental needs of its community. This could be useful in realising the implementation of the SMME concept. In realising the implementation of LED strategy to improve the economic conditions of its community, the City of uMhlathuze has provided an exemplary strategy for implementation during the period 2008–2011.

An outline of pertinent challenges that could hamper SMME development and success was undertaken while possible remedies and the role of the municipality in developing SMMEs were addressed. These include start-up and venture capital, local business centres, reforming the tendering policies, establishing a database, as well as monitoring and evaluating SMME activities. To further understand the organisation of LED strategy, as well as satisfying SMME needs, Phila Xuza and Mark Swilling (2008) propose a consideration of institutionalising the different roles of stakeholders in municipalities. The intention of presenting LED strategy and its institutionalisation is to ensure that its implementation approaches to issues such as SMMEs are undertaken within a guided framework. Phila Xuza and Mark Swilling (2008) further allude to the notion that institutional arrangement and implementation of LED should be done with the following in giving further effect to SMME initiatives:

- Non-governmental organisations: One role of NGOs might be to find external resources other than those of government to support the LED projects of a municipality. In the application of SMMEs, NGOs could assist individuals and cooperatives with entrepreneurial skills and business ideas.
- LED units: The creation of LED funds by government has been intended to support community projects that were politically endorsed by the
municipality. This prompted the majority of municipalities in South Africa to create LED units to support SMME initiatives within the municipality.

- LED forums: Participation of LED stakeholders such as NGOs, institutions of higher learning and the business sector serves an important role in ensuring that LED activities such as SMME initiatives within the municipality are monitored locally.
- Donor agencies: The involvement of donors in the development of South Africa is essential. However, this should be treated with caution, since such involvement is largely seen as a short-term solution for long-term problems. This is due to the limited amount of money that can be dispensed. In this regard, the local municipality should be able to engender sustainability in the established SMME projects.
- Development agencies: The formation of agencies could serve as an important initiative to support LED at all community levels for different activities. The establishment of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), which supports the formation of development agencies and provides the seed funding necessary for the expansion of SMMEs in South Africa.

The above institutional arrangements could also give meaning to the implementation of LED strategy realised through SMMEs, as argued in this article. While this article advocates that SMMEs are inherent to LED, a theoretical analysis indicates that a distinction could be drawn between these two (LED and SMME) variables. However, in this regard, the relationship between LED and SMMEs, highlighting common characteristics warrants a brief overview.

3. Small Medium and Micro Enterprises in South Africa

The National Framework for LED in South Africa aims to support the development of sustainable local economies through integrated government action. This government action is developmental and stimulates the heart of the economy which comprises those enterprises that operate in local municipal spaces. The framework is underpinned by an appreciation of the evolving practice of LED internationally and is based on the unique South African context and challenges.

The promulgation of the National Small Business Act, 1996, gave formal recognition to the existence of the small business in South Africa. This recognition served as a basis for the establishment and promotion of small businesses by all spheres of government. The recognition discussed in section 3(1)(a–e) of the NSB stipulates that a National Small Business Council be established to fulfil the following functions:

- to represent and promote the interests of small business, with emphasis on those entities contemplated in the National Small Business Support Strategy
to advise the national, provincial and local spheres of government on social and economic policy that promotes the development of small business.

Since the notion of small business has been formally recognised, the challenges to be overcome in improving economic development and growth are legion. This article focuses on the role of local government and its policy interventions to address developmental challenges for small business. This is because the creation of LED units and other methods on the institutionalisation of LED in local government requires an understanding of the different forms this implementation could take, including SMME development. During the initial stages of the development of LED policy and strategy in 2002/03 by the former Department of Provincial and Local Government, LED activities were already credited with the establishment of SMMEs in various communities. These included several women-driven entrepreneurial initiatives. Accordingly, Rogerson (2008) concurs that SMMEs have been acknowledged as an application of LED policy from its inception and formalisation in South Africa.

Visagie (1997) espouses the recognition and value of the SMMEs in the generation of new employment and competitiveness, in which, the government must endeavour to bring SMMEs into a regulatory framework for labour standards. The South African municipalities are facing the enormous challenge of poverty, which requires interventions to improve the conditions of the poor. The introduction of the SMME concept requires that the municipal role be clarified, not as a business owner, but as a facilitator of an environment conducive to the development of business initiatives by community members. Rogerson (2008) provides examples of SMMEs in most African countries which include handicrafts, speciality food outlets and tourism. This identification is necessary, because SMME policy should support specific sectors within a particular municipality. Rogerson (2008) further quotes a study by the World Bank (2000) regarding value chains within a particular area of SMME operation, such as tourism, to ensure that there is an understanding of the business environment. In this regard, municipalities are expected to become the major role players in LED in creating an opportune policy environment to facilitate SMME activities in the following ways:

- creating employment opportunities.
- developing infrastructure in a way that provides business opportunities for local communities.
- encouraging cooperatives to help the community become active in the local economy.
- promoting economic development and growth through strategies that create a conducive environment for investment.
- developing and sustaining the main economic sectors.
- promoting the development of small businesses and enterprises, namely, small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).
The above discussion confirms that municipalities are confronted with major developmental challenges, which require urgent attention. The intention is to identify the location of SMME strategy in the context of LED functions. This means that as indicated by the former Department of Provincial and Local Government, municipalities are required to create an environment that promotes LED and encourages SMME initiatives. However, municipal SMMEs are not always linked to LED activities. For example, the speech by the Mayor of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality highlights the intention to consolidate SMME projects with Tshwane women and cooperatives without any mention of the LED as a unit or activity (Ramokgopa 2009). The term ‘SMME’ is used in South Africa to refer to small businesses or enterprises. They are any entity, whether or not incorporated or registered under any law, consisting mainly of persons operating small enterprise concerns in any economic sector, and established for the purpose of promoting the interests of small enterprises.

One of the challenges faced by SMMEs in South Africa remains their inability to maintain effective presence within the economic system for a relatively long period of time. A need exists to investigate the existence of SMMEs and how they can promote LED. However, as earlier discussed, this is not the focal point of this article. The presence of supporting entities in the economic system and the vitality of this role suggest that SMME programmes and projects should reasonably operate in a favourable environment created by municipalities. The primary role of municipalities is defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution), as the ‘promotion of social and economic development’ and reinforced in the White Paper on Local Government of 1998 and other associated legislation such as the White Paper on Municipal Service Partnerships of 2000 and the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. Sections 152(c) and 153(a) of the 1996 Constitution states that a municipality must “structure and manage its administration, budget and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community”.

It is the aim of the South African government through legislation and other policies to support the development of sustainable local economies through integrated government action. This developmental action stimulates the heart of the economy, which consists of a collection of enterprises including cooperatives that operate in local municipal areas. In this regard, LED strategy is not about what municipalities do, but more critically what the three spheres of government do together with municipalities in supporting the generation of local economies through functional and effective SMMEs. In order to unpack the notion of SMMEs within municipalities in the context of this article, it is necessary first to understand the conceptualisation of LED as applied in this article.
4. Relationship and Common Characteristics of Led and Smmes

LED and SMME concepts have various characteristics in common. The discussion of the common characteristics of LED as seen in public–private partnerships, as well as SMMEs such as food outlets used in municipal programmes, illustrates the bond between them, since they are more related than distinct. This analogy explains the nature of their power and influence, and the contributions they can make to the economy of South Africa. The common characteristics identified include several areas such as the following:

- strategic intervention by municipalities.
- transforming or restructuring the manner in which municipalities conduct their business.
- focusing on development.
- consultative and multi-sector in orientation, which both reflect the operation of a municipality.

While the promotion of SMMEs is identified as a cornerstone of or as being inherent to LED, the interplay between municipal LED strategies as bandwagons and the existence of SMMEs is clear. This is because LED strategies are required to offer both municipalities and the private sector (including SMME initiatives) the opportunity to work together to improve the local economy. This interplay should be aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of various SMMEs and should encourage sustainable growth that is inclusive and participatory for the community. On one hand, LED strategy should be understood to be a result of actions and interventions of local government and the constant improvement and integration of national priorities and programmes in the local sphere (Nel 1998). On the other, SMME development and operation should be construed to be an outcome of LED strategy aimed at enhancing the living conditions of communities. This understanding emphasises the notion of LED strategy providing a bandwagon for SMMEs.

According to Rogerson (2008), LED processes and business cycles at times operate on different scales with varied implications, while there are some commonalities when devising policies and strategies. Hence, project development within the LED sphere, in particular within emerging areas, needs to incorporate the needs of SMMEs during the start-up phase. For example, the need is not only for business advice and support, but also for the provision of business infrastructure, because this is generally inadequate in many municipal areas both poor and rich, although to differing degrees. Some of the additional common characteristics tying LED and SMMEs in South Africa could include the following as espoused by Rogerson (2008):
• **Community participation and involvement in decision making**

Community participation is aimed at inspiring confidence in the local economy and mobilising resources for the advantage of local communities. This is intended to enhance the management and implementation of economic development strategies that are participatory, realistic, feasible and viable for development opportunities. The fact that a strong community participation culture within municipalities has not taken place outside party political influence means that SMMEs are faced with enormous pressure to ensure the inclusion of the general community.

• **Efforts to encourage establishment of community-owned businesses**

The citizens will be resourceful, skilled and able to take full advantage of economic opportunities. They are innovative and able to participate in and/or establish, run and grow thriving enterprises. They produce locally made and branded products for the domestic and international market that are of high quality and appeal to the needs of different consumers. Despite support from the government to ensure that SMMEs are owned by local cooperatives, this has not been sufficiently realised, as many of the businesses are largely owned by individuals within municipalities.

• **Strengthening municipal in-house capacity in for local business growth**

Most municipalities have embraced LED strategies and are implementing fully-fledged supply-chain management policy to govern decision making in their procurement processes. Through these policies and strategies, municipalities have strategically channelled resources and support to promote SMME development. The main challenge, however, is to develop and implement sound monitoring systems to guide the measuring of performance against outcomes achieved.

• **Intergovernmental relations with provinces and national departments**

Coordinated structural planning within the context of the integrated development planning (IDP) process is necessary. This could offer the potential to link economies and accelerate growth directly by public–private sector investment and through facilitating the strategic development of competitive advantage. The performance of a local economy is dependent on both effective local governance and the input of other spheres of government in local spheres. An example is the establishment of Seda by the Department of Trade and Industry. The involvement of both provincial and local government is necessary in the establishment and sustained support of SMMEs. However, the challenge is always how to manage the interplay among these stakeholders. This remains a major challenge since intergovernmental relations in
South Africa has not been a success story. Challenges including duplication of resources and lack of coordination of activities have not been fully addressed thus far.

While the above discussion may be regarded as a paradox in that SMMEs are a subsector of LED and cannot exist without LED, the above lessons highlight additional common characteristics shared by the concepts of SMMEs and LED. It is imperative to indicate that this (SMME as a subsector of LED) should not always be the case. Municipalities should adopt innovative approaches to ensure that some SMMEs’ activities are independent variables from LED at times. This could increase the sophistication of SMME projects and avoid their oversimplification, which could decrease innovation and contribution to local economic growth. To further consolidate the argument regarding the need to understand the concept of SMMEs as distinct from LED as described above, a conceptual framework for the improvement of SMME initiatives within municipalities is discussed below.

5. Challenges Facing SMMEs

SMMEs are considered the engines of growth in developing countries. They have played a vital role in creating jobs, spurring innovations, and creating new products, and thus contributed to economic vitality and growth. However, in considering the situation in African countries, there are several impediments that have to be removed in order for SMMEs to flourish. Kim (2011) alludes to the notion that the strong presence of Asian SMMEs in Africa and increasing competition have negatively affected local SMMEs. Most notably, according to Kim (2011), African countries lack the governmental capacity necessary to properly support the development of local SMMEs. It is pointed out that African governments impose harsh regulations on local SMMEs. Kim (2011) provides an example of SMMEs in Ethiopia which complain that regulations are too tight. It is also difficult to obtain a licence. Additionally, proof of premises and requirements for large amounts of capital and high qualifications stifle growth. SMMEs are heavily taxed.

Kim (2011) further provides examples for Ghana in which emerging SMMEs tried to enter the oil market. However, it is said that the existing legal system provided a more favourable environment for international companies. Consequently, it became impossible for local SMMEs to compete with international firms that have greater know-how and capital. The Ghanaian SMMEs raised concerns about the bidding process which seem to favour foreign companies. Information about contracts is not made available to local providers and there are perceptions of a lack of transparency.

Phila Xuza and Mark Swilling (2008) discuss the critical elements and challenges facing the South African SMMEs in this manner:

- Financial management

Financial management is a crucial field within the environment of SMMEs that
presents potential obstacles and challenges. Management competence is often determined by the availability of management and financial information. Lack of financial sources is often reported as the major obstacle for businesses, including lack of financial planning and control, bookkeeping and profit realisation. Hence, a proper financial history and business operation is crucial for success as well as recognition by potential financiers.

• Production and operational issues

Various operational aspects may impact on the success of the SMMEs, namely, lack of management skills and ethical conduct and practices, lack of proper quality control in the production process, lack of capacity and skills planning, problems with the suppliers of resources and limited attention to developing suitable products or services. It is also common knowledge that business managers reward themselves with bonuses and incentives before a turnaround profit is realised.

• Access to technology and market

A change in the socio-political sphere has brought some changes in the market economy. Entrepreneurs need to be technologically aware and understand the business systems and operations. Innovations and upgrading of existing systems need a boost. Marketing factors such as poor location and structures, inability to interact with potential clients and customers and lack of a customer-friendly approach also impact on the success and elevation of SMMEs.

• Fraud and theft

Recognising the important role played by SMMEs, it is crucial to look at the negative consequences of fraud on their businesses. Despite their important contribution to the socioeconomic development of South Africa, many SMMEs are exposed to the high cost of the fraud wave currently engulfing corporate South Africa. Appropriate measures such as internal controls and whistle blowing should be put in place to curb the scourge. Accordingly, procedures and mechanisms should be put in place to alleviate the problem and sustain the business operations.

• Inadequate management

This particular problem is broad but includes weaknesses in terms of business knowledge, lack of management skills, poor or inadequate planning, and inexperience. There is an overreliance on the single ownership manager of most small firms and there is a reluctance to move away from this managerial tendency on the part of the owner-manager. This results in and translates into poor human resource
practices where no new qualified staff is hired or authority and responsibility delegated to other employees.


Considering the pivotal role that municipalities are required to play in establishing conditions conducive to SMME development, it is necessary to understand and propose viable approaches for South African municipalities. This understanding is premised on the fact that the introduction of the concept of SMMEs has not substantively benefited poor people in South Africa. This is despite municipalities in general having introduced the formalisation of LED units which have initiated SMME projects in local communities. A conceptual proposition customised for South African local government could assist in the improvement of economic conditions in this regard. In order to ensure functional SMME initiatives that respond to the developmental agenda of the government in South Africa, several aspects that should be heeded are identified and explained below.

- **SMME Development and Implementation Strategy**

This strategy serves to implement LED that supports the concept of SMMEs. Municipal initiatives and programmes must seek to ensure that adequate support and delivery mechanisms exist across the entrepreneurship continuum. This means that every phase from pre-start-up to start-up, business survival, growth and expansion, and turnaround of ailing businesses should be carefully planned.

- **Implementation Challenges**

Poor implementation remains the most important feature of economic projects for most municipalities in South Africa. A key question has been whether government should provide finance directly to address the requirements put forward by the private banking and financial service sector in supporting the development of SMMEs.

- **Human Resource Services**

De Coning (1992) believes that human resource services include, among others, specific services such as SMME training, advice, mentorship and institutional arrangements which are key for SMMEs advancement. One of the key challenges of these SMMEs is their inability to attract and maintain a qualified workforce for securing productivity and profitability. This usually occurs because workers are often unskilled and/or inexperienced. The SMME strategy should seek to provide training opportunities for needy members of the community.
• **SMME Community Cooperation**

Visagie (1997) embraces the notion that traditional and not-so traditional SMMEs have not considered the implications of valuing and managing a diverse workforce and unwritten rules are still skewed. A strategy is required for managing diversity which takes into consideration the effects on SMMEs of cultural, racial, gender, age and other kinds of diversity.

• **Financial Services**

Financial services represent the overall process involved in securing basic financial products such as loans, grants and donations. SMMEs need to engage in the establishment of relationships with appropriate financial service providers. The SMME strategy should make provision for SMME projects to ensure viable and sustainable initiatives.

• **Infrastructure Services**

Infrastructural services include services associated with the provision of basic information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure, as well as physical infrastructure. Some providers may offer SMMEs the opportunity to undertake their activities within appropriate business premises conducive to productivity. Therefore, the establishment and support of SMME initiatives could provide much-needed assistance to meet the local challenges of economic development.

The conceptual framework is proposed to help South African municipalities take a proactive stance in attempting to understand the concept of SMMEs. This could serve as a necessary basis for municipalities to facilitate conditions suitable for SMME establishment and support, to promote sustainable local economic growth. Municipalities have the potential to influence their economies by contributing directly or indirectly to job creation in their areas of jurisdiction. However, it is not the primary responsibility of municipalities to create jobs, but rather to facilitate conditions for job creation.

7. **Conclusion**

The purpose of this article was to describe how the concept of SMMEs is used in South African local government as an application of LED. This article indicated that the readiness of local government to adopt the concept of SMMEs and apply it as an LED strategy has not been sufficient to respond to the developmental challenges they face. Moreover, the creation of LED units and other institutional components does not sufficiently support SMMEs in South African local government. It is also fair to say that one needs to have customers in the marketplace who would want to buy the goods
and services on offer. One of the main factors in the success of any small business is
the existence of a real business opportunity. It is not enough that the business
opportunity exists; of more importance is the manner in which the opportunity is
exploited or seized. Therefore, the article concludes that, among other things, the
improvement of infrastructure, such as technological applications and transport,
should be incorporated into the SMME implementation strategy.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has established the Small Enterprise
Development Agency (SEDA). This should be the key vehicle for localised enterprise
support. This should be complemented with a network of sector-specific business
support service providers. The best way of achieving this should be explored by SEDA
with the aim of ensuring that access to relevant support is broadened and localised. It
is critical that municipalities develop strategic relationships with SEDA and provide the
necessary information to their communities. It is equally critical that SEDA uses the
municipalities and information services to extend the reach and range of its services
and be perceived to be local and driven and locally owned.

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Multipurpose Community Centers in South Africa  
An Empirical Study of Select Municipalities  

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Abstract

The provision of basic services to citizens in a fair and equitable manner has been a challenge for the South African government, given the history of segregation based on race and color that was instituted by the apartheid regime. It is such a challenge that compelled the present government to identify various alternative strategies that will enhance service delivery, hence the birth of an idea to establish Multipurpose Community Centers (MPCCs), which later became known as Thusong Service Centers (TSCs), to serve as the vehicle in enhancing service delivery. The aim of this study was to evaluate if the MPCCs (herein also referred to as TSCs or Centers) established by the South African government do enhance service delivery to the previously marginalized communities. The study was conducted in three provinces in South Africa, and in each province three municipalities where TSCs have been established were randomly chosen on the basis of their geographical location, namely rural, semi-urban and urban areas where previously marginalized communities dwell. Stratified random sampling was utilized in gathering information as the researcher targeted four population groups, namely the beneficiaries of services, government officials who service clients in the TSCs, center managers and provincial coordinators of the TSCs. The researcher utilized structured questionnaires to gather information from beneficiaries of services, semi-structured interview schedule for government officials, and an observation sheet to record how TSCs operate, and whether the government officials practice Batho Pele Principles in serving recipients of services. This article argues that although the introduction of such Centers was a noble idea and that the household access to basic services has changed for the better in certain communities, the Centers have not been successful in accelerating services in some communities as revealed by the study. One of the reasons these Centers are not successful is lack of consultation by government with communities and other relevant stakeholders in the establishment of some Centers to establish what services need to be rendered. Furthermore, some Centers do not have adequate physical and human resources, and the managers running these Centers are not adequately trained in managerial and other relevant skills. The study also revealed that lack of funding makes it impossible for these Centers and services rendered sustainable, and lack of communication and coordination of activities between departments utilizing the Centers render integrated service delivery. The article concludes by giving recommendations that were carefully drawn from the analysis of the findings and the entire study.
1. Introduction

The advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 and the demise of the apartheid regime brought hope to millions that were deprived of decent basic services. The democratically elected government led by the African National Congress, however, was faced with a monumental challenge of addressing the inherited inequalities of the past, among other things, the provisioning of basic services. Previously inequality and segregation based on race and Color prevailed, therefore the new government was obliged to transform the public service in order to provide quality services to all citizens on an equitable basis, regardless of race, Color and population group. As mentioned by Harsch (2001, 12), democracy ushered a new dispensation as far as the provision of basic services to citizens. However, the inequalities created by the apartheid regime would still linger for a long time.

A few years after democracy came into being; service delivery to the previously marginalized still remained a big challenge for the newly elected government. Levin (2004, 78), the former Director-General in the Department of Public Service and Administration, acknowledged the fact that the South African Public Service was to a certain extent inaccessible particularly to those in remote and or rural areas due to transport costs that were high and unaffordable. He further stated that lack of information and communication makes it impossible for ordinary citizens that were previously disadvantaged to be aware of what the government offers as far as benefits and services are concerned. It was, therefore, necessary for government, in the interest of the poor, to bring services closer through the creation of “one-stop-shop Centers”, especially in previously marginalized rural communities.

These concerns led the government to explore various methods in which services can be brought closer to the people, and therefore the introduction multipurpose community Centers, herein referred to as Thusong/Assistance Service Centers (TSCs), was seen as the solution.

The idea of establishing such Centers was first conceptualized in the G-7 Information Society and Development Conference (ISAD) held in 1996 in South Africa through the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It was then that the National Information Technology Forum (NTF) appointed a Community Access Task Team (CATT) to look into the possibility of the development of such Centers and their role as integral points in disseminating information and improving service delivery in the South African community (Ladikpo 2005).

According to Pahad (2005, 7-10), in 1999 the Cabinet mandated GCIS to roll out the program as the pilot project in the delivery of services. The reason for delegating this program to GCIS was that the Department as mouth-piece of government had to ensure that citizens become active participants in government and are well informed on the services they are supposed to be receiving. The Centers were seen as the vehicle that will speed up service delivery and improve the lives of citizens by bringing services closer to them, particularly the poor and previously disadvantaged. From
these Centers, citizens would be empowered through accessing information on government services and resources, and also be utilized as Centers for development and empowerment.

In order for the programme to be successful, as mentioned by the Government Communication and Information Service (GCIS, 2008), the national and provincial public institutions had to be involved in developing an effective community-centered communication, with the main focus on integrated service delivery offered in one locality, that is, citizens have to access a number of services in one place. The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) and its provincial counterpart, the Government Information Centers (GICs), were to support the TSCs initiative by continually assessing information needs in communities and developing creative ways to meet these; identifying and promoting the utilization of the most appropriate mediums available in each area; working with communities and all the stakeholders involved to develop creative ways of passing on messages for all-round development; organizing events for national, provincial, local and other stakeholder leadership to interact with communities; helping communities understand and utilizing all available sources of information including radio, TV and the internet; promoting the need to maintain specific focus on gender, youth and other sectoral issues; and sustaining intergovernmental relationships between national, provincial and local government.

2. The Concept of Multipurpose Community Centers

According to Benjamin (2008, 2) a Multipurpose Community Centre is an adequately resourced establishment in which government provides diverse services to a community in an efficient, cost effective manner, and enables a community to develop itself through programs initiated by both government and a community involved. Service delivery in the Centre needs to be integrated, where information and a variety of services can be accessed by a community in one place within five minutes of a residence. A Centre is also to empower the poor and marginalized through access to information, services that were expensive to obtain, and resources from both government and non-governmental organizations for community development. In other words, access to information by communities was perceived as the driving force to development. The concern was that recipients of services often struggled to get prompt services because of inefficient officials who would send them from one office to another. Government Communication and Information Service (2008) further states that for integrated service delivery to be successful, all stakeholders need to play an important role. It is not only government that needs to utilize such buildings, but also the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based Organizations (CBOs), parastatals and private sector. Expanding further on community involvement in the affairs of government on matters that affect them directly and in the development of their socio-economic status, Chiliza (2004: 34) asserts that no
community needs to be left out, but all communities need to have equal opportunity to participate. This is further articulated by Mubangizi (2007, 6) who states that the Government needs to have people-centered programs of development that are based on meeting both the material and non-material human needs.

Bruiner (2003:4) says the Centers are meant to be utilized not only to develop less privileged or previously marginalized communities in the use of technology as far as communicating is concerned, but also to improve their socio-economic status.

3. The need for TSCs in South Africa

From 1999, the Government engaged itself in improving strategic planning and management in order to effectively implement the plethora of policies developed for the betterment of lives of citizens, particularly those that were disadvantaged prior to 1994. The managers of public institutions were entrusted with the responsibility of implementing these policies. One of the challenges faced by the managers was the turnaround time between decision making and implementation that extended to 18 months because of bureaucracy which often caused lack of communication between different levels of authority. Other challenges facing institutions are shortage of office administrators who have basic administrative skills, leadership that cannot take prompt decisions, and the non-implementation and monitoring of Batho Pele Principles in public institutions (Ramaite 2002: 20 - 21).

Shilowa (2006:62-66) attests to the fact that there is a need to have interventions in all spheres of government that will serve as a method of accelerating service delivery, and to be prompt in responding to the needs of the public. He further says that “improving the efficiency and performance of government is therefore not a ‘nice to have’, but rather an essential prerequisite in achieving government’s objectives. While there is a lot we can be proud of, we cannot be fully satisfied with the current pace and quality of delivery”.

The above-mentioned challenges had a negative effect on service delivery, particularly in the remote areas of the country where the poorest of the poor are found. It therefore became imperative that government should introduce an innovative strategy that would further transform public service delivery in order to take care of the needs of those that are unreachable, thus the birth of MPCCs also known as Thusong Service Centers.

The establishment of TSCs was seen as a means of providing valuable information about Government and also as Centers of community development by bringing projects that will improve communities’ economic status (Ladikpo 2005). It was also envisaged that the TCCs will also serve as Information Technology Centers (ITCs), bringing technology closer to the communities and enabling them to access online information through Public information Terminals (PIT) that will be based in the Centers. The Centers would offer services from three spheres of Government, availing as many services as possible in a single place. Services to be given were, but not
limited to, obtaining and processing of all kinds of government application forms, legal services, arts and culture, passports and identity documents, information on welfare, health, housing, education and bursaries (GCIS 2008).

The target is to establish one Centre in each of the 283 local municipalities that will have representatives from various departments who will expedite services like social grants, identity documents, passports, housing and any other relevant service by the year 2014 (GCIS 2008). The roll-out plan ran from October 1999 to March 2000 in a form of pilot projects in rural and areas where communities have not been receiving adequate services. Three Centers built within that period were in Tombo in the Eastern Cape Province, Kgautswane in the Limpopo Province (the then Northern Province), and in the Western Cape Province in Worcester. By the year 2008 there were already 101 Centers and satellites throughout the whole country (GCIS 2008).

With these Centers the Government aimed at covering 43 districts and 6 Metropolitan Municipalities by the end of March 2003. In the same year, there were 54 TSCs and 7 satellite sites established throughout the country and by the end of 2005 there were already 60 Centers. In March 2007, there were already 96 of these Centers and the services rendered were from Departments of Home Affairs, Labor, Housing, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), Social Development, GCIS, and Health.

About 96 TSCs were already established by the end of March 2007, as the Government was determined to expand infrastructure for citizens to access information and services. By the end of March 2009, 137 TSCs were in operation. Services rendered in these Centers vary according to the needs of the communities, and they are from the Departments of Home Affairs, Labor, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), Social Development, GCIS, and the Department of Health. In other areas they will serve as Telecasters\(^1\), Post Office, Libraries, Agricultural Extension Offices, Municipal Services and South African Police Service Offices. Community Development Workers, NGOs and community-based organizations will use these Centers to offer services to communities (GCIS 2008).

Services offered in these Centers are supposed to be client-oriented and need to vary according to the needs and demands at the time. They range from giving advice on education to health matters and any other relevant issue to the community. People who come to these Centers include jobseekers, community organizations that may require information on internet, small businesses that require consultation to get ideas on how to write a business proposal for tendering purposes, development officers that may need telephone, fax and email services (GCIS 2008).

4. Brief Profile of Centers

They are “one-stop, integrated community development Centers” that offer poor and

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\(^1\) A telecaster is a building that is equipped with a set of television in which community members gather to watch live broadcasted television programmes.
disadvantaged communities an opportunity to access Government services and resources that are relevant to their needs, thus enabling them to engage in the programmers that are offered by Government in order to improve their lives. In these Centers communities get empowered through access to information not only to government services but also to NGOs, parastatals, business and any other relevant institution. Each Centre is expected to have a minimum of six Government departments that will offer a variety of services to clients (GCIS 2008).

In his 2004 State of the Nation Address President Thabo Mbeki emphasized that his administration was committed to offer better services to communities, and therefore every municipality must have an MPCC by the year 2014. In March 2007, there were already 96 of these Centers and the services rendered were from Departments of Home Affairs, Labor, Housing, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), Social Development, GCIS, and Health. Services rendered in these Centers vary according to the needs of the communities. Community Development Workers and NGOs will use these Centers for developmental projects that will empower communities to be economically skilled to fend for themselves, other than depending on government grants and handouts. The Multipurpose Community Centers will ensure that the already existing facilities are optimally utilized (GCIS 2008).

According to Pahad (2005,7) the GCIS Thusong Service Centers Business Plan 2006-2014, there are supposed to be three categories of TSCs which offer six types of integrated services, and they are hubs, satellite and mobile service units. These categories were identified on the basis of different services offered, the frequency of offering those services, and also on the availability of infrastructure and facilities. The infrastructure of the hub and satellite Centers in different provinces can be offered in different forms. For instance, it can be one big building that offers a variety of services under one roof, separate buildings that are very close to one another, or buildings scattered in a wider area, preferably utilising existing infrastructure to cut the costs. The Government proposed that such Centers may be established in already existing buildings such as shopping Centers or buildings that are privately owned. Mobile units may be based at a hub but not bound in one position; they have to be moved from one place to another, stopping at defined points. The population density determines what type of centre to be provided to a particular community (National Treasury 2009: 18).

5. Research Method

The research required the researcher to be in different places to collect and analyze data that would be used to evaluate if the introduction of TSCs in South Africa has improved service delivery, particularly in areas that were disadvantaged during the apartheid era. The researcher saw it necessary to use both the qualitative and quantitative approaches.
5.1 Method of Data Collection

In order for the research to weight in terms of the findings, the researcher saw it fit to use a variety of data collection methods, as the use of a single method may not give a true state of circumstances. For this research the following data collecting methods were employed:

5.2 Sampling Method

In this study stratified random sampling was utilized because of the different population that was divided into relevant strata based on one or more attributes. The sample was representative of all population groups to avoid bias. The researcher used two different types of samples, and they are the beneficiaries of services who are also referred to as clients, and officials who are responsible to render services to clients. The latter represents the knowledgeable population because of experience, position, and information in the field of service delivery. They are officials who hold senior position in the public service and are directly involved with policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The former represents citizens who benefit from services rendered. It was crucial to get information from them as they experience service delivery first hand. The study was conducted in three provinces in South Africa, and in each province three municipalities where Centers have been established were randomly chosen on the basis of their geographical location, namely rural, semi-urban and urban areas where previously marginalized communities dwell.

5.3 Primary Data

Both structured and semi-structured interviews were utilized. The structured interview schedule, directed to nine managers and 18 government officials working in the Centers, served as a tool to ask questions that are written down in their correct order as they appear on the interview schedule, ensuring that both the researcher and the interviewee do not deviate from the pertinent issues that will enable the researcher to reach the objectives of the research. The schedule had Sections A and B. Section A composed of nineteen questions, focused on biographical details of respondents, and Section B with seven questions, intended to inform the researcher about the types of resources available at the Centers. The semi-structured interviews were directed to three key role-players and strategic provincial government officials who are responsible for the Centers in their respective provinces, and three Senior Communications in Centers where the study was conducted. These are in direct contact with various Centers in provinces where they have been placed, and have in-depth information on the operation of Centers.

The use of semi-structured interviews assisted the researcher to gather more information as this type of interview allowed the researcher to follow-up on an answer
given by an interviewee in order to gather more information on a question asked. The semi-structured interviews were directed to two government employees working in each centre who interact face-to-face with clients on a daily basis. The total number of government employees interviewed in the three provinces using semi-structured interviews was eighteen (six in each province).

5.4 Questionnaires

As another form of gathering data, a total number of 180 questionnaires were distributed to clients of these Centers at selected municipal offices where Centers are based, taking into account the geographic representation from rural, semi-urban and urban areas. In each of the nine Centers visited by the researcher, twenty clients who were at the Centre on the day of the researcher’s visit were randomly chosen. This was done in order to draw comparison between external clients’ views on service delivery and those of officials with respect to customer satisfaction. The questionnaires were designed to obtain information relevant to the objectives of the research, and had eighteen questions divided into four categories, namely the biography of respondents, their knowledge of TSCs, customer service as per the Batho Pele Principles, and a section on whether the Centers are bringing projects that will uplift the socio-economic standard of communities.

5.5 Observation Sheet

Observation is one of the methods used in research to gather, analyze and interpret data in order to evaluate whether the objectives of the research have been achieved or not. This method ensured that the researcher did not have to rely on participant’s perceptions which may be unreliable or misleading. In this research the researcher used a structured observation sheet to record how Centers operate, the infrastructure, surrounding environment, how staff treated clients and general observations about the functioning of the Centers. The sheet focused on the geographical details of the Centers, taking into consideration aspects such as the distance of the Centers from the community, mode of reaching the Centre by the clients, accessibility of the Centre to clients, the availability of furniture and safety equipment, whether the vision and mission of the Centre and Batho Pele principles were displayed, and general behavior and attitude of personnel towards clients and other visitors of the Centers.

5.6 Analysis of Data

It was important to analyze data by grouping each response according to themes and patterns from the questions asked in the questionnaire, and from personal contacts. As stated by Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell, (2005: 211), theme identification in the process of analyzing data is the fundamental component in research. Themes are
“described as an ‘umbrella’ constructs which are usually identified by the researcher before, after and during the data collection”.

6. Findings

The chart below indicates that only 1% of respondents indicated that they do not have any formal education, 58% indicating that they have secondary education, and 16% have reached tertiary institutions, therefore they can read and write, enabling them to understand and answer the questionnaire. Although the respondents have secondary education, most of them are unemployed and do not have necessary skills that are needed in the labor market. The Centers, therefore, were a beacon of hope in the creation of employment opportunities.

**Figure 1:** Respondents according to level of education

![Chart showing level of education](chart.png)

6.1 Respondents by race

About 3% of respondents were Coloreds and 97% were Blacks. This is due to the fact that the discriminatory laws that were passed by the apartheid regime that promoted inhumane and unjust forced removals that led to classification of inhabitants according to race. Areas that were mostly marginalized are historically black townships, followed by Indian and Colored residential areas. For that reason, the

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2 Respondents in this section refers to community members where these Centres have been established, who are supposed to be recipients of services.
majority of Centers are placed in formerly black residential areas, as this shows that politics and societies in the democratic South Africa are still shaped by the apartheid architecture.

**Figure 2: Race Representation**

![Race Representation Pie Chart]

6.2 **Respondents by age**

Figure 3 below shows that the majority of respondents (57%) were from ages 20 to 39, and those that are 60 and above were at 25%. Those that fall between the ages 40-59 and teenagers are 10% and 8% respectively. Most teens interviewed said that they visit the Centers either to apply for identity documents or birth certificates, as some were accompanied by parents or guardians. The majority of those that fell between the ages 20-39 solely came for child support grant which was introduced by government in 1999 for persons responsible for looking after a child younger than 15 years old. These parents are mostly single and earn R28 800.00 per year or R2 400.00 per month as specified by government, and some are married with a combined salary of R57 600 per annum or R4 800.00 per month. Many of the respondents who fall between 40 and 59 years of age visit the Centers for social grants and were looking for job opportunities.
Figure 3: Age categories

6.3 Respondents by Sex

67% of respondents were females whilst males were only 33%. This is due to the fact most households were headed by single females that were both young, unemployed (see Figure 4 below) or pensioners. According to Lehohla (2007), the South Africa’s Statistician-General and Head of Statistics South Africa, the 2007 mid-year estimates statistics showed that 24.3 million (about 51%) of the 47.9 million South Africa’s population are female, and that life expectancy at birth for men is shorter than that of women. It is further asserted by Hassim (2005) that households headed by females in rural areas are at 65%, as compared to 54% households headed by females in other areas. African women who are under the age of 30 are most likely to be unemployed at a rate of 75%.

Figure 4: Sex category
6.4 Respondents by marital status

According to Figure 6 below, 65% of the respondents were single, whilst only 25% were married. Those that were divorced and widowed were 2% and 7% respectively. As mentioned before, most households were headed by single female parents.

Figure 5: Respondents According to Marital Status

6.5 Respondents by gross income per month

Figure 6 below depicts that the majority (71%) of respondents do not have an income that exceeds R1 000.00 per month. This is due to the fact that most respondents are unemployed and do not have steady income as depicted in Figure 8. These are the residents that get less than a dollar per day. They often go to the Centers, particularly to the Department of Labour, with the hope of finding employment. Respondents who get a gross income from R1 001.00 to R3 000 are at 20%, whereas those that fall in the R3 001 and R6 000.00, and those within R6 001 and R9 000.00 categories are at 6% and 2% respectively. Respondents who fall in the R9 001 and above category are at one percent.
7. Utilization of Centers

These Centers were supposed to be the nucleus of community development by offering education, knowledge, and providing relevant basic services and projects to benefit communities. Although certain Centers have libraries, schools, clinics and other relevant facilities, some Centers are not optimally utilized. The reason given by respondents who are recipients of services is that services rendered are not the ones needed by them, in other words a Centre was placed in the community and services provided were of no relevance to the community. Again, some Centers that have telephone facilities charge clients for the use of the equipment, and therefore are not accessible to ordinary citizens who do not have money.

8. Skills Development and Economic Projects

One of the objectives of establishing such Centers was to bring projects that will equip communities with the development of necessary skills that will enable them to be employers. The Centers were also expected to bring about job opportunities that will benefit communities such as construction of roads, toilets and houses by municipalities, and upgrading of the sewage system. The survey, however, showed that Centers seldom brought projects for the benefit of communities. About 36% of respondents said there were not enough projects brought by the Centers, whilst 34% said there were no projects brought by Centre. Only 17% said the Centers brought projects, and only 8% said they completely agree that Centers brought projects. Respondents alleged that if there are projects brought by municipalities through the
Centers, corruption becomes the norm; people who often get employment and lucrative tenders in such projects are relatives and friends of politicians in power.

**Figure 11:** Skills Development and Projects Brought by Centers

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to a question about courtesy in the centers.](image)

**9. Batho Pele Principles**

This part focused on the implementation of Batho Pele Principles in the Centers. Batho Pele Principles are meant to serve as guidelines for achieving quality service delivery. The aim was to determine if the principles were practiced by government officials in the carrying of their duties in the Centers.

**Courtesy**

**Q: Are staff members in the centre very helpful and demonstrate an acceptable behaviour and attitude that is of high standard?**

Courtesy is that behavior or gestures that should be exhibited by providers of services to clients. It can be shown, for instance, in cases where an elderly person needs to be taken by the hand to counters without the person having previously asked for help, thanking the customer after he/she has been served, or just greeting the customer with a smile. These little gestures convey the message to the customer that he/she is important and valued, and also tells the customer that he/she is noticed. Some of the
gestures that can be attributed to courtesy are listening with interest, giving a polite word, and saying a word of kindness.

Although 59% of the respondents indicated that government officials working in the Centers were very helpful, and displayed an attitude of high-standard caring, 13% strongly disagreed and 16% disagreed. According to these clients, treatment meted on recipients of services by officials in the Centers was bad. This kind of behavior made clients feel they were not valued and unimportant. Even though the bad attitude of officials was reported to the relevant superiors, the disrespectful behavior of officials still continues.

**Figure 7:** Demonstration of Acceptable Behavior and Attitude by Staff

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**Redress**

**Q: Are your complaints addressed by the concerned departments in the centre?**

Redress is one of the ways that an organization can be able to evaluate itself as far as service delivery is concerned. One way of knowing whether customers are satisfied or not is to listen to their compliments and complaints. In this research study most respondents (40%) said government officials did not address issues raised on services that are poorly provided or on those they do not receive. In many instances complaints are attended to, but very late, which makes clients feel that the service they get is not worth the money they pay. Examples of poor service delivery, as mentioned by clients, is when sewage pipes leak, it takes an average of a week before being fixed, and street lights generally are fixed a month after they have been
reported. It is noteworthy that respondents also mentioned that government officials do not take kindly to complaints.

**Figure 8:** Complaints addressed by relevant departments

![Figure 8: Complaints addressed by relevant departments](image)

**Openness and Transparency**

**Q: Are you informed as a community member how the Centre operates, and how money is spent on services you are supposed to be receiving?**

Openness and transparency, as stated by Johnsen, Howard & Miemczyk (2009, 273) is an important ingredient in fostering partnership between government and electorate who are major stakeholders, and that partnership entails four attributes namely commitment to the course, proper and effective coordination, interdependence and trust. Wood and Winston (2007,177) further say that transparent and open organizations show consistency in the treatment of both the internal and external clients, and have the attribute of openly listening to clients’ perspectives that may not necessarily be the same as that of an organization, always explains why a certain decision was taken, always keeps records that can be easily accessible to constituents, always explains why a certain decision was taken, always keeps records that can be easily accessible to constituents.
Information

Q: Does the centre provide up-to-date, easy to understand information concerning services rendered?

According to Figure 10 below, 38% of respondents said the Centers do not give them up-to-date information concerning services they receive, whereas 29% said they are informed on a regular basis, and that the information given them is easy to understand. The latter said there were brochures and information leaflets offered to them when they visit the Centers. Respondents who strongly disagreed and those that strongly agreed are at 13% and 10% respectively, whilst 10% was uncertain. Those who strongly disagreed contest that there are no road shows that take place and that in itself is a barrier to information flow. They also alleged that councilors and government officials do not bother bringing necessary information to them.

Again, these Centers were supposed to have fully fledged computer laboratories that would enhance knowledge and bring information to communities on health, education and economy. In some Centers visited the computer laboratories were not functional, and others were not fully utilized because of illiteracy level of communities that served as a stumbling block in the usage of computers.
Figure 10: Centers providing up-to-date and easy to understand information

10. Other Challenges Identified

The following challenges were identified when using the structured interview schedule to interview the nine managers of the Centers and eighteen government officials placed in these Centers.

10.1 Knowledge of Legislation that Impacts on Centers by Managers

Of the nine centre managers interviewed, six of them did not know of any legislation that impacts on the Centers. That is a major concern as these managers are expected to enforce Batho Pele Principles, and abide by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, especially Chapter Two that has the Bill of Rights and Chapter Ten that deals with public service issues. They are also either not aware of, or have limited knowledge of, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper). The managers blame employers for not offering induction program to newly recruited managers, particularly on legislation, in order to equip them with necessary knowledge. They are employed, put into Centers and left on their own without proper support. They have to learn through trial and error.

10.2 Lack of Motivation

Firstly, contract staff members are demoralized because of the uncertainty of their future employment in the departments they serve. The issue of low salaries was raised by a number of employees as one of the causes of demotivation. Secondly, the
number of clients that by far outnumber officials causes staff members to be overworked, and therefore affects productivity. Finally, staff members allege that they do not get the needed support from their respective departments.

10.3 Departments Working Together (Integrated Service Delivery)

Another reason that necessitated Government to come up with the idea of services offered under one roof in the TSCs was the fact that currently each government department does not offer a wide variety of services to clients. Bringing the departments together, and the availability of online services in the Centers will enable these departments to work together and know the details of what the other departments are offering, and what documentation is needed from clients to access a certain service. This will prevent a client waiting on a queue for a long time and be turned away at the counter because of standing in the wrong queue. Again, integrated service delivery was envisaged to eliminate traveling from one department to another by the client and in the process time is lost.

Although these Centers are in operation, there is still lack of government departments working together to ensure that the Centers serve their purpose: in some Centers it became evident that departments do not know what programs are planned by other departments; each department works in isolation and without proper collaboration with other departments. In one case there were community meetings arranged at the same time in the same community by two different departments. Community members did not know which one to attend as both meetings were important to them. In another instance one official from a department was asked if he knew what the other department next door was offering to clients as far as services are concerned, he responded by saying he had no clue. It turned out that representatives of departments each day just come to do what they need to do for their departments, and are not conversant with what other departments are offering or how they operate. This, of course, goes against the basic motivation for the establishment of these Centers.

10.4 Management of Centers

One Centre is remotely managed by someone who is not based at the Centre but in the nearest town. The reason given by the said manager is that she is responsible in managing a number of other Centers who are not necessarily TSCs. The person who really monitors the day-to-day running of the Centre is the supervisor who also attends to complaints by the public on municipal services.

The other issue is the qualifications of managers. Seven out of nine do not have public administration and management qualifications, with four having degrees, and others just diplomas. They expected to be given in-service training in order to equip
them with necessary management skills, but it did not happen. Raising his concern, one official said:

"I wish our employer can take this (position of managers) seriously. In-service training is crucial for some of us who do not have relevant qualifications as it will keep us abreast and informed of latest developments in management issues," (Manager D: 16 October 2009).

10.5 Political Conflict

Internal politics also hinders some services in the Centers: Centre B manager expressed concern over a computer laboratory that is well equipped but not functioning because of internal politics. The Center has been there for two years but no service provider that would render the centre effective has been chosen as yet as there is still internal strife on who has the authority to offer a contract to the service provider. It became evident from respondents that a power struggle within the majority party in the municipality has a negative impact on the smooth running of the Centers, particularly the proper functioning of the computer laboratory.

It is also a perception that politicians interfere a lot in the employment of a centre manager, particularly councilors; it is evident that the employment of managers is based on political affiliation. If there are two candidates and one of them belongs to the majority party, he/she will be favored for employment at the expense of the one who does not belong to the majority party. It does not matter how good that person can be, even if he/she has relevant qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience. It is also alleged that employing relatives, friends and people they know they will benefit one way or the other from them, is common practice.

10.6 Frequency of services

Some respondents would have preferred services to be offered on a daily basis. There are departments that do not honor their appointments with clients. Instead of arriving on the agreed-upon time, they come two to three hours late. Sometimes they do not offer services at all. This makes people unsure whether service providers will be coming or not the next time.

The main cause of service providers not honoring their appointments, as mentioned by one manager, is the lack of control over government officials providing services in the Centers by managers. Service providers do not stick to the time-table given to the manager. They come and go as they wish; others come late, whilst some often do not come on stipulated dates. These service providers do not regard managers of the Centers managers as their immediate supervisors. This attitude
renders managers powerless as they do not have authority to discipline these government officials. This causes despondency in clients as they wonder if going to the Centre will be a fruitful exercise or not.

10.7 Community Needs Not Taken Care Of

The issue of community engagement still needs to be taken seriously. As stated by one government official, there is a communication gap that exists between the elected and the electorate. Politicians usually think they know what communities need, and therefore bring programmers that are irrelevant. The South African system of choosing Members of Parliament is flawed; it is not a constituency-based election system. Members of Parliament are chosen from the political party list. This has caused serious problems as far as representation of constituencies and their views in parliament is concerned. It has given rise to politicians, particularly members of parliament not really serving the communities they say they represent, instead serving their own interests.

11. Recommendations

The following are recommendations that emanate from the findings of the empirical study:

11.1 Center Managers need to be equipped with appropriate management skills

Managers who assume responsibilities of running a Centre, and those that have not been inducted but manage the Centers should go through an induction program that will familiarize them with management issues and government legislation that have an impact on the running of Centers. When Centre managers were recruited they were not told what was expected of them, and they also did not know how these Centers looked like. It came as a shock to them to find Centers to be what they did not expect. Induction programs will help managers to manage resources better, make them aware of leadership and managerial skills in order to be competent, familiarize them on policies, legislation and other service delivery concepts, and gain knowledge on performance management issues.

11.2 Politicians to be guided by ethics and professionalism

From the research it emerged that internal strife in the ruling party and its supporting structures do harm to service delivery. The strife is often caused by individual’s self interest that supersedes that of an organization, especially in public institutions where politics play a major role. Some individuals are driven by power whilst others by material gain. For public institutions to survive suicide brought by such infighting, it is
advisable that strict adherence to ethics and professionalism be the guide. Politicians should know that they are in those positions because they have been voted for by the people, therefore they need to serve the people without fail, and put self-interest last.

11.3 Ensuring Frequency of Services in the Centers

Departments using these Centers should ensure that their staff members do go to offer services to clients where these Centers are. That can be done by giving more power to the manager in administering their regular presence, and to take disciplinary measures against the defaulting service providers. It is also important that managers of Centers should be given the latitude of providing a comprehensive report on the attendance of employees of different service providers to relevant departments, and the departments to take drastic disciplinary measures in addressing the rate of recurrence. It is also important that managers of Centers should be given the latitude of providing a comprehensive report on the attendance of employees of different service providers to relevant departments, and the departments to take drastic disciplinary measures in addressing the rate of recurrence of such unacceptable behavior. Failure to deliver services promptly and regularly is detrimental to the clients’ trust, demotivates those that come regularly, promotes employee and customer dissatisfaction, as a result there will be a decreases in employee and customer retention.

11.4 Service delivery programs: Community needs to be taken into consideration

It became evident from the research that communities are seldom consulted on matters that affect them directly as far as services are concerned. The representation of communities at both national and provincial levels needs to be reviewed. The current system of appointing Members of Parliament by the ruling party needs attention as it does not address service delivery issues. Communities need to play a vital role in the appointment of MPs; they need to elect their own people that will represent them in Parliament other than the ruling party using the party’s list to choose candidates for Parliament. Stringent measures also need to be put in place to ensure that the representatives perform. It is very important that a representative of community communicates time and again with the community in order to know what the needs of that community are.

11.5 Introduction of skills development and economic projects at the centers

As skills shortage is a challenge in South Africa, the DoL should promote skills development rigorously in communities by utilizing Centers in offering courses and training to this regard. If properly done and well coordinated, developing skills by giving appropriate training to communities will help eradicate dependency but
promote self reliance, and then improve the socio-economic conditions of the communities.

12. Conclusion

The success of any government depends on its effective and efficient delivery of services to its citizens. In the quest to transform service delivery, the South African government aimed at to be a client-oriented and offer services in an equitable manner, and relevant to the needs of each community. These services also have to be of good quality and be given to citizens in an equitable manner, regardless of race, color, status and religion. For that reason the new Government faced a mammoth task of dismantling the malpractices of the past and provide services to all citizens on an equitable base, thus the enactment of new policies that sought to transform the public sector from a racially segregating one to the one that promotes equality, fairness and justice.

Although the government has taken strides towards improving service delivery, there is still much to be achieved in reaching the poor communities that still do not have basic services. The establishment of TSCs should be accompanied by, among other things, the supply of relevant resources such as well-trained and skilled staff and functional technological equipment to expedite service delivery.

References


Mechanisms to Improve Accountability in the Public Sector

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Abstract

Incidents of a lack of accountability, often associated with an element of corruption, among public officials and institutions when rendering public services, is a worldwide occurrence. In an attempt to address this governance tendency, governments increasingly look towards more sophisticated managerial methods such as improved monitoring and evaluation systems, and performance management systems, to address accountability deficits in governance. Such a managerial method is not necessarily similar to the rational theory as a remnant of the New Public Management (NPM). The prevailing belief in the NPM is that improved effectiveness and efficiencies enhance accountability and eliminate corruption. Accountability, however, is a political concept that relates to a power discourse. Citizens are often unable to influence government decisions affecting their lives and eliminate the abuse of power by the government. A key challenge in practice is, accordingly, to create forms of accountability in terms of which citizens can have control over and sanction such abuse of power. This type of approach necessarily positions accountability in a non-rational neo-institutional theory framework. The article explores existing accountability mechanisms that scholars propose as solutions to address governance challenges and to strengthen weak accountability. These mechanisms are analysed so as to indicate weaknesses and strengths of each. It then deals with other accountability mechanisms that relate to a neo-institutional theory framework and discusses strengths and weaknesses of those mechanisms. The article concludes with proposals of alternative innovative accountability mechanisms with which citizens could hold the public sector to account.

Keywords: Accountability, corruption, new public management, political power, management, rational theory, non-rational neo-institutional theory, accountability mechanisms.

1. Introduction

One of the central concerns of contemporary governance is the reduced or complete lack of accountability among public officials and institutions when rendering public services. In the absence of accountability, incidents of corruption often occur. This is evident in governments worldwide and the mentioned concern is thus well justified. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International, the vast majority of the 183 countries and territories assessed in 2011, scored below five on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean). Corruption exacerbates
underdevelopment in developing countries and thwarts the achievement of upliftment goals. It causes and results in, amongst other things, poor quality goods and public services, a lack of efficiencies, excessive costs, and ineffective public programmes (Madonsela 2010). It came as no surprise when service delivery protests in many countries, including South Africa, escalated to the point of mass demonstrations in 2010, and still continue today.

Governments attempt to address this governance tendency by looking towards more sophisticated managerial methods such as improved monitoring and evaluation systems, and performance management systems, to address accountability deficits in governance. A managerial method then applied in practice is not necessarily similar to the rational theory as a remnant of the New Public Management (NPM). Wherever the NPM is followed, the belief is that to reach improved effectiveness and efficiencies in service delivery, this enhances accountability and eliminates corruption. Rational theory, in this regard, refers to making a decision or performing an action that is based on reasoning and which is in line with the pre-existent objectives of the institution concerned, and is directed towards maximizing them. When reasoning is not used to accomplish an objective, the behaviour can be regarded as non-rational (Smith 2003, 315-316).

This, however, does not appear to be the ultimate solution for the aforementioned concern. Citizens are still often unable to influence government decisions affecting their lives and eliminate the abuse of power by the government. This, accordingly, creates a key challenge in practice to create forms of accountability in terms of which citizens can have control over and sanction government’s abuse of power. This type of approach, namely where citizens make use of accountability mechanisms to be able to influence government decisions affecting their lives and eliminate the abuse of power by the government, necessarily positions accountability in a non-rational neo-institutional theory framework. In this regard, neo-institutional theory offers a means to explore not only the level of commonality in use of other accountability mechanisms, but also the processes by which these have become popular across the governance landscape. Neo-institutionalism is therefore a theory that focuses on developing a sociological view of institutions; the way they interact and the way they affect society (Larrinaga 2007).

The article makes reference to the existence of different conceptualisations of accountability in an attempt to define accountability. Subsequently, a brief overview is given of the NPM as an exponent of rational theory. Following this, the most prominent accountability mechanisms in use are identified and discussed with indications of weaknesses and strengths of each. Although not totally discarding the usefulness of mechanisms based on rational theory to improve public efficiencies, it is argued though for mechanisms that will address the root cause of corruption, as being power abuses. The article then deals with other accountability mechanisms that relate to a neo-institutional theory framework and discusses strengths and weaknesses of those mechanisms. The mechanisms proposed are grounded in non-
rationalist theory and have the ability to civilianise power so as to improve public accountability and curb corruption. The success of these mechanisms has already been proven in the uprisings in Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Syria. The article concludes with proposals of alternative innovative accountability mechanisms with which citizens could hold the public sector to account.

2. Accountability Adversely Affected

In an attempt to improve the accountability of government and its executive institutions, governments are looking towards mechanisms to secure the accountability of government and public officials. The mechanisms proposed for improved accountability, initiate primarily from rational theory. Rational theory underpins the NPM which purports to define a more suitable paradigm for managing government and public institutions in a contemporary environment. This paradigm is one of a market-based public administration. The thinking is that should public officials be more efficient and effective when rendering public services, the accountability for their actions will also improve.

Ayeni (1998), however, remarks that the perceptions that the widespread adoption of rational economic and public choice thinking would reverse the damage and make public accountability more readily manageable “were probably misplaced and may have in fact compounded the problem of some societies”. This is because rationalist theory and managerialism do not recognize the political dimension of governance. “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”, writes the historian and moralist, Lord Acton in his letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887. Political power is a political discourse underpinned by non-rational theory. Those in power usually enjoy the advantage of superior or expert knowledge, legal authority, huge organizational size and professional cohesion which render them even more powerful than they ought to be. If politically powerful regimes are not kept answerable for their actions by effective accountability mechanisms, they will not act in the legitimate interest of society. Accountability, can be argued, is therefore the fundamental prerequisite for preventing the abuse of political power by government and directing such power towards promoting the rights of citizens.

Political power, being a political discourse, requires us to ensure that citizens’ political rights take centre stage and are not relegated by the wave of consumerism and managerialism. Contrary to the effectiveness discourse of rational theory, the political discourse departs from a non-rational theoretical framework. Within this framework, political power is recognized as a political construct to be civilianised or deconstructed by citizens (Steyn 2011).
3. Defining Accountability

For the purposes of this article, the concept of accountability is taken as wide as possible as authors tend to conceptualise accountability differently. It could be identified from the perspective of its sources, or as a directional model, or even in terms of a process. Accountability can also be defined in terms of internal or external accountability, depending on whether control is exercised through institutions based outside of or those located within the target institution. For the purposes of this article, accountability is then defined in terms of “public accountability”.

Ayeni (1998) defines public accountability as being “about how those who exercise powers in the name of the public fulfil their duties and obligations, and the process by which they are made to answer and account for their actions. It is about the responsibility of officials and agencies, ways to minimize the abuse of power and authority, and strategies to ensure that those in authority comply with acceptable standards, and can be sanctioned whenever necessary”. Accountability is understood as the obligation to render an account for a responsibility that has been conferred (Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt & Jonker 2002, 3).

The report of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA Study, 2002) endorses the following general definition of accountability: “Accountability,” is universally and generally defined as holding responsible elected or appointed individuals and organisations charged with a public mandate to account for specific actions, activities or decisions to the public, from which they derive their authority. Accountability focuses on the ability to account for the allocation, use and control of public expenditure and resources in accordance with legally accepted standards, regarding budgeting, accounting and auditing”. Public accountability therefore refers to the constraints placed on the behaviour of public officials by organisations and constituencies which have the power to apply sanctions to them.

Holding government and public officials accountable is about making sure that those entrusted by society with the power and responsibility to manage societal resources and regulate people’s lives, remain accountable for their actions to the people within agreed paradigms, says Advocate Thuli Madonsela, the Public Protector of the Republic of South Africa (2010). Accountability is also about ensuring that those who earlier surrendered power remain empowered to ask questions, to get recourse for unauthorised actions and are able to withdraw stewardship when things go wrong. According to the Public Protector, accountability has certain elements: firstly, giving an account, secondly, justification, and thirdly, redress and/or sanctions when parameters have been transgressed.

In short, “public accountability rests both on giving an account of and on being held to account” (Stewart 1998, 132). Public officials, who are employed in complex government departments, have to be accountable to their immediate supervisors, the political leadership and the public at large (Campbell 2000, 185). It follows that they
should also be held to account by their immediate supervisors, the political leadership and the public at large.

4. New Public Management Approach

The NPM approach was the dominant paradigm in public administration theory and practice for about 20 years since the 1980’s. It could be described as a loose body of concepts, approaches and theories which purported to define a more suitable paradigm for managing government and public sector institutions (Ayeni 1998). The NPM has been described differently by different governments and authors. Some describe it as a market-based public administration and others as an entrepreneurial government or simply, during that period of time, a new doctrine of managerialism. A number of key components are generally associated with the NPM stream of thinking: (a) setting managers free to manage ethics; (b) setting explicit standards and measures of performance; (c) greater emphasis on output controls; (d) breaking up public sector entities and systems into corporatized units around products; (e) greater competition through term contracts and public tendering procedures; (f) adoption of private sector management styles, and (g) greater discipline and parsimony in resource use.

Underlying these components is the rational theory. The trail of thought is that should government’s efficiencies be improved through an increased use of more sophisticated management tools, increased accountability will follow (Ayeni 1998). However, as already stated, accountability refers to the constraint of political power which is a political discourse, and for which rational theory does not provide any basis.

Levy (2011) demonstrates, through his discussion of the global economic crisis of 2008, that the adoption of norms of service delivery in the private sector by the public sector did not lead to increased accountability – but rather to the contrary. Says Levy (2011, 235): “When highly paid private sector executives have presided so spectacularly over the demise of huge organisations in banking, insurance and car making, public sector managers might want to think again before making comparisons”.

A market-based public administration underpinned by neo-liberal market strategies promoted by multi-lateral institutions might have opened up markets, but it could also have contributed to a further widening of the gap between the rich and the poor. It could furthermore, have led to decreased accountability, corruption and other social and political problems associated with widespread poverty. In an attempt to address these governance challenges, different accountability mechanisms are now discussed in order to identify those that can possibly strengthen weak accountability.
5. Mechanisms to Secure Accountability

The channels or mechanisms, by which accountability is secured for officials, can consist of informal mechanisms such as mass demonstrations, or formal mechanisms such as legal instruments which are the creation of the state and founded on its sovereign authority. Mechanisms to secure accountability serve to embed and secure whatever it is that people are accountable for: "They are instruments for calling people to account, for judging the adequacy of the accounts rendered, and for bringing sanctions to bear for failures to produce an adequate account" (Goodin 2003, 365).

There are different channels or mechanisms being advocated for securing the accountability of public institutions and public officials (public accountability) and indicating their weaknesses and strengths. A discussion now follows of the accountability mechanisms that are being used more frequently to call public officials and governments to account for their actions when performing public activities.

5.1 Constitutionalism and the judiciary

Democracy, as reflected in section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, (hereinafter called the Constitution, 1996) (http://www.GOV.za/constitution), demands that government activities should be transparent, responsible and accountable, and performed by honest officials. An occurrence such as corruption is an example of poor service delivery and the opposite of what democracy demands. Governance in South Africa has to comply with these constitutional demands. The Constitution, 1996, therefore obliges government to perform public actions in an effective and efficient way in terms of particular constitutional prescriptions and the Bill of Rights (Van Heerden 2009, 3).

Constitutionalism in the concept of democracy is essential when controlling authority (Bekker, 2009). The constitution of countries such as South Africa demands transparency and accountability for public actions. However, not all countries have a constitution that demands accountability. Even if a country does not have such a constitution, attitudes of the media and the public towards public officials should not remain static, advises Judge Edwin Cameron (1990). The constitutional dispensations of countries should endeavour to change the relationship between the media, the public and the judiciary, as members of the public are bearers of rights and the judiciary is the guardian of such rights (Rickard, 2011).

A common characteristic of constitutional systems is the division of a state’s authority between legislative, executive and judicial institutions. The 1996 Constitution provides for such a division of authority in sections 43, 85 and 165, respectively. The current three divisions of authority aim at functional separation from each other and have been put in place to prevent state authority from being exercised arbitrarily by any one of the three divisions (Van Heerden 2009, 6).
Although the judiciary is one of the three divisions of state authority, it is, as the courts have said, “the state acting through its judicial organs” (Lekhari 1956). It is, however, an unelected instrument of state power. This anomaly has caused much debate. Cameron identifies several reasons why judges in a modern state should be accountable to the public: firstly, they are part of the governing structure of a country; secondly, they wield enormous power over their fellows, and thirdly, they are often regarded as ‘public oracles’. Cameron also states that “Power, public prominence and influence without accountability amount to despotism”. He quotes Lord Devlin who said: “It is a great temptation to cast the judiciary as elite which will bypass the traffic-laden ways of the democratic process. But it would only apparently be a bypass. In truth it would be a road that would never rejoin the highway but would lead inevitably ... to the totalitarian state” (Cameron 1990, 253). It follows, therefore, that if judges in a modern state want to avoid the suggestion that they wield autocratic power, they must be subject to public scrutiny of their functions, continues Cameron; some way must be found to reconcile performance of their judicial duties with constitutional theory. The work of judges should be done under public gaze, every decision needs to be justified with reasons, and hardly any decision should be made without the concurrence of at least one other judge.

According to Page and Wright (1999) there is an increase internationally in the trend of politicisation, which means that there is an increasing political influence over the senior public service despite clear and unambiguous constitutions which provide for the definite separation of the different arms of government, the executive head of state and the cabinet. In such cases, politicians seek to shape to a greater extent the relationship between politicians and the public service in favour of politicians. An uncertainty about a political-administrative interface poses a danger to accountability, especially where the political leadership plays an increasingly dominant role in the relationship. Should there be an overwhelming majority of the ruling party being represented in parliament, this will simply strengthen the notion of abuses of power by politicians instead of curtailing the powers of the presidency, as is supposed to be the role of parliament.

### 5.2 Improved control measures for parliament

Bekker (2009) suggests improved control measures for members of parliament in discharging their parliamentary duties and exposing financial irregularities. The same suggestion could be made for legislatures at provincial and local government level. Bekker also suggests that clear instructions and control instruments will enable members of parliament and public representatives in local government and civil society in their oversight duties and in holding departmental officials to account. This suggestion means that the current descriptions of parliamentary duties should be revised and made more comprehensive. The descriptions should include control measures over such duties, as well as clear statements as to the sanctions that could
follow when duties are performed without the necessary responsibility and accountability.

5.3 Legal frameworks

Brand (2006) is of the opinion that certain South African legislation such as the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), has contributed significantly to better and more regular reporting, improved financial management and more detailed and informative reports on the spending of public funds within the national and provincial spheres of government. This Act, therefore, contributes to that which is required as an accountable use of public funds.

The law is vital for the promotion of public accountability, and Hayek (1960) states that the rule of law could produce economic inequality. He observes that so as to produce the same result for different people “it is necessary to treat them differently. To give different people the same objective opportunities, is not to give them the same subjective chance ... all that can be claimed for it (the Rule of Law) is that this inequality is not designed to affect particular people in a particular way”.

5.4 Codes of conduct

The King III Report on Governance has been adopted internationally to promote sound governance of primarily private corporations, but also of voluntary organisations and the public sector. This report states: “Boards must apply the test of fairness, accountability, responsibility and transparency to all acts or omissions and be accountable to the company but also responsive and responsible towards the company’s identified stakeholders”. In the case of the public sector, government stakeholders would refer to all the sectors of society, be that civil society, the public sector or business. The report places beyond doubt that all actions must be performed with the necessary accountability.

Every action undertaken by public officials, regardless of which department they serve in, occurs within a constitutional and legal framework. Naturally, such a legal framework contains guidelines on the procedures within which public activities must be performed by public officials. Laws therefore regulate the behaviour of public officials. Statutory codes tend to be more rigid in their interpretation and revision of rules of behaviour than non-statutory codes. In South Africa codes of conduct for public officials are contained in the Constitution, 1996, the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 93 of 1994), the Public Service Regulations and the Public Service Staff Code issued in terms of the Public Service Act. Normally, a code of conduct is the codification of the principles and standards that ensure accountability by public officials.
5.5 Change to the culture of public institutions

Some authors suggest that by instilling a culture of professionalism and prudence in public officials in their duty of serving the public will make public officials more accountable (Miller 2005). Such principles include values such as integrity, accountability, transparency and accessibility (Armstrong 2005; Fox, Schwella & Wissink 2000; Senay & Besdziek 1999). Other authors, such as Raga & Taylor (2005) suggest that countries need an organizational culture that not only supports ethical behaviour, but sees that it defines and underpins right and wrong conduct at an individual and institutional sphere. Normative criteria are proposed as being suitable as a base for effective and efficient public service delivery to its populace on the local sphere (Raga & Taylor 2005).

Raga and Taylor (2005) state that in countries such as South Africa, the proliferation of ethical codes of conduct, public accountability and the promulgation of a number of laws to thwart unethical behaviour is likely to fail because it is first necessary to inculcate within the public and public officials particular dispositions, attitudes and virtues to guide human conduct. They contend with Aristotle that humans are not inherently virtuous and that ethics must therefore be taught and practiced. Training in ethics is accordingly seen as an essential initiative for establishing an efficient and effective ethical and accountable public service.

Bekker (2009) states that institutions of higher learning such as universities and training centres, should focus on the improvement of financial management and accountability in government departments. He suggests that research should be directed to this field and, furthermore, that special curricula and financial courses should be designed to further the capabilities of public officials and the training of prospective candidates in a career of Public Finance and Accounting. Although this might help to improve some of the inefficiencies, it does not address the root cause of the abuse of power and will therefore not necessarily address the accountability deficits. The same reasoning applies to proposals for other innovations such as accreditation systems for public service managers that would ensure that appointees have the skills and experience required for the work.

5.6 Media

According to Rickard (2011), the media has obligations to help maintain a constitutional democracy. The media should use its reporting power and freedom in defence of judicial independence and the constitution of a country. Odugbemi and Norris (2007) argue that the news media, provided that it is set up in a way that allows it to act as a watchdog, agenda-setters and gatekeepers, is vital for the reform agenda of democratic governments that are responsive to social needs, inclusive, and accountable to citizens.
The watchdog role of the media requires the news media to provide a check on powerful sectors of society, be those leaders from the private or the public domain. In this role, journalists are expected to guard the public interest and to protect it from incompetence, corruption and misinformation. Brunetti and Weder (2003) conclude that an increase by one standard deviation in a country’s level of press freedom generally reduces the level of corruption in that country by 0.4 to 0.9 points, on a six-point scale. The reasons they suggest, are that the press provides a platform for the private sector to voice complaints. In addition, with a free press, journalists have incentives to investigate misconduct by officials. A series of other aggregate-level correlational econometric studies, incorporating the standard controls, generally point to similar conclusions (Stapenhurst 2000). Lederman, Loayza and Soares (2005) analysed the effects of democracy, parliamentary systems, and freedom of the press on corruption, and their results confirm the general assumption that a free press inhibits corruption. Media access, in addition to press freedom, is also found to be important. Bandyopadhyay (2006) reported that the degree of media and ICT penetration is associated with less corruption, with the strongest effect where newspaper circulation was deepest.

**5.7 Ombudsman**

The institution of the Ombudsman has spread phenomenally over the last several years. Dennis Pearce (1999 114) says: “this astonishing growth of an institution is not and has not been emulated by any other body”. The ombudsman, or Public Protector in South Africa, is an office established by the Constitution, 1996, and the Public Protector Act, 1994 (Act 23 of 1994). The Public Protector is one of the Constitution’s Chapter nine institutions, named for the constitutional chapter that establishes a number of bodies with the mandate to guard democracy. The office is entrusted to an independent, impartial and highly respected functionary who is accountable to the legislative authority. The ombudsman receives complaints from aggrieved persons against public institutions and public officials or launches an investigation on his/her own initiative, recommends corrective action and issues reports. The ombudsman usually receives complaints about maladministration in public institutions. The jurisdiction is usually wide enough to investigate any action or failure to act on the part of any public institution or public official. It also grants authority to investigate the justice, correctness of findings and motivations, adequacy of reasons, effectiveness and correctness of procedures in any action or failure to act of a public institution or official. This institution serves as a watchdog over the interests of the public and other public institutions to ensure that public services are rendered with the necessary accountability.
5.8 Communication Technologies

Communication technologies such as the Internet and the World-Wide Web have given rise to new organisation forms and ways of organising and communicating with social forums (Gladius and Timms 2006), internet-based mobilisation (Clark and Themudo 2006) and transnational networks (Katz and Anheier 2006) as prominent examples. Globally and locally, citizens converge on the World-Wide Web searching for information on similar interests. Social tools and media on the World-Wide Web, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are used as accountability mechanisms to achieve political results. Reports on government and public officials’ activities can be noted. Reports and criticism by interest groups and others about the conduct of government and public officials can be compared with what is expected in one’s own country. In this manner a government should take cognizance of comments from the public. In order to show an interest in what the public has to say about the conduct of government and public officials, the South African president has a phone-in service where the public can complain about any matter involving the conduct of public institutions and public officials.

5.9 Protests

John Schwarzmantel (1987, 110) argues that the people themselves must be able to decide what their best interests are and have the ability to remove or have a say in the removal of officials or governments which do not respond to their interests as the people define them. The challenge for a democracy is to work out or decide on mechanisms or strategies for implementing these goals. Esterhuyse (1989) emphasises in this regard that a society which does not, or is not allowed to express moral protest in public, can cause political office-bearers to have a low sense of responsibility and integrity. Consequently, the possibility of corruption and maladministration is increased.

Moral protest aided by technology, as will later be purported, has in the past two years proved a powerful mechanism to not only hold governments accountable, but to also remove corrupt governments. On February 11, 2011, President Hosni Mubarak resigned from the presidency after 29 years in power. This removal was preceded by a popular peaceful uprising that continued for 18 days, spreading across Egypt ultimately forcing Mubarak to cede power to the military. This illustrates that protests can be a mechanism to enforce accountability.

6. Innovative Mechanisms to Improve Accountability

It appears that mechanisms, that relate to a non-rational theory, such as protests and social media, could be regarded as the most effective way to increase public accountability, rather than improved effectiveness and efficiency. The question then
arises as to who would be the accountability actors holding a government to account when using these mechanisms? Keohane has conceptualised accountability in principal-agent terms. Broadly defined, Keohane refers to accountability as a relationship “in which an individual, group or other entity makes demands on an agent to report on his or her activities, and has the ability to impose costs on the agent”. He states “it is ... essential, in thinking about accountability in a given situation, to distinguish between agents, individuals or organisations that make decisions, and their principals, who have authorised their actions” (Keohane 2002, 12).

Technology allows for a mix of external actors to hold governments accountable to citizens. This mix consists of organized civil society, civil society networks, the media and individual citizens. Organised civil society and organisations such as Amnesty International and Transparency International act as agents of the state demanding greater transparency and accountability from the state and specifically from officials, ministers and members of parliament. Many scholars in the past have attempted to substantiate the potential and right of global civil society to fill democratic deficits towards political ends. Ezzat and Kaldor (2007, 36-37) call on the ‘special duty’ of civil society actors, in pointing out civility failures and taking corrective action accordingly. Scholte (2007) similarly argues for the potential of the activities of global civil society to act as an antidote to the failings of democracy in politics and in so doing enhancing ‘rule by the people’ in contemporary politics. Civil society as the so-called “conscience of society” (Bekker 2009, 16) can exert tremendous pressure for improved accountability using the media, the internet and social networks as accountability tools. Internationalisation of relevant national issues (Ayeni 1998) through organisations such as Amnesty International and Transparency International also wield considerable influences because of their acknowledged ability to focus international on relevant national issues.

As a consequence of the NPM, there is a global acknowledgement that organs of civil society need to be empowered to share the responsibility of governance – a shift in emphasis from “government” (the power to govern) to “governance” (the act of governing). Buse and Harmer (2004) state that power in such partnerships or collaborations are being exercised on the basis of coercion, either political or financial, and also on the basis of authority and legitimacy. A citizen-orientated management approach will simply lead to the co-opting of the mandate of the most powerful; in this instance government could render civil society powerless to monitor and to challenge power-holders.

For government to be held to account, civil society must be a source of dissent, challenge, and innovation, a counter-veiling force to government and the corporate sector in an age of globalisation (see, for instance, Batliwala and Brown 2006; Keane 2001; Taylor 2004.). Civil society should “serve as a social, cultural and political watchdog keeping both the market and state in check, and contribute to and reflect the diversity, pluralism, and dynamism of the modern world” (Anheier 2007, 7).
Kaldor, Anheier and Glasius (2003) classify civil society in terms of ideological positions and policy options. In the so-called Activist Manifestation of civil society, they give examples of civil society represented not only by large international non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International and Civicus, but also by the multiplicity of social forums and dot.causes operating on the Internet. The Internet and cell phone technology has provided citizens of the world the opportunity to form citizen networks from the local to the global scale to claim rights and responsibilities as members of a given polity. Deilbert (2000, 255) refers to the rise of the prominence of citizen networks as “one of the most dramatic changes in world politics” and asserts that “they will continue to grow and expand, intruding into international policy-making processes”.

The 2010, 2011 uprisings in the Arab world were demonstrations of the power of citizens mobilised by technology to hold governments to account to such an extent that some governments were toppled through the uprisings. Without technology small pockets of protests might have erupted in the past as mechanisms to call governments to account. Today, however, citizens and civil society have access to the technological tools to hold governments accountable for their actions.

7. Conclusion

A central concern of contemporary governance is the accountability of public officials and institutions. The discussions indicated that in the absence of accountability, incidents of corruption in the public sector abound. This also causes poor quality goods and services, lack of efficiencies, excessive costs, and ineffective public programmes.

Although the so-called New Public Management has been the dominant paradigm in public administration theory and practice for about 20 years since the 1980"s, it has apparently not yielded desired results and appears to have rather led to decreased accountability, corruption and other social and political problems associated with widespread poverty.

The discussions then focused on the most common channels or mechanisms that are being used to call public officials and governments to account and for securing public accountability. Powerful regimes need to be kept answerable for their actions by effective accountability mechanisms. Accountability should be the fundamental prerequisite for preventing the abuse of political power and directing power towards the protection of citizens’ rights.

Finally, the discussions touched on the question of who would be the accountability actors to hold government to account when mechanisms grounded in non-rational theory such as protests and social media are used to increase public accountability. The conclusion of the discussion in this article is that civil society should serve as a social, cultural and political watchdog to keep public officials and institutions in check.
Citizens and civil society have access to the technological tools to hold governments accountable for their actions.

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A Case Study of Non-Payment for Municipal Services
In the Vhembe District Municipality

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate reasons for non-payment by residents for services rendered by the Vhembe District Municipality. The municipalities are responsible for delivering such services as water supply, electricity, road maintenance, refuse collection and sanitation. Multistage sampling techniques were employed. The subjects in the study were grouped into clusters and a sample was taken from each cluster. In this case the local municipalities that took part in the study were selected first, followed by wards, villages and households. Households in the selected villages were selected randomly to participate in the study. The results showed that although the municipalities were making an effort to raise revenue and send bills to the residents, some 38% of the residents were not forthcoming with payments. The reasons found in the survey for the unwillingness to pay services by residents include ignorance, poverty and simple unwillingness to pay.

Key words: Municipal services, non-payment, residents, water supply, electricity, sanitation, district municipality.

1. Introduction

Service delivery is one of the key mandates of South African governments. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter called the Constitution) clearly states in section 152(1)(b) that one of the objects of local government is to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; and section 195(1)(d) states that services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias. The South African government has focused on the effective and efficient delivery of services to the majority, particularly rural African inhabitants, who have historically been deprived of basic essential services such as water and sanitation, housing, electricity and health facilities. Scientific research towards understanding and explaining the dominant trends in service delivery provision for human development is critical, as is analysing and generating practical solutions to problems of planning and administration. Local government (municipality) is the sphere of government closest to the people. Local government councillors are elected by citizens to represent them and are responsible for ensuring that services are delivered to the
community. The Constitution provides that municipalities have the responsibility to make sure that all citizens are provided with services to satisfy their basic needs. Municipalities provide the service themselves, partially through the use of their own resources - finance, equipment and employees, and also a part of the “equitable share and conditional grants”. National government has made available resources (for support of the Free Basic Services policy in the form of the Equitable Share Grant\(^1\)).

The grant, however, remains insufficient for the needs of municipalities. Moreover, the grant is unconditional, allowing local government to spend it as it deems fit. The Share Grant is also just one component (out of six) which comprises the Equitable Share Grant. In December 2009, Cabinet approved a turnaround strategy for local government which was expected to ensure that local government has the correct management, administrative and technical skills. A municipality may also outsource the provision of a service, that is, it may choose to hire someone else to deliver the service.

In terms of section 153 of the Constitution (http://www.GOV.za/constitution), the developmental duties of municipalities include, amongst others, 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. This compels municipalities to carry the responsibility of providing residents in its jurisdiction with water, sanitation, transportation facilities, electricity, municipal health services and security. In order for municipalities to carry out their constitutional responsibilities, they have to mobilise resources locally. One way of doing this is through the collection of rates and tariffs. Municipalities must make sure that people in their areas have at least the basic services they need. There are a large number of services that they provide, the most important of which being: Water supply; Sewage collection and disposal; Electricity and gas supply.

These services have a direct and immediate effect on the quality of lives of the people in that community. If the water that is provided is of a poor quality or refuse is not collected regularly, unhealthy and unsafe living environments would be created. Poor services can also make it difficult to attract business or industry to an area and can limit job opportunities for residents. Water is a basic right and it should be universally guaranteed, at least at some basic level (García-Valiñas, Martínes-Espiñeira and González-Gómez 2012, 2696).

Municipalities, such as Sannieshof in North West Province and Ngwathe and Mafube in the Free State Province in South Africa are unable to deliver services to

\(^1\) The Local Government Equitable Share is one element in a system of transfers that flow to local government. Along with local government’s own revenue raised mainly from its taxes and user charges, transfers make up the total resources available to local government. By definition, transfers originate outside of local government – they are raised by other spheres of government using revenue instruments particular to those spheres. In South Africa between 15% and 20% of all local government revenue comes from national and provincial grants. The annual Division of Revenue Act (DORA) specifies and governs the Local Government Equitable Share allocations. The Act quantifies all of the vertical and horizontal equitable share allocations to provinces and municipalities.
residents. This might be because of lack of finances or lack of capacity to provide a good service at an affordable price. Such municipalities should find other ways to ensure that services are improved and that they reach the people most in need of them. Some options that they could consider are capacity building, corporatisation and municipal service partnerships (Anon 2011).

Whatever method a municipality chooses, it must always be in line with the overall goals of improving the quality of services, extending services to residents who do not have them and providing services at an affordable cost. It is important to provide services that are affordable, but municipalities must do so without compromising on their ability to operate and maintain existing services (Ajam 2001, 102). A major financial problem in many municipalities in South Africa is the inadequate collection of service charges due to widespread non-payment. However, huge variations in compliance exist both within poor communities and between communities with similar socio-economic characteristics. How can these differences be explained? Moreover, what factors determine citizens’ compliance? Other studies, however, claim that widespread unwillingness to pay exists due to an “entitlement culture”, and the “culture of non-payment” inherited from the apartheid era (Ajam 2001, 85; Johnson 1999, 69). This study argues that non-payment is related not only to the inability to pay or “a culture of entitlement”, but also to whether citizens perceive the local government to be acting in their interests. In particular, three dimensions of trust may affect citizens’ compliance: (1) trust in the local government to use revenues to provide expected services; (2) trust in the authorities to establish fair procedures for revenue collection and distribution of services; and (3) trust in other citizens to pay their share (Cashdan 2002, 159).

The non-payment of rates and service charges, particularly in African and “Coloured” areas, is not, however, a new phenomenon in South Africa (Bond 2000, 200; McDonald 2002, 59). During the apartheid era, boycotts of rents and user charges became the chief weapons against what was considered an illegitimate regime. In the late 1980s, many townships and rural areas in the homelands were already effectively ungovernable. With the passing of the apartheid system, such boycotts were expected to cease, but they did not. Non-compliance with respect to service charges seems to have become an established “norm” in many areas, creating major constraints to attempt to develop a viable new local government system in South Africa (Timm & Jadwat 1998, 121). Moreover, the phenomenon of non-payment, which until recently has been restricted to one population group, is likely to spread to other population groups in accordance with growing dissatisfaction with government performance (Mattes, Davids & Africa 2000, 69).

Different arguments are used to explain the extensive and increasing non-compliance. A recent study by the Centre for Development Support (CDS 2001, 10) at the University of the Free State concluded that non-payment is primarily an issue of the inability to pay. It argued that the poverty of many households made them unable rather than unwilling to pay, hence the need for free basic services to the poorer
segments of the population and/or a lowering of the rates. This argument is supported by, for instance, Fiil-Flynn (2001, 109) and McDonald (2002, 57). It is assumed that an understanding of the relationship between payment and the provision of services is a critical factor for compliance. Consequently, the prescription is education and the political mobilisation of ratepayers, combined with the restoration of law and order.

To heighten citizens’ awareness of issues associated with local government finances and service provision, the Masakhane campaign was launched by the South African government in February 1995 (Timm & Jadwat 1998, 123). The overall aim of the Masakhane campaign which means “let us build together” was to normalise governance and the provision of basic services at the local government sphere. The campaign has a broad set of objectives, including (i) accelerating the delivery of basic services and housing; (ii) stimulating economic development in both urban and rural areas; (iii) promoting the resumption of rent, service charge and bond payments; and (iv) creating conditions for large scale investments in housing and service infrastructures and local economic development.

Although the Masakhane campaign was a general and narrowly focused programme to “get people to pay for services”, the importance of delivery has not received adequate attention (Timm & Jadwat 1998, 124). Although the campaign has had a substantial budget and administrative structure, the general view of a cross-section of people at national, provincial and local spheres is that it has not been successful (Cashdan 2002, 159). On the positive side, it may have contributed to increasing the awareness of issues associated with local government and service provision. But with respect to improving payment of service charges, the results are dubious. A general picture is that the Masakhane campaign contributed to increased payments for either a short period of time only or not at all (Johnson 1999, 65). In some communities, non-payment even worsened after the launching of the campaign.

Municipalities have responded to the non-payment crisis by implementing a harsh policy of disconnecting municipal services. Research which has recently been undertaken estimates that at least ten million people have experienced either a water or electricity disconnection since 1994 (Desai 2003). As these harsh measures are being implemented, the poor are responding through new social movements, for example, in the form of the Anti Privatisation Forum or the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee. These movements are, for the first time in South Africa’s new democracy, beginning to challenge the state in its free market and privatisation stance on the provision of basic services.

In recognition of the inability of poor households to pay for municipal services, government introduced the Free Basic Services policy, which provides some free water and electricity to all households. The implementation of the programme has been uneven, with municipalities implementing what is affordable to their councils. In most cases the greatest progress has been made by South Africa’s largest metropolitan
councils, especially those having budgets of around R10 billion per annum, such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and eThekwini (previously Durban).

2. Literature Review

Non-payment of rates, service charges and other tariffs began in the Black townships in the 1980s as a political strategy to confront the former government and its system of separate development. It was then justified and it was also taken for granted that this would just wane out after the political transition to a democratic country. However, fifteen years after the historic transition to democracy in South Africa, non-payment of services continues to pose a serious financial challenge to municipalities.

At the end of June 2009, South Africa’s municipalities were owed R50 billion (Coetzer 2010). South Africa is also going through the process of de-industrialisation witnessed in many other countries, for example Austria, Canada and Poland (Anon 2012). This involves a run down in manufacturing; mining and agriculture; growth is only limited to the service sector. This has had an extremely depressive effect on the formal sector job market because the unemployed masses being absorbed onto it usually lack the skills required in the growth areas of the service sector such as information technology, software and financial services. There is a general decline in per capita incomes with relative growing inequality within groups. The number of poor white people is increasing too. Thus it is be expected that more and more of them will react, as have the white community of Carletonville, situated in the Gauteng Province, South Africa, by becoming non-payers themselves on a very significant scale. Thus, the phenomenon of non-payment for municipal services, predominantly an African one to date, is likely to spread to other racial groups (Johnson 1999, 100).

The money collected from ratepayers covers the costs of certain development projects that local councils initiate, for example, the provision of basic services needed by the community. This developmental role of municipalities is emphasised in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (1994, 130), which states that all municipalities should embark on programmes to restore, maintain, upgrade and extend networks of services. Tariff structures should be structured on a progressive basis to address problems of affordability. Even though the RDP stresses that “all consumers should pay for services consumed”, the culture of non-payment for municipal services in South Africa continues to frustrate the efforts of local government to provide these essential services.

According to Johnson (1999, 1), the phenomenon of non-payment clearly undermines not only local government structures, but the entire capacity of national government to deliver change at the local sphere. All development programmes ultimately rely on the support and co-ordination that only local government structures and officials can provide. In the words of the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, “non-payment today hurts those who have nothing and who
are waiting for houses, electricity and sewerage. It hurts neighbours who must carry
the unfair burden” (Kromberg 1995, 31).

According to Johnson (1999, 101), the approach of the Masakhane campaign
appeared to be based on the assumption (or belief) that non-payment is simply a
cultural issue. As a result, it was argued then that the strength of this campaign lay in
its attempts to tackle these cultural phenomena head on and to install a strong sense
of community consciousness in its place.

Given the limited success that the Masakhane campaigns have enjoyed, many local
councillors have come forward to state that the fundamental reason for this is simply
the poverty of many of their constituents which makes them unable rather than
unwilling to pay. This view is also strongly supported by evidence from the baseline
survey by Botes and Pelser (2001, 60).

3. Method

The study was empirical in nature. The study involved the development of certain
theories meant to explain the non payment for services and these were tested in the
field to find out if they were true or false. The study involved different types of
research such as descriptive, historical and explanatory research.

3.1 Research demarcation

A number of questions should be asked in order to understand clearly the research
problem. These include questions such as where the problem is located. For this study
the following questions were asked: Why do communities fail to pay for the services
rendered? How do municipal customers pay for their services? Where do the
municipal customers pay for the services? How often do municipal customers receive
their statements? For this study, the geographical boundaries comprise the
Thulamela and Mutale Municipalities, situated in the Limpopo Province, South Africa.
In terms of the population it will concentrate on the population that can legally enter
into contract with the municipalities for the supply of particular services. The services
to be considered for the study were also demarcated. In the scope of the study, one
needs to decide upfront whether the intention is to investigate a general solution to a
problem or in one that works for a particular area or field. If a general solution is
required, then a far wider study is needed. In this case the problem of non-payment
for services is common throughout South Africa and although the study was carried
out in the Vhembe District Municipality, the results could possibly be pursued by
other researchers in other municipalities.

3.2 Variables

After demarcating and determining the scope of the study it was necessary to
determine the variables since these would determine the data collection techniques and instruments. The quantitative variable was used in this research.

3.3 Population and samples

A population is any given group that is the subject of research interest. Oxygen molecules in the universe, supercomputers in the world, frogs in South African rivers or dogs in a particular city could all be the populations that are groups a researcher wants to study. According to Goddard & Melville (2001, 26) it is often not practical or possible to study an entire population. For example someone trying to determine the average length of adult frogs in South Africa would find it impossible to do this by measuring each and every frog in the entire country. In such cases it is necessary to make general findings based on a study of only a subset of the population that is a sample.

Samples must be representative of the population being studied; otherwise no general observations about the population can be made from studying the sample. Two key features of sampling determining how representative the sample is of the population are size and bias. In the case of the Vhembe District municipality, the populations consisted of the consumers of services, municipality and government officials, local politicians, special interest groups such as civic bodies and other key informants or experts.

3.3.1 Sample size

A sample must be large enough to correctly represent a population. For this study, the samples differed from one population set to another. At least 10% of the consumers were studied, while 35 of the concerned municipality officials were involved in the study. Other categories, such as special interest groups and experts, were included depending on their availability in the area. The sample was representative of each particular selected group.

3.3.2 Sample Bias

A sample is said to be biased if it represents only a specific subgroup of the population or if particular subgroups are over or under represented in it. In this study, measures were taken to avoid any source of bias such as deliberately choosing the local municipalities that are nearer to the district centre at the expense of those that are further away. The other source of bias could be caused by the fact that the researcher works for the Vhembe District Municipality. Respondents might have given responses they suspected she wanted to hear. This was overcome by engaging research assistants at community level and training them thoroughly in administering data collection tools. The researcher also avoided making assumptions based on her
knowledge of the municipality systems but she tried as much as possible to collect data objectively.

3.4 Sampling Methods

In the current study, three random sampling methods were utilised. The Vhembe District Municipality has four local municipalities that have wards and villages under them. There are also distinct urban, commercial and small scale farming and rural areas. There are different races and socio-economic groups. There are commercial and industrial enterprises, as well as mines. The sampling mechanism should take all these various members of the study population into account so that representative samples can be selected. Cluster sampling was employed in order to select the local municipalities that will take place first instead of dealing with the whole district. The municipalities were selected using simple random techniques. Once the local municipalities have been selected, the wards participated in the study were selected from those local municipalities using simple random sampling techniques. Once the wards were selected, then population was stratified into different strata before further sampling. The population was stratified into different categories of consumers such as rural and urban population, commercial and small scale farming sectors, commerce and industry. A simple random sampling technique was used to select members from each stratum to participate in the study.

4. Data Collection Instruments

Researchers have to collect data and the instruments commonly used to collect data from people are tests, interviews and questionnaires, checklists, observations, focus group discussions (FGDs) and a range of participatory tools. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the generality of the consumers. FGDs were conducted with key informants, such as community leaders and civic organisations, who had particular knowledge and expertise in the subject at hand. Participatory tools were used to allow in depth discussion of certain themes relating to service delivery while checklists were used to review all documents relating to payment for services.

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the field study. The data was collected mostly through interviews with communities using structured questionnaires. In a few cases, especially concerning government and municipal officials, self administered questionnaires were sent out and later collected for analysis. Official municipal records were reviewed to assess the level of payments made by the consumers. Focus group discussions were held with the community leadership to assess their knowledge, attitudes, practices and perceptions towards payment for services. The
leaders were brought into groups of not more than 15 people each and the facilitator chose a theme relating to service delivery and payment for services. The facilitator made sure that the discussion went smoothly by ensuring that no participant dominated others. The data was analysed using a SPSS computer based programme for analysing data from social science studies. The results highlight the reasons why communities resist paying for services rendered by municipalities. The unit, study population and sample size were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>STUDY POPULATION</th>
<th>SAMPLE SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Municipalities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35 Municipal officials were interviewed. They were grouped (8-10) and focus group interviews were conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wards in selected municipality</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>A total of 159 villagers completed the questionnaire which had both open and closed ended questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Villages in selected wards</td>
<td>405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

Fifty one percent of the respondents were females and the remaining 49% were men. Fifty five percent of the respondents had primary school education, 30% had secondary school education, 12% had tertiary education while the remaining 7% had no education at all.

5.2 Access to Municipal Services

Ninety-three percent of the respondents confirmed that they had access to municipal services and 7% indicated that they had no services.

Municipal officials who were interviewed also confirmed that the municipality offered services to members of the community. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they had access to municipal water services. Only 13% said
they had access to municipal refuse collection services, 76% said they had access to electricity services, 53% said the municipality maintained the road network, while 93% confirmed that they had access to sanitation/sewerage services.

5.3 Payment for Separate Municipal Services

Sixty-two percent of the respondents said they paid for municipal services, whilst 38% indicated that they did not. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents said they paid for water. Only 17% said they paid for refuse collection, while only 7% said they paid for sanitation. Although a lot of respondents claimed to pay for services, a look at municipal records and interviews with officials revealed that the number of people paying for services could be far less than the above figures. For example the majority of rural dwellers are covered under free basic water and electricity supply. The people in rural areas are only required to pay R120 per year (about $14 USD) for all services they receive from the municipality. Some residents of the community of the Thohoyandou urban area do not pay anything at all for all the services they receive from the municipality. This situation has serious implications on the sustainability of services since the municipality is not recovering the cost of providing services. Lessons need to be learnt from other African countries such as Zimbabwe which tried the idea of providing services without cost recovery, resulting in the collapse of services.

5.4 Receipt of Bills

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents said they received bills for the municipal services they get from the municipality and the other 31% did not. Sixty-seven percent of those who received bills said they got the bills monthly, while the rest said they got them bimonthly. The municipality is performing relatively well in sending out bills, but the low amounts that the people are paying could in the longer run be exceeded by the cost of sending out the bills. This also raises the question of sustainability of the services if they continue to be offered at costs below the cost of providing the service.

5.5. Last Time a Bill Was Received

Twenty-two percent of the respondents who received bills had last received their bills in the previous week, 31% had last received theirs two weeks before, 42% had received theirs a month before while the remainder (5%) could not remember.

5.6 Method of Sending Bills

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2 Currently all households in South Africa receive 50kWh of electricity and 6kl (6000 litres) of water per household per month free.
Seventy-eight percent of the respondents said their bills were sent by post, 19% were sent through a messenger, while the remaining 3% said the bills were sent by other means which were not specified. The fact that the bulk of the bills are sent by post increases the chances of them reaching the rate payers.

5.7 Place Where Bills Are Paid

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents said they paid their bills directly to the municipalities, 8% said they paid at the bank, 6% said they used stop orders to pay for their bills, while the remaining 8% said they paid through other unspecified means. One of the municipalities included in the study is Thulamela Local Municipality which is situated in the Thohoyandou urban centre. People converge on the urban centre to conduct various transactions. The transport network linking Thohoyandou to the rural areas is good. This could also account for the high number of people paying their bills directly to the municipality.

5.8 Method and Means of Getting to the Payment Office

Sixty-eight percent of the respondents said they used buses or commuter taxis to get to the payment offices. Sixteen percent said they walked, 8% said they drove their own cars while the remaining 8% said they used other means which they did not specify. The accessibility of the municipal offices as already indicated could be responsible for the large numbers of people paying through those offices.

5.9 Time Taken to Get to the Place of Payment and Back

Only 47% of the respondents said it took them more than an hour to get to the payment office and back while the rest took less than that. This further shows that the pay offices are very accessible to the rate payers.

5.10 Average Amount Paid for Municipal Services Per Month

Fifty one percent of the respondents who paid bills said they were paying bills of above R200,00 per month, 29% said they were paying between R100,00 and R200,00 while the rest said they were paying less than R100,00 per month.

5.11 Affordability of Municipal Services

Only 8% of the respondents felt that the services were totally unaffordable, 50% felt that they were not very affordable while 42% felt that they are affordable. With such a high percentage of respondents feeling that the services are at least affordable, the municipality should not experience a high default pay rate from rate payers. If the
default rate is high under such circumstances, then it could mean that there are other reasons, including unwillingness by the users of the services to pay.

5.12 Rating of the Quality of Municipal Services

Only 2% of the respondents rated the services from the municipality as very good, 39% said they were good, 36% said the services were poor and 23% rated the services as very poor.

5.13 Attitudes Towards Payment for Services

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents felt that people should pay for services, whilst the remaining 33% did not feel that way. While this is a good attitude on the part of the consumers of municipal services, it should be noted that fewer people are actually paying as shown above. Therefore, there is an urgent need to take measures to improve services as a way to encourage residents to pay for services rendered by the municipalities. Fifty-two percent of those who felt that people should not pay for services believed it was government’s duty to provide and pay for services on behalf of the citizens. This indicates a dependency syndrome on the part of communities and steps should be taken urgently to redress this situation. Communities need to be educated on the need for sustainability in service delivery as well as the importance of cost recovery in this regard.

5.14 Source and Level of Income of the Breadwinners in Households

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents said they got their income from formal employment, 35% got it from self employment, 23% depended on social grants and the remaining 5% got assistance from relatives. Fifty-two percent of the respondents said they had an income of over R1,000 per month, 26% said they had an income of ± R1,000 per month and 22% said they had an income of less than R1,000 per month. Since less than 40% of the consumers had a guaranteed income from formal employment and 22% of the respondents had less than R1,000 per month as an income, the community can be considered as vulnerable. The capacity of such a community to pay the full cost of supplying services is doubtful and, therefore, subsidies should be considered in accordance with the indigent policy. But cross subsidies should be considered where the services can be priced in such a manner that the rich are made to pay for the poor instead of the whole cost being met by the government since this latter option is not sustainable in the long run.
6. Recommendations

This section presents recommendations which are aimed at the municipalities improving on their service delivery so that the consumers of the services are encouraged to pay for the services. The municipality needs to urgently improve on the quality of services to ensure that consumers’ willingness to pay for services is raised. The municipality needs to launch an educational and awareness campaign among the communities to deal with the apparent dependency syndrome. The communities need to be convinced that it is the duty of everyone to contribute towards provision of services and not the government alone. A carefully planned subsidy scheme based on the block tariff system\(^3\) needs to be introduced where the richer members of society can be made to augment government subsidies. Government subsidies alone cannot be sustained in the long term.

7. Conclusion

Vhembe District Municipality is indeed experiencing problems with people failing to pay for municipal services rendered, such as water, sanitation and electricity. This lack of payment is due to various reasons, including poverty and unwillingness to pay for services. The communities acknowledge that they get services from the municipality and that the municipality sends out bills regularly. The majority of the people pay their bills directly to the municipal offices and the offices are easily accessible to the community because of a good transport network in most parts of the district. Most of the people feel that the services are affordable although only less than 40% of them had steady incomes from formal employment. Only about 62% of the consumers are paying for the services that they receive from the municipalities in the Vhembe District Municipality. The number of people failing to pay is too high and the situation is not sustainable.

One contributing factor to the non-payment for services is the fact that only 2% of the population rated the services as very good. There was widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of services offered by the municipality. The other contributing factor towards non-payment could be originating from people’s attitudes. A large portion of the population felt that it was Government’s duty to deliver services and pay for them. This could be a dependency syndrome created by years of social welfare approaches to development in the country. The above situation is not sustainable and needs to be corrected urgently. Although a lot of people felt that the services were affordable, an

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3 The block tariff structure is designed such that the more you consume, the higher your average price. The feature of this structure is that customers are charged at higher rates as their consumption becomes higher. The tariff structure is usually divided into four consumption blocks where each successive block has a higher price per kWh of energy or kl of water. The amount payable is the sum of the consumption per block multiplied by the rate/price per unit for each block.
analysis of the sources and levels of income among the communities showed that the communities were vulnerable and could be genuinely failing to pay for services.

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Ethical Leadership Principles in South African Public Administration Lost Opportunity or Alive with Possibility

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Abstract:

South Africa is a society emerging from a chequered and troubled past with a legacy of impairments in terms of education skills, opportunities, resentments, equality and perceptions. As in many societies, corruption is recognized as a major hindrance to good governance in the public sector. The South African government has prompted the public sector to focus on anti-corruption measures as part of their mechanisms to prevent and curb corruption. It is evident that these mechanisms are insufficient to prevent and curb corruption, due to poor governance practices, such as weakness and gaps in legislation. Furthermore, the public sector has seen that there are unethical and even toxic leaders, who exploit the loopholes in the systems and processes and seek to fulfil their personal desires at the expense of their departments. It is therefore argued that there is increasingly a need for ethical leadership in the public sector. This article therefore suggests the need for ethical leadership to prevent and curb corruption and to promote good governance in the S.A. public sector. Ethical leadership is associated with leader effectiveness and good governance. Leaders need to demonstrate ethical leadership in their daily behaviors, decisions and actions. By sending out strong messages about ethics and establishing clear reward and sanction systems to hold public sector employees accountable for their actions, leaders can do a lot to promote good governance in the public sector. This may need to be linked to values inherent in certain uniquely cultural and South African traditions.

Keywords: Public sector, corruption, leadership, governance.

1. Introduction

With a population of just over 50 million, South Africa (S.A.) has extensive gold, platinum, coal and other mineral resources, well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, transport and mining sectors, an established 120 year-old stock exchange, and reliable transport, energy and communications infrastructures.

South Africa has a fully functional judicial and legislative system (based on long established Roman-Dutch legal principles), with extensive legislation governing commerce, labor, social and property issues as well as laws and regulations associated with agencies overseeing competition, copyright, and communications policies, conform to international norms and conventions. The population comprises various
cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds (e.g. the population largely derives from European extraction and indigenous African tribes), also has 11 official languages, (and scores of unofficial ones). Although English is the most commonly spoken language in commerce, it is only the fifth most spoken ‘home’ language. The country’s democratic Constitution, recognizes all 11 official languages, to which the state guarantees equal status.

The country’s financial systems are sophisticated and robust, surviving the 2008 financial crisis relatively intact with extensive banking and financial services regulation and policing. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, tax compliance has steadily improved and the revenue service (S.A.R.S) prides itself on innovative e-filing and digital applications to speed-up tax submissions, as well as an efficient turn-around for the country’s growing tax base. South Africa is - until 2015 - eligible for preferential trade benefits under the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and the two countries have a bilateral tax treaty eliminating double taxation.

South Africa is a member of the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, G-20, World Trade Organization, and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and recently (2011) became the 5th constituent of the so-called ‘BRICS’ emerging nations trade grouping, thereby joining the rapidly growing economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa’s GDP growth in 2011 was 3.1%.

However, there are many socio-economic problems, such as high unemployment (officially 25%), illiteracy, and certain areas of the public sector – such as the health service and local government (divided into 9 geographical provinces), that often function poorly, and are frequently characterized by ill-informed uncaring public officials. Recently the Public Service and Administration Minister announced a programme to professionalize the public service by introducing compulsory induction training from October 2013, (Aboobaker, S., 2012).

Recognizing the need for improvement, and following six months of nationwide public consultation, a draft long-term vision and strategic plan for South Africa has recently been devised by government. This road-map – The National Development Plan-2030 – sets down strategies to address poverty by broadening access to employment, strengthening the social wage, improving public transport and raising rural incomes, and crucially in terms of the focus of this article, outlines the steps that need to be taken by the state to strengthen accountability, improve coordination and prosecute corruption in the public service.

Although S.A. ranked 54th out of the 178 countries listed in Transparency International’s 2010 Corruption perceptions index, South Africa’s Auditor-General (AGSA) – with a constitutional mandate to ensure oversight, accountability and governance in the public sector, uncovered R26,4bn in “unauthorised, irregular and fruitless expenditure” in his review of S.A. government and public sector departments during the 2010/2011 financial year (De Lange 2011).
The AGSA – which celebrated its centenary of public sector auditing in 2011 – audits 8 metropolitan, 283 municipalities and a further 60 local government entities annually, within 3 months from receipt. On average, about 50% achieved a clean financially unqualified audit (S2.2.2) after correction conform to pre-determined objectives or misstatements, within the audit period, with the remainder tarnished by various “negative disclaimers, adverse findings or qualified opinions.” The key drivers of failed audit outcomes include deficiencies in internal controls, poor HR, and problematic I.T., as well as by oversight committees which the AGSA attributes to:

a) Officials in key positions lack minimum required skills and competencies (72%);
b) Lack of consequences for poor performance and transgressions by officials and leaders (70%);
c) Mayors and councillors do not timeously respond to requests from the AG for information/corrections and fail to “take ownership of the implementation of key controls,” (57%) (S2.1.5).

The AGSA notes that “numerous errors need to be corrected by auditors during the audit despite consultants being brought in to assist municipalities, and that some were submitted too late to be completed in the time period,” (AGSA Report, 2012). Overall, the AGSA opines that drivers of audit outcomes are “that leadership should set the tone from the top regarding the importance of internal controls and expected standards of conduct” and that for the purposes of corrective action, the different components of internal control are categorised as leadership, financial and performance management and governance” – the drivers of internal control (AGSA Report, 2012, 4.1.1), Heese and Allan (2012:4). Somewhat ironically, the S.A. Public Protector, (mandated to investigate corruption in public administration), noted that there would soon be no money left for service delivery in SA, due to the alarming increase in corruption in government departments in the public sector (Madonsela 2011).

Although the shift from the stigma of apartheid, (which excluded the majority of South Africans from ownership and/or control of productive assets and resources and participation in the economy), to democracy in 1994, was achieved relatively peacefully, many organizations remain hierarchical in structure, while industrial and employee relations are often characterized fostering resentments (and on occasion simmering violence, most recently apparent in an aggressive dispute between a private sector mining company, its employees, competing trade unions, and police intervention, (Paton and Seccombe 2012). Although legislation aimed at promoting economic transformation and eliminating resentment was introduced almost a decade ago, its record in relation to equalizing the wealth of ordinary workers has been patchy: average annual incomes for most blue collar and public sector employee remains stubbornly below R 50,000 p.a. (= 4,500 UK pounds = $ 7,000 (BMR 2010)).
The Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Act of 2003, targets sectors areas of the South African economy, such as energy, banking, and mineral beneficiation. These key development areas have specific criteria attached to measure more broadly-based economic participation outcomes, such as equality of ownership, increased employment, more equitable income distribution, opportunity and access to services.

In February 2007 the Codes of Good Practice on Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) were formalized by the government to provide a clear framework to measure broad-based BEE across sectors of the economy. The Codes define criteria and quantify seven scorecard categories: Ownership, Management, Employment Equity, Skills Development, Preferential Procurement, Enterprise and Socio-Economic Development.

The advantages of being BEE-compliant are access to the Department of Trade and Industry B-BBEE Opportunities Network to assist businesses to tender for preferential procurement and or enterprise development opportunities – typically in the form of tenders for government contracts.

However, circumvention of the B-BBEE Act and Codes has led to a process termed 'Fronting,' involving deliberate attempts to falsify and misrepresent scorecard data regarding compliance, and typically involve such practices as ‘window-dressing,’ in which a few formerly economically black/disadvantaged people are nominally appointed to prominent positions (e.g. as directors/managers) in an enterprise on the basis of tokenism, while the rest of the organization remains 'business as usual,' all with the objective of appearing BEE-compliant. The Public Protector (January 2012) referred to so-called 'tenderpreneurs,' who participate in public procurement self-enrichment schemes and treat government funds as ‘orphaned money’. The Public Protector said that those involved in such schemes “make use of personal connections to the powerful to score lucrative government contracts, often benefiting from inflated fees while delivering shoddy service. Pseudo entrepreneurs collude with public officials and office bearers to deprive citizens, not only of enormous resources but also of service delivery,” (Madonsela, T. 2012).

In a prominently quoted speech, Gwede Mantashe, the secretary-general of the governing party (the ANC), warned against BEE companies using the state as their ‘cash cow’ by providing poor-quality goods at inflated prices. He said it was unacceptable for contractors to charge taxpayers R20 million for a public school, when the private sector might only spend half the cost on a similarly specified project. Questioning the country’s tender system, Mantashe noted the need to move away from a ‘tender state’, to a state that actually has capacity to do business: “The state must be able to do what it has to do and never make secondary, what has to be a primary objective.” He stated that if the primary objective of the state is to “deliver food to a school, who delivers it, is secondary.” He concluded that the public had for too long tolerated the situation where BEE companies build bridges that got ‘eroded at the first rainfall,’ (Mantashe, G., 2012).
Although neither the Public Protector nor Mantashe actually used the term ‘corruption’ to describe these scenarios, not everyone’s perception might regard such schemes as corrupt. As noted by Jos (1993) and others, empirical studies of corruption depend on exactly where one is ‘standing.’ Some authors consider that definitions of corruption may be biased in favour of ‘Western standards,’ which are not universally applicable in a developing country/emerging economy context and thus overlook the fact that whether such “an action is corrupt depends on the social context, within which it occurs.” Actions are situationally dependent on their setting, in this case their socio/cultural /economic context. For example, in contemporary China, the DaZhong taxi company only buys one brand of vehicle, since the city also owns the Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC), which in turn manufactures the taxi: “so long as the DaZhong buys VW Santanas, there is a good chance that its licence to manage the city’s largest fleet of nearly 9000 taxis will be renewed by the city authorities..... To enter and compete in China you need a licence. To get a licence you need a friend...” (Dunne, M 2011).

According to Jos (1993), “Identical actions may be totally acceptable in one society...and yet be considered corrupt in another,” thus preventing the ‘neutral’ observer/commentator from providing an absolute definition of corruption, or avoiding cultural bias. Thus when a national daily South African newspaper interviewed nine black businessmen from industrial sectors such as infrastructure, property, construction and transport (on condition of anonymity), they stated that it was something of a norm to “pay to get a tender, pay to be paid, and.... grease the machinery,” (Rampiedi, P.2012): these just amounted to the hidden transaction costs of ‘doing business’ in a developing society.

Thus despite legislation concerning tenders in government, 34% of all government departments awarded contracts to officials and their close family members. Although there are a number of initiatives to curb corrupt practices in the public sector, it is evident that corruption, in various forms, exists.

The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) of the United Nations argues that a major obstacle to poor service delivery in South Africa, especially at local government, is poor governance, which includes not only corruption, but also poor leadership performance by government officials in their management of public resources and a lack of political will to act against underperforming officials (Luyt, 2008:2). The poor management of public resources, absence of adequate accountability mechanisms and a lack of transparency, in turn impact public service delivery (Naidoo 2009).

In their report of South African local government, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (2009: 10) identified the following as casual reasons for distress in municipal governance:

- Poor ability of councillors to deal with the demands of local government;
Inadequate accountability measures and support systems and resources for local democracy;  
Poor compliance with regulatory and legislative frameworks;  
Tensions between the political and administrative interface;  
Lack of clear distinction between the legislative and executive; and  
Insufficient separations of powers between municipal councils and political parties.

Their assessment revealed that party-political factionalism and polarisation has led to the deterioration of municipal functionality. These relate to the issues of democracy, representation, and inclusion, power sharing and the relationship between institutions of governance, such as the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, political parties and civil society organisations – all facets of political governance that affect the decision-making process that impact individual’s lives, livelihoods and lifestyles (Naidoo 2009). Nepotism, patronage and corruption leads to a lack of citizenry confidence and trust in the system, as the municipal accountability system is perceived to be ineffective and inaccessible to many citizens (COGTA, 2009:11). Clearly, greater trust in public administration processes is vital (discussed later).

Of course, examples of corruption and maladministration pervade the world over, often on a grander scale than in South Africa, whether it be the corruption conviction of Rod Blagojevich, the former Illinois governor, or the municipal bankruptcy of Alabama’s Jefferson County following a complex $3.14 billion sewer bond debt scandal. The reasons are often similar, with links established between corruption and lack of ethical leadership and poor governance, (Naidoo 2011; Pillay 2004, Simpson et al. 2012).

This article discusses certain known corrupt practices that exist in the S.A. public sector, and puts forward the argument for ethical leadership to promote good governance. Pillay (2004:590) states that success in eradicating corruption depends on the promotion of good governance. However, success in promoting good governance requires effective leadership (Naidoo 2011), in the form of exemplary moral and ethical values. Ethical leadership is needed to resist the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, as well as potential interference and to protect anti-corruption agencies’ operational independence, in turn facilitating good governance.

2. Preventing Corruption in the South African Public Sector

Various mechanisms and initiatives have been put in place since 1994 to prevent and combat corruption in S.A. However, it is also critical to determine their effectiveness in relation to the prevention and combating of corruption in the S.A. public sector including:
2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996

Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 indicates that Public Administration must be governed by democratic values and principles, such as:

- The promotion of a high standard of professional ethics;
- The promotion of efficient, economic, and effective use of resources;
- That transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information; and
- That public administrations must be accountable.

Legislation also exists to translate the principles of the Constitution to promote good governance in the public sector.

3. The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004

The Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (12 of 2004) outlines a framework for the strengthening of measures to prevent and combat corruption, provides for investigative measures, places restrictions on persons convicted of corrupt activities relating to tenders and contracts, and provides for extra-territorial jurisdiction if required. Government and Municipal Departments are required to periodically conduct audits of selected projects to identify weaknesses and malpractices in procurement processes. However, as was discussed earlier, audit skills and controls are often less than robust, especially in the smaller metros.

4. The Protected Disclosures Act 26 of 2000

The Protected Disclosures Act 2000 is intended to protect ‘whistleblowers’ who disclose information about unlawful or corrupt conduct against occupational detriment. The Act declares that criminal and other irregular conduct in organs of state is detrimental to good governance. However, Diale and Holtzhausen (2005:17) state that in its current form the Act “falls short of the practicality of its provisions and [lacks protection for] current and future whistleblowers.”

5. Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999)

The Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) (PFMA) introduced Tender Boards to help monitor the activities supply chain management departments. The medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) also compels national government departments to budget within strategic goals.

Section 39 of the Public Finance Management Act, states that the Accounting Officer (AO) must exercise tight financial control over expenditure and is obligated to
report all financial irregularities to the provincial treasury. Section 40(4) provides for a mechanism whereby the AO must report monthly to the Treasury for the previous month’s revenue and expenditure. This ensures that expenditure is spread over the financial year and can thus prevent ‘fiscal dumping’ at the end of the fiscal year, therefore curbing the scope for corruption by limiting the scope for artificially inflating budgets and thus promoting better governance.

6. Regulations for Procurement Practices

The Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan, in his Budget Speech (2012: 26), reported that the ‘National Treasury had issued new regulations which require departments to submit annual tender programmes, limit variations to orders, and require disclosure of all directives’.

Other steps that are to be implemented by the National Treasury to improve procurement capacity in the public sector include (Gordhan, 2012:26) include:

- Strengthening fragmentation in the system and the national procurement architecture;
- Appointing a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in the Resource Management (RM) Department within the National Treasury to assess the competencies and capabilities required by relevant public servants to perform the procurement function.
- Developing a national price reference system, to detect deviations from acceptance price;
- Undertaking a joint review of the validity and cost effectiveness of all government property leases; and
- Improving the ability of departments to set the specifications for tender.

7. Institutions to Curb and Prevent Corruption

‘Doing the right thing’ is often thought to stem from watching others do the ‘right thing,’ and in this respect, trust in the both the institutions and the fairness and equity of the processes within them is vital, sometimes more than the actual outcomes themselves, (Van Ryzin, 2011 745-760).

In this respect Chapter 9 of the South African Constitution establishes institutional safeguards such as the Constitutional Court, the Public Protector, and the Auditor-General, all characterised by safeguards on their independence and ability to investigate, gather and analyse information, following due process. Amongst various so-called ‘Chapter 9’ SA institutions charged with ensuring that public administration activities are in line with the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution and geared to promoting good governance, are:
• The Public Protector, who is mandated to investigate any corruption in state affairs, or in public administration, that is alleged or suspected to be improper or prejudiced;
• The Auditor-General (AGSA), who audits and reports on the accounts, financial statements and financial management at all levels of government to ensure efficiency and economical use of public resources (as previously discussed).

In addition, the Department of Public Service and Administration, oversees the national and provincial government; Siswana (2007: 225) adds that ‘in the SA context, it is imperative for institutions of governance, such as the Electoral Commission, and Public Service Commission (PSC), as well as Parliament and provincial legislatures to enforce, securitise and monitor the applications of the above legislative frameworks to instil a good governance culture in the public sector. These create conditions for an accountable government in the best traditions of democracy.

It is argued that pre-emptive attention should be devoted to the prevention of corruption and to identifying and eliminating systemic regulative and organisational lacuna that contribute to corruption. Preventive measures include reforming regulatory frameworks to reduce the discretionary powers of public officials, increasing the transparency of decision making procedures and improved skills training, particularly for those public servants occupying fiscally sensitive positions. More importantly, those interacting with the public sector need to be more informed about available protections and legislation, as well as the procedures of the Public Finance Management Act intended to curb and prevent corruption.

7.1 Manifestations of corruption

Recent information regarding reported public sector corruption in S.A. is reflected in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Corruption in the S.A. public sector for 2004-2010 as at 31 June 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of corruption</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fraud and bribery</td>
<td>1,511</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismanagement of government funds</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of government resources</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement irregularities</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Housing allocation irregularities</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appointment irregularities 627 8%
Social grant fraud 420 5%
Identity document fraud 781 10%
Unethical behaviour 580 8%
Criminal conduct 512 7%
Other 310 4%
Total 7 766 100%

Adapted from the Public Service Commission (PSC) Report 2011

The National Anti-Corruption Review Report in 2004 concluded that although S.A. has made great strides in fighting corruption, serious challenges remained in the public sector. The report highlighted that corruption in national government had decreased, but corruption increased at local government levels (Humphreys & Weinstein 2009:370).

Statistics S.A.’s 2011 ‘Victims of Crime Survey’, reported that bribery is the most common form of corruption in organs of state:

"Households were asked if any public official asked for money, favours or a present for a service that he or she was legally required to perform. 5.6% of households indicated they were asked for money by government officials for a service. The results show that paying a bribe (e.g. to the traffic police to avoid traffic fines) was the most common form of corruption. Other services where bribes were solicited include those involving driver’s licences (15.9%), employment applications (13.8%), or identity document/passport matters (13.3%). (Statistics S.A.’s Victims of crime survey (2011:34)"

Although, the proportion of people asked to pay bribes in relation to traffic fines has increased since 2007, bribes paid when visiting prisons and involving pension or social welfare grants have decreased.

In closely examining corruption in the provincial sphere in Table 2, it is also important to note the relatively small proportion of cases that have been resolved through closure.

Table 2. Cases of alleged corruption in provinces: 1 Sept 2004 to 31 June 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number of cases referred</th>
<th>Feedback received</th>
<th>Percentage of feedback received</th>
<th>Cases closed</th>
<th>Percentage of cases closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparison in Table 2 shows that while certain provinces have proportions of closed cases exceeding 20%, other provinces have significantly lower ‘resolutions’ indicating inconsistent progress in fighting corruption. Following a National Anti-Corruption Summit in 2002, the government adopted a Public Service Anti-Corruption Strategy, initiating an anti-corruption hotline in 2004: by 2008, 4,202 cases of alleged corruption had been reported to the Public Service Commission (PSC). According to government, R86m was recovered through successful investigation and disciplinary procedures, though it is hard to know what proportion of losses to the state fiscus remain unaccounted for.

However, a closer look at corruption in 2012 indicates that there have been certain egregious breaches. In Limpopo province, five provincial departments were ‘taken over’ by national government, as they were deemed not to have the capacity to deliver services (Rampedi 2012). A recent Limpopo scandal involved the tendering and outsourcing for (non-delivery of thousands of text-books to schools in the impoverished and administratively troubled region. Limpopo has a shortfall of more than R2bn, an overdraft of R700m and it recently applied to a commercial bank for a further overdraft facility, which was declined.

In Bloemfontein (2012), seven people were recently charged with unlawful practices involving tenders in the Free State education department, worth about R30m (News24.com: 2012). The Auditor-General (2012) found that over 50% of tenders in the province were given either to government workers or their family members. The report also stated that “there was still much to be done to address deficient asset management processes and practices in the province, while the prevalence and magnitude of irregular expenditure incurred by eleven departments and three public entities were unacceptably high” (Sowetan 2012).

Other prominent cases of corruption at national government include the Public Works Department that spent money on suspect leases that enriched a privileged few. This led to the dismissal of the former Minister of Public Works (Bryson 2011). At local government, it is evident that corrupt practices are also on the increase (Smyth, Reddel & Jones 2005). For example, a municipal councilor was arrested when he was found by the Department of Home Affairs with immigration stamps, allegedly being used on travel documents at the border between Zimbabwe and S.A. (News24.com 2012).
In light of the above, it is evident that corruption – whether formalised through BEEE legislation and policies that leads to company fronting or government tendering and outsourcing, characterised by collusion and lack of monitoring skills, or mere bribes, lies and falsification – does exist in the S.A. public sector. More seriously, corruption has an impact economically, politically and socially, especially on inward investment.

8. Challenges in Addressing Corruption in the Public Sector

Amongst the challenges in addressing corruption, are that public officials enjoy wide discretionary powers. Gumede (2011:20) argues that “there are still many ‘legislative gaps’ in S.A.’s corruption fighting infrastructure….. relating to how to deal with dual employment of public servants, manage conflicts of interest and deal with the ‘revolving door’ phenomenon, in which senior public servants and politicians, after leaving a job in the public and political sector – join the private sector... bringing with them all the inside information, contacts and influence”. There is limited capacity in the Public Service Commission (PSC) to scrutinise disclosures of conflict of interest, as it can only randomly scrutinise 30% of all senior managers’ disclosures in the public sector, and has no powers of its own to prosecute transgressors.

Although the Auditor-General investigates corruption, other agencies are required to police and prosecute. Integrity committees, for example, cannot investigate cases of corruption, neither can they penalise the guilty. The government thus needs to give attention to public servants implicated in corruption inquiries, who have apparently not faced disciplinary action from within their own departments, perhaps due to limited investigative resources and skills. In addition, it can take more than 60 days to finalise disciplinary enquiries even for minor offences (Businesslive 2012). This is costly for government, as department officials may be suspended from duty with full pay without rendering services. It is therefore suggested that the pace of disciplinary hearings should be accelerated to prevent cost and time delays.

It is perhaps not surprising therefore that Independent civil society bodies, such as ‘Corruption Watch’ have been established (2012), launching a website and SMS hotline to receive reports of corruption, a secure portal for evidence-based whistle blowing activity and a resource for information about corrupt activities in South Africa. A vocal public interest law centre, “SECTION 27,” (named after Section 27 of the South African Constitution, which enshrines the country’s commitment to socio-economic rights), has also been at the forefront of exposing administrative ills, most recently with the non-delivery of text books to schools referred to previously.

Anti-corruption bodies should be shielded from undue political interference. To this end, genuine political will to fight corruption is the key prerequisite. Such political will must be embedded in a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy, in which the level of independence can vary according to specific needs and conditions of each department. Structural and operational autonomy are important, along with a clear
legal mandate. This is particularly important for law enforcement bodies. Transparent procedures for appointment and removal of corrupt leaders together with proper human resource management and internal controls are important elements to prevent undue interference. Independence should not amount to a lack of accountability. Although such a body would have to account to politicians, it should not be managed by political office bearers, which could affect its independence (Glenister v President of the Republic of S.A. and Others, 2011). The principles of the rule of law and human rights should be adhered to, with regular performance reports to executive and legislative bodies, and public access to information allowed.

Other aspects of concern are that only 40% of public administration departments have anti-corruption policies of reasonable quality, with patchy evidence of implementation. The remaining 60% either have no policies, or very basic policies of poor quality. Ten percent (10%) of departments have clear written objectives which are well integrated with other objectives and with evidence of planning and monitoring against objectives. Forty-five percent (45%) of departments have written objectives dealing with corruption. Only 15% of the departments were found to have advanced investigative capacities, while 25% have basic capacity. The PSC found that many anti-corruption investigative units established in departments at the provincial level, are dysfunctional. The remaining departments were found to have no basic investigative capacity (Public Service Commission 2011).

Departmental feedback reports submitted to the PSC show that departments are often lenient, with only written or final warnings to officials found to be associated with corruption. The imposition of disciplinary sanctions against officials found guilty of corruption is often limited due to weak organisational mechanisms in public sector departments. The PSC also found that disciplinary enquiries are very time-consuming, (Public Service Commission, 2011).

There are also challenges around the investigative capabilities of the enforcement agencies, (e.g. abuses of power, lack of transparency and openness). There is therefore a critical need to address these challenges to curb the prevention of corruption. It should be mandatory for investigative units to be established within departments. Provinces should establish centralised anti-corruption investigative units. It is suggested that Provinces commit greater resources to investigate corruption. In particular, integrity management units should be created through the appointment of appropriately skilled persons and by training of officials in the discipline of forensic investigation. Failure to do so will impact negatively on successful prevention and curbing of corruption which will erode efforts to build integrity within the public sector. A centralised anti-corruption investigative unit could ensure that there is proper coordination of cases in provincial departments and that evidence is not ‘misplaced’ (Public Service Commission 2011:ix).

Currently investigative capacities in the local sphere of government are also fragmented and therefore need coordination and integration. The effective utilisation of funds and expertise is an important success factor for the local governance
framework. Strict adherence to legislation and the Public Finance Act (2002) must be ensured. The prevalence of under-spending must be avoided and monitored in relation to different projects. Poor financial skills, financial management, lack of financial controls, non-adherence to labour policies, dysfunctional labour forums and a breakdown in the labour and management interface are features of the majority of municipalities who have ‘qualified audits’ or ‘disclaimers’ applied to them (De Lange 2011). The importance of investing in people is critical, particularly where technical, managerial and leadership skills are required (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2009). It is also important to promote ethical leadership to curb corruption and promote good governance in the public sector.

9. Ethical Leadership to Curb Corruption and Promote Good Governance

Many definitions of leadership exist and it is not the purpose of this article to analyze them here, but unique situational factors may be especially relevant in an African context. In addition to transformational leadership (Bass et al. 2003), which is especially thought to facilitate organizational change and employee satisfaction by looking beyond self-interest, to focus on the needs of the organization, and information use is thought to help improve the performance of organizations generating and relying on data quality (recall the Auditor General’s critique of data from municipalities, discussed earlier), (Moynihan et al. 2011), the philosophical traditions of Africa, may offer an important contribution to the theory and practice of leadership which can be put into practice on a global platform.

African humanism or ‘Ubuntu’, evokes both reason and empathy as the basis for ethical leadership. Ubuntu – articulated in the Zulu proverb umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu – means that ‘a person is a person because of other people.’ Khoza (2011) contends that the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the social collective, stimulates caring and progressive thought and action, which is especially apt in the relationship between leader and followers –especially in bureaucratic organisations, such as those typified by the public sector.

While Ngambi’s definition of leadership is relatively conventional, “the process of influencing others’ commitment towards realizing their full potential in achieving a shared vision, with passion and integrity”, implying a leadership that facilitates self-empowerment in followers that inspires passion and compassion, and galvanizes all facets of an organisation to function at its maximum potential, it is a precursor for a more holistic leadership model requiring that leaders incorporate head, heart and hands, into what she terms the “RARE Principles” of Responsible, Accountable, Relevant and Ethical leadership.

Conversely, Ngambi describes a “toxic leadership” intermittently present on the African continent, where legacies of empowerment and opportunity have often been squandered to kleptocracy, xenophobia and equally toxic “followership.” Recent corruption scandals in the public sector where it has been said that those with “the
right connections can get a sympathetic hearing from the powers that be,” (Khoza, 2012), have raised important questions about the role of national leadership in shaping ethical conduct, a perception held by Khoza (2012) in criticising contemporary “short-term, transitional and ethically weak transactional leadership styles.”

Kroukamp (2011:29) argues that leadership should involve promoting public sector ethics. It is further suggested that more emphasis on ethical leadership in the public service could curb corruption and ensure good governance. Leadership that is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and inclusive, following the rule of law, with the views of communities taken into account and the voices of the most vulnerable in society heard in decision making, it is argued, will help ensure that corruption is minimised.

According to Van Aswegen and Engelbrecht (2009:228), ethical leadership “demonstrates the will and ability to strategically position, design, and sustain an organization successfully, to develop employee competence and to direct human and organizational energy in pursuit of performance and achievement that stand the ethical test of effectiveness and efficiency”. Van Den Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen & Six (2009), contend that being an ethical leader is about being both a moral person and a moral manager. Ethical leaders increase awareness of what is right, good and important, inspiring their followers to become leaders, who go beyond their self-interest for the good of the organisation. Palanski and Yammarino (2007), classify the various meanings of integrity into five general categories, namely integrity as wholeness, consistency between words and actions, integrity as consistency in adversity, integrity as being true to oneself, and integrity as moral or ethical behavior. Integrity implies that an individual’s behaviour is consistent with espoused moral values, implying that a person is honest and trustworthy. According to Van Aswegen and Engelbrecht (2009), most scholars consider integrity to be a requirement for ethical and effective leadership. Integrity, in particular, is recognised as the core value of leaders. To promote good governance, both political and administrative leaders should therefore act with integrity at all times and support the ethos of democracy such as that which crafted the Constitution of the Republic of S.A. Avey, Palanski and Walumbwa (2010), Walumbwa et al., and Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts and Chonko (2009) indicate that ethical leadership fosters individual perceptions of a more ethical climate. Ethical leadership argue Brown & Treviño, (2006) may portend outcomes, such as followers’ job satisfaction and dedication, and their willingness to report problems to management.

In the African context, Ngambi (2011) highlights the resource of spiritual intelligence in the leader-follower relationship. The more ‘spiritually aware’ leader will she argues, comprehend their subordinates’ reaction to events or decisions, and at least be aware of their feelings. Equally, followers will respect ‘authentic leaders’, who display consistently principled behaviour whatever the circumstances. The solution to
ethical problems, such as corruption in the S.A. public sector, may therefore rely on a spiritually aware moral and competent leadership nexus.

Given a more ethical leadership, mechanisms of curbing corruption can be implemented more vigorously, thus promoting good governance. It is therefore crucial that managements create organizational cultures of openness and transparency in which unethical conduct becomes visible and employees and managers are accountable. In addition, it is suggested that public sector departments need ethical training programmes to create and maintain a culture that promotes appropriate behavior. However, in a society historically characterized by inequality, between the employed, the unemployed and the unemployable, and also amongst the ranks of the employed in terms of cultures, education and experience, inculcating a uniform attitude to ethical leadership may prove a long and winding path, (see further Zajac and Comfort, 1997).

In order to strengthen the public sector culture, a programme of structural and procedural changes could be implemented by management as a means of institutionalising ethics (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht 2009:228). These could include formulation of ethical codes and value statements, management and corporate ethical education, public sector ethical performance evaluations, disciplinary codes for breaches of procedures, and channels for seeking advice or reporting violations (for example support of whistleblowers), ethics ‘hotlines’, conducting ethics audits, scrutiny by ethics committees and informational newsletters. However, as has been used to describe American CEO Alan Mulally’s leadership philosophy at Ford, (Hoffman, B, 2012): “The leader’s job is to remind people of that vision, make sure they stick to the process and keep them working together,” – which as mentioned above, is often hard to achieve, especially in the stratified South African social and organizational contexts.

Ngambi (2011) also suggests the need for ‘African Intelligence’ (AQ), rooted in traditional African community values and the ‘village model’ of leadership, where respect and accountability are daily practiced. However, the building of an ethical climate in the S.A. public sector requires more than just leaders who behave ethically. It requires the proactive management of ethics. Such leaders have to be motivated and committed to achieve the vision of an ethical public sector. However, as Zajac and Comfort (1997: 548) remind us: “organizational learning is not always a fully realized process. Rather it involves organizational progress through stages of awareness, information gathering, inquiry, change, evaluation and revision of action. The extent to which organizational learning culminates in actual behavioral change depends in part on the mix of receptiveness to, and constraints upon [the] change characteristic of each organization.” Overhauling ethics cultures is therefore often hard to achieve in any long established organization, especially those practicing public administration.

South Africa’s journey from restricted access to education, information, opportunities and resources, although by now well established, is still an emergent
process. The country is still characterized by inequality, patriarchy and hierarchy in an almost self-re-enforcing cycle. To import leadership styles and techniques from other developed societies, and expect them to transform public administration and service delivery in South Africa, does so at the risk of ignoring local history, experience, culture and values. To adapt and integrate leadership skills, and at the same time capitalize on strongly embedded norms and values discussed above, and apply them to contemporary public administration in order to improve attitudes, service, efficiency and delivery both towards, and from within, the public service, must surely be the ultimate prize, for which to strive.

10. Conclusion

The article presented a background to contemporary public administration in South Africa and discussed issues relating to deficiencies, skills, especially as they relate to perceptions of and methods to prevent and combat corruption in the S.A. public sector. It also explored the challenges to curbing corruption and suggested the critical need for ethical leadership to curb corruption and promote good governance in the S.A. public sector.

Despite mechanisms to prevent and curb corruption in the S.A. public sector, it is evident that corruption exists. It is apparent that public sector leadership entrusted with state resources, enrich themselves instead of acting as custodians of the state and that poor governance compounds the corrosive consequences of corruption. This article examined corruption and its effects on good governance in the S.A. public sector. The article identified corrupt practices in the S.A. public sector and recognised the critical need for ethical leadership to curb corruption and promote good governance in S.A. It is evident that successful eradication of corruption and promotion of good governance therefore depends on ethical leadership. Ethical leadership – with African nuances – is therefore suggested to help prevent the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, reduce potential interference and protect anti-corruption agencies’ operational independence, thus potentially enabling better governance.

Given the above, it is therefore hoped, that the successful application of ethical leadership principles in the context of South African public administration, is in the words of a recent patriotic marketing slogan ‘alive with possibility.’

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Improving ICT for ODL in the UNISA Department of Public Administration

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Abstract

The University of South Africa (UNISA) is a comprehensive open and distance learning (ODL) institution that aims to be the premier online teaching and eLearning institution of choice. This article presents a case study of the Department Public Administration in UNISA with regard for the expansion of ODL practices to improve online teaching and eLearning. The purpose of this article is firstly to recommend that the teaching and learning methods presently used by the Department of Public Administration (UNISA) should be combined with more interactive technology-enriched teaching and learning methodologies so that the department can “be ahead of the game” when it comes to online teaching and eLearning. The significance of this study is to improve Public Administration teaching and learning by the Department of Public Administration (UNISA) through creating a virtual study environment and in ensuring the department becomes a fully fourth and fifth generation ODL provider. This includes an explanation of the blended use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools such as interactive satellite-based platforms, web-based management system and social networks, as mechanisms for improving online teaching and eLearning methodologies in Public Administration.

Keywords: Open Distance Learning (ODL), Synchronous Technology, Asynchronous Technology, Online Teaching and eLearning, Fourth and fifth generation ODL provider.

1. Introduction

The University of South Africa (Unisa) is an open distance learning (ODL) provider which is one of the most rapidly growing fields of education in South Africa (SA). Its potential impact on all education delivery systems can be greatly improved through the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Prinsloo 2012). Unisa is moving towards an integration of blended, flexible and technological enhanced learning environment. ICT usage by Unisa has opened up new horizons for ODL education in South Africa.

The use of ICT merely for the provision of information and communication has not directly resulted in the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) from becoming an effective fourth or fifth ODL provider. There are approximately 22 356 students and ninety one (91) modules offered by the Department of Public Administration as at
2012. The lecturers in Public Administration (Unisa) mainly use teaching methods that are evident in a correspondence model of teaching, which are associated with print delivery and the uploading of printed material on the web-based management system (MyUnisa). Lecturers are now expected to explore new and more effective ways of improving ODL mainly through online teaching and eLearning by using ICT (Singh 2011). It is however, difficult for academics to not only keep up-to-date with the rapid developments in Public Administration, but also to continuously try to keep abreast with developments in ODL, pedagogy and technology.

According to Prinsloo (2012), Brewslow (2007:293) and Van Jaarsveldt (2011), this would enhance a more learner-centred approach to teaching, as there would be improved ways of interaction and support. Recent literature on Public Administration pedagogy strongly argues that pedagogical practices based on interactive, problem-based, technology-enriched teaching and learning are appropriate methodologies to prepare students for the increasingly complex Public Administration challenges in society (Moore, Fowler and Watson 2007); (Park and van der Merwe 2009) and (Van Jaarsveldt 2011). ICT can have a profound impact on ODL online teaching and eLearning in Public Administration (Breslow 2007:293). There would be a shift away from passive learning to more active learning pedagogies, as there would be a move away from traditional transfer of knowledge to more interactive learning (Bryan 2008: 64). Through the integration of ICT such as interactive satellite online teaching and eLearning, more effective ODL online teaching and eLearning is possible in Public Administration (Albrecht, 2006: 5); (Bryan 2008:64) and (Park and van der Merwe 2009:360).

It is argued that the Department of Public Administration should therefore find innovative ways of enhancing ODL online teaching and eLearning that are beneficial to the students, mainly through ICT. Recent studies (Wessels 2012: Unpublished Paper) have been undertaken about the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) on satellite broadcasting as a tool to promote ODL practices in the department. However, no comprehensive study has been previously undertaken of the usage of ICT in the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) to improve online teaching and eLearning. It is argued that such a study will assist the department in becoming a more innovative fourth and fifth generation ODL provider on the African continent. It is will also assist in improving the online teaching and eLearning methods in Public Administration.

The objective of this article is to identify online teaching and eLearning methodologies used in the Department of Public Administration. The common challenges that hamper effective ODL by the Department of Public Administration are identified. The aim of the article is to provide recommendations to address the challenges identified, and to provide suggestions for the improvement of ODL, especially through enhancing the use of ICT by the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) to improve online teaching and eLearning. The Department of Public Administration is one of many departments in Unisa that are expected to use
ICT as an ODL tool to teach a large and diverse population of students. While this paper does not primarily discuss Public Administration, it illustrates how ICT is used by a larger Public Administration department on the African continent.

To place the study in context, a brief overview of ODL practices and trends in higher education is discussed. The University of South Africa (Unisa) as an ODL provider is delineated. This is followed by a synopsis of role of ICT as an enabler to promote ODL in universities. Thereafter, the role of Unisa and in particular the Department of Public Administration as an ODL provider is explored. The common trends and challenges hampering the effective implementation of ODL by the department are examined. This is followed by the conclusion and recommendations. This study is primarily undertaken by using a qualitative case study approach using both primary and secondary data.

2. ODL Practices and Trends in Higher Education

Open distance learning (ODL) represent approaches that focus on freeing students from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of students (Prinsloo 2010). ODL is one of the most rapidly growing fields of education globally, and its potential impact on all education delivery systems has been greatly accentuated through the development of Internet-based information technologies (UNESCO 2002).

ODL is a multi-dimensional concept aimed at bridging the time, geographical, economic, social, educational, and communication distance between student and institution, student and academics, student and courseware and student and peers. ODL focuses on removing barriers to access learning, student-centeredness, supporting students and constructing learning programmes with the expectation that students can succeed. More importantly, if the Department of Public Administration in Unisa focuses fully on the above-mentioned, it will become fully a fourth and fifth generation ODL provider.

ODL comprises of five generations. The first generation of ODL is called the correspondence model, whereby the associated model of delivery is printed material. This is usually a collection of textbooks and study manuals sent to students through the postal system. The students are almost totally self-directed, as they are largely on their own. Students submit assignments through the post and receive them back the same way. According to Taylor (2001), the level of interactivity is very low because there is often a long waiting period between assignments and tutorial letters with feedback. Some communication was possible via phone, and later fax, but most students did not take advantage of this option (Taylor 2001).

Taylor (2001) explains this second generation of ODL, also known as the multimedia model, as associated delivery technologies are print (as in first generation), audio, video recordings, computer-based learning, interactive videos (disks), discussion classes and tutoring. Discussion classes and tutoring represent the
conventional view of the lecture room as a place used for learning and teaching in ODL universities. A standard lecture room, with immovable chairs all facing the lecturer, may represent a philosophy of ‘pouring content into students heads’ (Park and van der Merwe 2009:360). The level of interactivity is still low in the case of print, audio and video recordings, but there is a slight improvement with discussion classes, tutoring, computer-based learning and interactive videos. However, most of the communication is still one way, and true ‘live’ interaction is not possible.

The associated delivery technologies for third generation ODL, also known as the telelearning model, are audio-teleconferencing, video-conferencing, audio conferencing, television and radio and audiotelconferencing. Live connections and true interaction between students and instructors in real time are possible. The learning experiences are of a more interactive nature because synchronous communication is a possibility (Taylor 2001).

Taylor (2001) refers to the fourth generation of ODL is also known as the flexible learning model. The main tenet of fourth generation is teaching delivery via the internet. The associated delivery technologies with this generation are interactive multimedia online, internet-based access to World Wide Web (WWW) resources, and computer mediated communication. The learning is more interactive because both synchronous and asynchronous communication is a possibility. The students could react in ‘real time’, but they could also learn and interact at their own time, at their own pace. This has led to advances in distance learning (Taylor 2001).

The fifth generation is called the intelligent learning model (Taylor 2001). The associated delivery technologies with this generation include interactive multimedia online, internet-based access to WWW resources, computer mediated communication, using automated response systems, and campus portal access to institutional processes and resources. Computer systems can include many automated processes, follow individual choices and preferences of students, and remember passwords and identities. Many of the learning experiences are increasingly personalised and individualised. At the same time the computer system is able to keep track of individual student needs, preferences, successes and areas of need.

At present, the University of South Africa (Unisa) spans across five generations ODL provider. However, the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) falls across the first (correspondence model), second (multimedia model) and third (telelearning model) generations, as an ODL provider. It should however be noted that, not all tools are used from the second and third generation ODL models by the department. The department, however, has the potential to advance into a fourth and fifth generation ODL provider by improving online teaching and eLearning, especially in the usage of ICT. There is a drive to adapt a blended learning approach, where the department’s largely print-based teaching is increasingly with the online components made available through the Unisa learner management system, referred to as MyUnisa. At the same time, the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) has implemented some initiatives to upgrade and include some multi-media elements, mainly as
satellite broadcasts. However, this is used minimally in the department. Out of 91 modules, satellite broadcasts were only used for approximately eight modules as at 2012. There are also constraints that exist that keep the department from advancing into fourth and fifth generation developments because mainly of poor bandwidth for internet in Africa and because of uneven unreliable access of many Unisa students to these technologies online. However, mobile technology can become largely instrumental in the creation of a virtual learning environment for the student of Public Administration (Unisa). They offer solutions for the challenges the department faces of poor bandwidth and access to technology (Park and van der Merwe 2009:359).

3. Overview of ODL in Higher Education in South Africa

Unisa is the only dedicated, comprehensive open distance learning (ODL) public provider in higher education in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The raison d’être of Unisa as expressed in its 2015 Strategic Plan, is to contribute in the development of Southern Africa and Africa. The University dedicates itself to becoming “The African University in the service of humanity”. Against this backdrop of this mission, the University community needs to formalize the aspirations of the University’s Strategic Framework. In this statement the University unequivocally declares its firm intention to be a higher education institution in developing the fabric of the South African and African society. With this broad compass for development, Unisa committed itself to an outward-reaching role within South Africa, Africa and the global community. South Africa’s key national goals include, amongst others, being part of the knowledge-driven world economy, appropriate human resource development and appropriate skills training linked to technological improvement and innovation. Unisa’s mission is therefore aligned with South Africa’s national goals. Unisa is also committed to the advancement of social justice with the emphasis on redress, equity and empowerment of the previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa such as blacks, women, people with disabilities, the rural and urban poor and adults who have missed out on opportunities to access higher education. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mandla Makhanya (2012) explicitly linked the University’s aspirations of excellence and development to an international development agenda aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This once again confirmed the University’s determination to be a significant role player in working systematically to achieve major national and international socio-economic goals, such as the eradication of poverty. Makhanya (2011) notably also alluded to the potential role that ICT could play in achieving the Strategic Vision 2015. Louw (2011) and Prinsloo (2012) indicated that information and communication and technological advances have made it possible for the University to teach more subjects to a greater number of students at a distance in SA. Unisa has therefore become a comprehensive higher education institution, offering diplomas and the full range of degrees across general, vocational and professional fields. In 2011, it enrolled approximately 280,000 students,
including some 10,000 students from the rest of Africa. The University is therefore one of the mega-universities in Africa. It also has students enrolled from different countries (Crous 2011). The most obvious solution to such huge student numbers, are the extensive use of ICT for online teaching and eLearning. The utilization of ICT can create a user-friendly virtual environment to enable all students from all communities to participate effectively in higher education (Park and van der Merwe 2009:364). One of the essential elements of an ODL provider is to make the University more accessible to all students, including those living in remote communities in South Africa, Africa and globally. The role of ICT in promoting online teaching and eLearning in an ODL university is therefore explored.

4. The Role of ICT as an Enabler to Promote ODL

Lloyd (2005) defines information and communication technology (ICT) as specific devices or processes which collectively make up the “technology which maintains its usage in government, business, industry and in relation to tertiary and other academic courses dealing with areas such as programming, database design and expert systems.” It generally relates to those technologies that are used for accessing, gathering, manipulating and presenting or communicating information. The technologies could include hardware (example computers and other devices); software applications; and connectivity (example access to the Internet, local networking infrastructure and video conferencing). What are most significant about ICT are the increasing convergence of computer-based, multimedia and communications technologies and the rapid rate of change that characterizes both the technologies and their use. The term “ICT integration” on the other hand means a range of learning environments from a stand-alone computer in a classroom, to a situation where the teaching is done by the computer through pre-packaged study material which is presented through media form, online. This highlights the important role of ICT in higher education, especially with an ODL provider such as the Department of Public Administration in Unisa.

Different stages of technology development exist (Herselman and Hay 2003). The first entry is the stage where Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) train students to use the technology; The second is the adoption stage where HEIs use technology to support traditional teaching and learning instruction; The third stage is the adaptation stage where HEIs use technology to enrich the curriculum; The fourth stage is the appropriation stage, where HEIs integrate technology and use it for its unique capabilities for teaching and learning. The fifth stage is the invention stage, where HEIs are prepared to develop entirely new virtual learning environments that use technology as a flexible tool for online teaching and eLearning. With the fifth stage, teaching and learning becomes collaborative, interactive, and customized.

In this regard, it would be advantageous for the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) to aspire to the fifth stage of technological development and
to become an effective ODL provider. There are some elements of the second stage of technological usage by the Department of Public Administration (Unisa), but in terms of collaboration and interactivity, this clearly must be developed further. However, the level of interactivity with students by the lecturers of the Department of Public Administration is minimal. More importantly, as indicated previously, the low level of interactivity could prevent the department towards becoming a more effective ODL provider. Nevertheless, it is critical to explore the role of ICT in promoting ODL in universities.

5. The Role of ICT in Promoting ODL in Universities

The increasing need for education, limitations on access to information centers, economic problems, a lack of experienced experts, and the costs of education in South Africa has brought about the development of new delivery methods for instruction to students. Rapid changes in ICT have assisted South Africa to face the issues of illiteracy and targeting students in remote areas, namely in rural communities (Kelly and Stevens 2009:1); (Prinsloo 2010). The need for widespread education and training, through an ODL provider has called for new teaching methods. Digital education by an ODL provider whereby education is delivered online could be one way to solving this problem. ODL universities require technology that provides access to information and education without limits on time or place. In such an atmosphere anyone can learn according to their individual needs and abilities.

ICT extends the possibilities of communication by collapsing distance and by compressing time in an ODL university. It does not restrict a learner or lecturer to the library and classroom or to the physical interaction with classmates. Lectures are able to communicate with the students through subject portals in university websites. Content can be put on a compact disk (CD), which in turn can be presented to the students for learning purposes. While improvements are taking place in higher education institutions, it is vital for those improvements to be efficient as well. However, the introduction of ICT can also be accompanied by increased centralisation and lack of consultation (Wessels 2011). Some argue that the more ICTs improve, the more the changes that take place in the existing modules and programs. Others argue that such changes add value to course content. On the positive note, ICTs are seen as providing tools to make ODL in higher education more efficient by reducing administrative work and assisting with repetitive teaching activities, while on a negative note, efficiency can become an end in itself at the expense of other educational values (Prinsloo 2010).

ICTs have enabled ODL universities to provide more learner-centered learning (Singh 2011). But they also depend on the educational philosophy and values of the particular system, and the educational characteristics and potential of the technologies used. There may be a connection between teaching strategies, the choice of technology, as learning and studying can take place at any time or place.
and the costs of producing learning materials can be reduced compared to the production of print learning materials. This is made possible by ICTs. Learning materials and resources are essential components in ODL universities (Kelly and Stevens 2009).

ICT facilitates communication between lecturers and students, which is a necessary component in ODL (Pityana 2010). ICT distributes messages in text, still and moving images, and sound. Knowledge-generating messages may be communicated to large numbers of students, pushed by broadcasting or accessed on demand through audio and video players or Internet. As these devices change, so the quality and nature of the messages will change. Thus, new Internet devices make it possible for larger numbers of people to share a common learning experience, and enable an individual learner to have a unique personal interaction with a lecturer or with another learner, no matter where they are located. These experiences are of much higher quality than were possible before since they do not depend on physical access (Kelly and Stevens 2009).

In view of the above, it is evident that ICT serves two roles. One role is the distribution of information. This delivery system may comprise both distribution of pre-packaged study material and transmission of synchronous or broadcast programs, lectures, and many more. The second role of ICT is the crucial component of all education, which is the interaction between lecturers and students, and, where possible, between students. In some forms of ODL, the learner interaction is practically non-existent, but in most cases it is considered important and may be provided in different ways. Often students meet together physically in groups, sometimes connected with other forms of local support, such as discussion classes. New technologies allow for the organisation of students in countries where access to the Internet is common, such as online discussion forums and on-line tutoring. This is the fastest growing approach to distance teaching since there is no conventional classroom in ODL.

ICT enables students to consult lecturers timely through email and telephone and use university portals to access information. ICT tools can be used for communication on a number of issues (Panda 2010). They can assist the learner to not only learn but also be able to apply the knowledge gained from the learning materials, be it printed or electronic learning materials. Other tools that assist students are course websites, podcasts and videos, on-line and face-to-face tutorials made possible by video or satellite conferencing, virtual libraries and printed study support materials. Although using computers and the internet is very important in ODL, it presents the students with some difficulty as not all students have the necessary skills, equipment and internet connection that are required to communicate with the lecturer and other students (Kelly and Stevens 2009). Furthermore, not all students can afford an internet connection. This will impact on the effective implementation of ICT as an ODL tool.

ODL universities attempt to: increase the quality of learning; reduce the time of attaining educational goals; increase efficiency; increase the independence of users
and flexibility of education; reduce costs without affecting quality; eliminate limitations on time and place (Amiree and Khabbazan 2009). The application of online teaching and eLearning technologies at Unisa therefore has the potential to transform the University into a world class ODL provider.

6. The Role of the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) in ODL

Similar to other higher education institutions in South Africa, Unisa has embraced ICT to include change as improvement, innovation and transformation (Czerniewics, Raje and Mlitwa 2005: 60-64). Unisa designs its modules as outlined in the ‘Unisa Tuition Policy and Framework’ and delivers them through print and digital media such as hard copies of study guides, audio, compact discs (CDs) and DVDs, satellite broadcasting, video conferencing and online distribution of information and online distribution of study guides that are uploaded on its web-based management system known as MyUnisa. Other initiatives to promote the usage of technology include the use of multipurpose community centers, also referred to as telecentres, mobile units and short message system (SMS) system. Therefore a blended approach to teaching and learning is evident in Unisa. Students are encouraged to use a continuum of learning opportunities that range from synchronous to asynchronous technology. In this way lecturers can improve connectivity with students through broadcasts but at the same time provide continued support, for example through online discussion forums. However, it is evident, with the Department of Public Administration its teaching is predominantly by print material (study guides and tutorial letters). The department mainly employs the correspondence model of teaching. There is also online distribution of information through MyUnisa. The study guides and tutorial letters are uploaded on MyUnisa. The use of discussion forums to stimulate discussions and satellite broadcasting mainly for communication of course content are also used moderately by the department. The SMS system is mainly used to send short messages to students on instructions on assignment and exam dates and satellite broadcast reminders.

6.1 Web-Based Learner System - MyUnisa

Unisa has recently embarked on a program to use web-based technology in online teaching and eLearning. A web-based learner system called MyUnisa was developed to improve communication between lecturers and students (Davies 2011). One can access administrative information such as biographical details, academic and assignment records, examination results and dates, and financial records. Academic information comprises study guides, tutorial letters, subject-related academic guidance, discussion groups, journal lists and recommended and prescribed books. Unisa kick-started 2010 with new tools and rules for MyUnisa which included site stats, (which is used to monitor learner and lecturer activity on the site), and on -
screen marking, (to route and mark assignments on screen) and the creation of course sites, (where students can obtain information on their progress). Lecturers were advised to give students guidance on length of discussions and pacing through courses on the discussion forum. MyUnisa discussions are mainly held monthly by the Department of Curriculum and Learning Development (DCLD) to interested lecturers (Focus Newsletter, January 2010).

The key point about MyUnisa is that a learner can read, download and upload most material related to their specific module(s). This includes downloading assignments, and submitting them electronically. This reduces the cost, time and risk of loss associated with traditional hard copy and post, which takes weeks to process. Students can view their results and scripts much more quickly, thus improving feedback. They can also register or re-register via MyUnisa, view study material and even communicate with other students in forums related to their subject.

Some lecturers indicated that the teaching and learning experience lessens the administrative load as notices can be posted on Myopias and students can enquire and reply via email (Wessels 2011). This adds value to the teaching and learning experience for the learner which highlights one of Unisa’s aims; to be a learner centred higher education institution. A lecturer’s time is made more efficient by the use of technology as frequently asked questions can be posted to the University website, Myopias (Focus Newsletter January 2010).

MyUnisa is a useful tool to promote communication and delivery of information. It is also a tool for interaction between lectures and students and students and their peers. However, according to Davies (2011) interaction in Unisa is limited and could be increased to improve ODL online teaching and eLearning.

The use of MyUnisa for students in Africa remains a challenge because of limited bandwidth and Internet use in Africa. Within Africa there are also huge discrepancies between countries. For example, Sub-Saharan Africa is the most digitally isolated region in the world (Juma and Moyer 2008: 1261). The bandwidth per capita is not only 1 percent of the world average, but this region also has among the highest connectivity costs in the world. In contrast with this picture of Internet usage, the growth of mobile telephone subscribers is the highest in the world. This scenario has also been observed by learners of the Department of Public Administration (Unisa).

6.2 Multi Purpose Community Centres – Telecentres

In line with ODL principles, Unisa has signed agreements with multi-purpose community centers throughout South Africa in areas identified as remote. Registered Unisa students in South Africa’s rural areas and townships can now access the internet for free for academic purpose (access to MyUnisa, the digital library and other computer-based training modules), courtesy of Unisa.

Unisa menu of services available at the telecentres includes activation and access to learner e-mail, internet research particularly for postgraduates. Unisa also provides all
students with a private email address called ‘MyLife’, which is unique and secure, so that confidential communication such as marks can be reliably communicated. The ‘My Life’ email is free to all Unisa students, and its functionality by students for the Department of Public Administration includes assignment submission and links to the SMS system. Other learner awareness initiatives comprise of SMSs’ sent to students, to for example notify them about the existence of the telecentre in their immediate communities and posters that are distributed to all the Unisa regional centers. This benefit is however only for registered Unisa students.

In light of the above, MPCC are very beneficial to improve student support in Public Administration. Furthermore, students have access to computers, whereby they can download a host of information using the internet. MPCC can also connect students to e-tutors to help reduce the distance, often hundreds of kilometres, between the University and its students. The University is embarking on this initiative in 2013, and all departments, including the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) and required to implement the e-tutor system.

6.3 Satellite Broadcasting

Unisa has used satellite broadcasting as a vehicle for teaching to a wide variety of student communities in South Africa (SA). Satellite broadcast is a live or pre-recorded presentation of lectures, tutorials and training programmes to students via a television screen at remote venues across SA (Wessels 2011). Unisa, as an ODL institution, uses satellite broadcast as one of the technologies to support students across SA with the aspiration of bridging the distance between the learner and the lecturer. The use of satellite broadcast is especially relevant to students in SA studying at Unisa, as a large number of students live in rural and remote areas, and do not have contact with their lecturers or their peers. The lecturers determine subjects to be broadcast and decide in advance which topics they need to discuss with the students. The lecturers of Public Administration explain and discuss those parts in the study material with which students experience most difficulty (Wessels 2011). It is therefore important that students attend satellite broadcast sessions at their nearest satellite classroom. DVD’s for all broadcasted sessions are available to assist students who have not attended and students who want to use it at later stage, for example, for exam preparation (Focus newsletter 2010). Satellite broadcasting is a useful ICT tool to improve online teaching and eLearning in Unisa and in particular by the Department of Public Administration. This is a useful intervention to improve access and efficiency by having a one-to-many multi-media communication. It is also a cost effective method of teaching as several students can be reached. Furthermore, these sessions are re-broadcasted and re-used. It consists of an on-campus studio and eight learning centres situated all over South Africa. Because satellite broadcast cannot utilize the delivery path as a return path or ‘back channel’, viewers can return information to the
Studio only by the use of mobile technology or emails. Simple text messaging via SMS or email protocol is the obvious choice to interact with the lecturer during a session.

6.4 Video Conferencing

Video-conferencing is used by Unisa for giving lectures, conducting tutorial classes, oral examinations, group discussions, workshops and scientific demonstrations, conducting interviews; and setting up meetings. Video conferencing is a system allowing participants at different locations to view and hear each other immediately via video cameras, TV monitors and microphones by using the telephone lines. This system can be easily integrated into the ODL model with minimal adaptation to the course and is designed to support two-way video and audio communication, between students and lecturers/tutors, or between students and students in multiple locations.

Video conferencing has the following advantages. Firstly, it offers the ability to see and interact with people at remote locations without incurring expenses for example, travel, time and accommodation or other expenses associated with face to face communication. Secondly, it provides the platform to interact in a two-way audio-visual communication setup. Thirdly, students from diverse communities and backgrounds can come together to learn about one another. Fourthly, students are able to explore, communicate, analyze and share information and ideas with one another. Video conferencing is an ideal way to conduct an academic discussion or debate with geographically remote students, particularly those students outside South Africa.

In light of the above, it is evident that videoconferencing can give remote students a sense of belonging to Unisa. For instance, even if students are geographically remote, this technology can bring them ‘closer’ to not only the Unisa staff but also to the University as an institution. This ICT tool is a reflection of ODL in action and its learner-centeredness. It also reduced the cost of lecturers travelling and time involved in improving efficiencies. However, this online teaching and learning tool has not been popular amongst lecturers of the Department of Public Administration. It is evident only one such initiative has taken place by the department in 2010.

6.5 Social Networks

Web 2.0 includes social networking websites, blogs and wikis that create a shift in how students communicate and how lectures communicate currently and in the future will communicate with their students. Web 2.0 is a cultural advance that views the internet as a platform to create new ideas, design new teaching methodologies and provide teaching to students. Web 2.0 technology creates opportunity for more interaction, collaboration, student participation and sharing of ideas (Deloitte 2012: online) and (van Jaarsvedlt 2011).
Accenture (2009: online) states that ODL universities has already seen the benefits and advantages of using technology such as Web 2.0. Web 2.0 represents a move to more interactive online teaching and eLearning. French universities are using Web 2.0 website and has created discussion forums with wikis and videos to improve learner support and online teaching and eLearning. Universities in the United States of America, Canada, Finland, United Kingdom, Italy, also use technology and social networks including blogs, Twitter, Facebook and text messaging very successfully in online teaching and eLearning. According to IBM (2012: online) virtual worlds have now come to the fore as the most interactive form of engagement available on Web 2.0. Virtual worlds is a new way of gathering students together and communicating in real time, in a customized environment, and presents new possibilities for ODL higher institutions of reaching and communicating with students. The virtual world has created a “second life” three dimensional world that has students build a virtual world which has implications and possibilities for ODL higher institutions to use virtual applications to promote online teaching and learning. “Second life” is a good place to meet, reach and leave messages for students (America gov 2012: online). With more than 12 million members “second life” is already becoming the preferred way of communication and interaction for a new generation. IBM (2012: online) stated all active Internet users have a “second life” in the virtual world. The next generation of students will demand that ODL universities function differently and provide online teaching and eLearning that distinctly meets the needs of the current reality (van Jaarsveldt 2011).

According to IBM (2012: online) the virtual online teaching and eLearning world offers the following opportunities:

- A new and unique opportunity to engage with students around the world in “real time”. This is particularly relevant for Unisa and the Department of Public Administration as the students are from South Africa, Africa and globally.
- A new way for lectures to observe how students interact with-and react to each other.
- A new opportunity for students from all geographical locations, to work together in solving problems and finding solutions. This is particular relevant for students of Public Administration who should be trained in finding solutions to real situations.
- An opportunity for students and lecturers to employ social networking tools for online teaching and eLearning.

IBM (2012: online) states that these opportunities found in a virtual environment can help in the exchange of information and ideas between students and lecturers and between student and their peers, making online teaching and eLearning more interactive. It is possible to create “real life” situations while in the virtual world.
However, as Unisa moves into becoming a fifth generation ODL provider, it must train its lecturers to effectively use ICT for online teaching and eLearning. Students are encouraged in Unisa to use social networks as an academic tool for interacting with lecturers. They would be involved in a classroom network with the social network as the foundation. However, lecturers should learn to use the interface of the network. In addition, students and lecturers can be more closely connected, which in return can benefit the lecturer-learner relationship. Also on the Unisa staff website, is an important link on “Blogs”. On the blog page, there are two links namely “E-connect” and “ODL”. If you follow the latter you will be able to read and comment on the ODL Communiqués by Unisa. The cost of social networks is minimal. The style of communication is easily understood by students and it is a two way interactive process. Cordis (2009: online) states that in the future students and lecturers will live in a world of networks where they will be permanently connected from anywhere to all information. Information is faster and technology is cheaper thus benefiting more students. However, with the Department of Public Administration the use of social networks has been minimal. All lecturers surveyed (100 percent) only linked to e-connect and ODL Communiqués by Unisa. Lecturers did not use Facebook, Twitter and text messaging for online teaching and eLearning. The future of technology in a virtual world will require lecturers of Public Administration to teach online to meet the needs of a new generation of students. The Department of Public Administration should design its teaching methodologies to instill the necessary knowledge and skills to intellectually prepare students to become effective public servants.

7. Current State of Affairs in the Public Administration

The teaching and learning methodologies that are used in the Department of Public Administration are explored. The common challenges that hamper effective online teaching and eLearning by the Department of Public Administration are identified. The factors that hamper the Department of Public Administration from becoming a fully fourth and fifth generation ODL provider are also explored. In order to access the above current reality prevailing in the Department of Public Administration three methods were used. Firstly, a document review was undertaken using a number of reports, newsletters, Journals, documents on the Unisa website, documents Unisa’s institutional repository and the Department of Public Administration’s departmental reports and website. Secondly, information from a survey by the College of Economic and Management Sciences (CEMS)-Directorate of Tuition was used. The survey compromised of an unstructured electronic questionnaire that sent to a purposeful sample of all twenty five lecturers in the Department of Public Administration. Thirdly, an observation technique was used for a period of approximately three years (2010-2012) by the researcher. The qualitative methodology produces in a holistic way descriptive data about the object of a study (Wessels 1999: 389-390). The data was
collected through careful documentation and was analysed qualitatively. This was followed by a discussion of the findings.

Recent ODL improvements in Unisa, has challenged the Department of Public Administration to improve its teaching methodologies and practices. Therefore, in line with the vision of the College of Economic and Management Sciences (Unisa), of which the Department of Public Administration is part, the aim is to produce graduates who are responsible, accountable, relevant, ethical and enterprising citizens, and employees of choice in the workplace. Lecturers are required to impart knowledge, skills, attributes and values to their students to enable them to become competent and professional graduates who can make positive contributions to society, their professions and their workplace. The education, teaching, learning and assessment process must provide a foundation of values and core competencies (namely knowledge, skills and attributes). The Council of Higher Education (CHE, 2010: 21) advises that lecturers must not take an easy way out of effective and quality teaching because of large student numbers, and prepare teaching based on the need to minimize administrative work. Instead, superior teaching and learning should be implemented that is purposely executed to produce well-rounded student graduateness. Graduateness is defined as “inherent characteristics (transferable meta-skills and personal attributes) of graduates to the workplace (Focus newsletter 2011:4).

For many years, Public Administration students at Unisa grapple with Public Administration theory and concepts (Wessels and Binza 2011:481). One of the challenges faced by the South African public service is that public servants cannot translate the knowledge acquired formally through universities into action in the workplace. Public Administration is defined as the study of various processes which include the development, implementation and management of government policies which result in the preservation of values of improving equality, justice, efficiency and effectiveness in order to improve the general welfare of the community which it serves (Binza 2011:166) in Wessels and Binza (2012:481). A debate took place during the 1980s in South Africa amongst academics on pioneering teaching methods which could be employed to teach Public Administration. The debate took place between the traditional school of thought, which wanted to adhere to the status quo, and an innovative school of thought, which was striving to introduce innovation and new content into the academic field and professional actions of public servants (Wessels and Pauw, 1999: 334). The new school of thought was of the belief that innovative teaching methods mainly through the use of ICT had to be introduced into the teaching processes of Public Administration at the various higher education institutions (Wessels 2012:481). This was re-iterated in 1991, during the Mount Grace Conference which was attended by academics and practitioners of Public Administration and Management. The previous teaching methods were no longer relevant to the rapidly changing needs of the South African communities where the public officials served. Unisa students do not attend regular classes. The average student therefore encounters difficulty in mastering the content of material in an
isolated learning environment (Wessels 2012:481). Unisa students could therefore gain the necessary skills, competencies and attitudes that could place them at a competitive advantage when employed, and online teaching and eLearning methodology could assist with graduateness at the end of their programme.

The department has approximately 23 000 students, registered for different degrees and diplomas. The ratio of the number of lecturers to the number of students is approximately 1:800. There are number of challenges hampering the effective implementation online teaching and eLearning by the Department of Public Administration (Unisa). This prevents the department from becoming a fully fourth and fifth generation ODL provider. These are mainly the non-connectivity of students to the internet and computers and the lack of infrastructure in remote rural areas in South Africa and Africa. The main constraint that keeps the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) from fully advancing into becoming a fully fourth and fifth generation ODL provider is mainly of poor bandwidth for internet in African countries. It is also evident that there is uneven unreliable access of Department of Public Administration (Unisa) students to these technologies online. Guri-Rosen (2009:113) indicates that there are infrastructural gaps between the developed and developing world, as fewer students have access to a personal computer in developing countries, especially in Africa. The students of Public Administration, especially in remote locations in Africa, such as Zambia are affected by this challenge. These students are therefore dependent on institutional resources. Unisa should therefore be aware of how the digital divide affects accessibility to students and the implications of the attainment of academic success. It is also critical for Unisa to pay attention to the human and social systems that must also change for ICT to have an effect. Content and language, literacy and education, and community and institutional structures must all be taken into account if meaningful access to new technologies is to be provided (Warschauer 2002: 49). This is the main factor that hinders the proper implementation of ICT in online teaching and eLearning by the Department of Public Administration. This also prevents the department from fully becoming a fourth and fifth generation ODL provider. However, the Department of Public Administration has the potential to become a fourth and fifth generation ODL provider, provided that the University addresses common problems hampering effective implementation of ODL and improves its ICT strategy in remote countries, especially in Africa.

The research reflects that the lecturers of the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) use a blended teaching approach for teaching and learning; namely through the correspondence model of teaching via print, meaning generic study material and tutorial letters. Multimedia (such as satellite broadcasts approximately 5% percent), video-conferencing (approximately 1%), and MyUnisa are mainly used for online communication (approximately 85%).) Lecturers also answer telephonic and e-mail enquiries on course content (100%). Lecturers and assistant markers also comment on written assignment submitted by students (100%). The Department of Public Administration (Unisa) communicates with its students predominantly via print media.
(Wessels 2011:84). The concern raised, is how can the lecturer teach a “skill” only through printed study material? This was a challenge to the lecturers of Public Administration, as the practitioners expected the students to complete their programmes and be ready to work in the public sector.

Nonetheless, online teaching and eLearning is dependent on ensuring connectivity of the students (Wessels 2012). This means that the technical infrastructure (for example, ISDN lines, electricity, and Internet service provider connections) that facilitates the delivery is not always available to students (Pityana 2010). According to approximately 50 percent of the lecturers surveyed in the Department of Public Administration, there are accessibility problems by at least 10 percent of their students, especially in remote locations. These lecturers indicated that teaching and learning would therefore not effectively happen for these students. It could be argued that a similar scenario would be, as if no course materials had been delivered to students.

Nevertheless, the 5 percent of lecturers indicated that students felt that they benefitted from satellite classes. Satellite classes assists in bridging the distance between students and lecturers. These classes took place in real time at the location convenient to the student. Even though it encompasses the lecturer sitting in front of the camera, there have been a way of having a two-way communication, for example, via emails and SMS’s and information is received through the facilitators at the venues. Students in remote locations have also benefit from this teaching method. DVD’s on the satellite classes are then posted to all students who are registered for the module. According to Wessels (2012) satellite classes contributed to an increase of 30 percent pass rate of approximately 30 percent of the modules in the Department of Public Administration. During the session the lecturer can determine the number of students attending the live broadcasts at the various regions. To ensure interactivity the lecturers pose questions on the content. The students respond via SMS from their own cellphones. Feedback is received from students via an evaluation form to indicate the student experiences. The feedback from the evaluation forms indicate at least 10 percent of the students surveyed where positive about the quality of learning and their experience of satellite broadcasting. Given the literature, numerous references were made to the positive effect of satellite broadcasting can have in a student’s learning. Satellite broadcasts are therefore seen as a positive tool to provide support to Public Administration (Unisa) students. The live satellite broadcasts are mainly available in eighteen regional Unisa offices in South Africa or to only those selected. However, the students in the rest of Africa and globally do not benefit from the live satellite broadcasts due to lack of connectivity. However, they do benefit from the DVDs posted to them on each satellite session. There are other challenges such as attendance registers which are not sent timeously to the lecturer from all regional centres to assess attendance. The facilitators are not always present in classes to send the stats to the studio. The attendance is minimal as DVD’s are sent to all students. There is no direct access to the lecturer. Not all students get a chance...
to ask questions. Not all students can attend satellite classes due to work responsibilities and this takes place during office hours. Not all students can watch the DVD as they may not have access to a DVD player or a computer. Furthermore, the technologies used by the Department of Public Administration in Unisa to facilitate teaching and learning have limited interaction possibilities such as digital media (DVDs), online distribution of content and information via MyUnisa and the departmental website. The associated delivery technologies used mainly provide information and are tools that are used by the lecturer to communicate with the learner. Despite, discussion classes being held with students twice a year, many of the learning experiences are not personalised and individualised. Furthermore, only about 20 percent of registered students attend discussion classes. The computer system in the Department of Public Administration is unable to keep track of individual learner needs, preferences, and areas of need. The survey revealed that technologies that are asynchronous such as wikis, blogs, social networking facilities and e-portfolios are not used by the department. There is no personal platform and social networks that are used by lecturers in the Department of Public Administration. The lecturers surveyed indicated that some students of Public Administration don’t join Facebook pages because of privacy issues. They also indicated that there are also cost implications such as paying for using the internet and downloading information. Neither are there television, radio, newspapers, DVDs, CDs and podcasts that are used. However these technologies can be used effectively to support online teaching and eLearning in the Department of Public Administration.

On a different note, it can be argued that students in a face-to-face setting have (often immediate) access to lecturers during the lecture or afterwards. Residential students have mostly, immediate access to resources found in the institutional and departmental libraries. These students are also networked with one another and have the privilege of being in contact with peers who are doing the same modules as they themselves have registered for. Fifty percent of the lecturers surveyed in the department indicated that at least eighty percent of their students of the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) are however excluded from immediate access to lecturers, library-based resources and peers. The survey revealed that students of the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) therefore need different types of support than students in residential settings such as face to face discussion classes and on-line discussion classes. The students’ chances of success are also hugely impacted by non-academic factors in their personal lives, example their health, predispositions, attributes, locus of control, and non-academic factors on the side of the institution, example on-time delivery of study materials, and organisational efficiency.

Ninety percent of the lecturers surveyed indicated that in the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) the main means of communication to students on is the delivery of study materials and tutorial letters. However, it is only when students receive the materials that they can start learning. Failure to produce and dispatch
 According to the Unisa teaching policy all academics are expected to explore new and more effective ways of online teaching and eLearning especially with the use of ICT. According to sixty percent of the lecturers surveyed in the Department of Public Administration (Unisa), it is however difficult for academics to not only keep up-to-date with developments in their field of expertise, but also to continuously try to keep abreast with developments in ODL, pedagogy and teaching.

Given that the vast majority of students of Department of Public Administration are working, a lower success rate is evident (Report-Department of Public Administration 2012: 1). There is, however, evidence of the Department of Public Administration of the throughput of different cohorts of students, that only a small proportion, and in some cases an alarmingly small proportion of students in their undergraduate qualifications actually complete their qualifications within the prescribed time period (DISA 2011). A number of other factors could also be responsible for low throughput in the Department of Public Administration, including; inadequate learner support, allowing access to programmes to students without the necessary background to succeed and insufficient online teaching and eLearning methodologies. Other challenges include the tutor systems not being fully functional in the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) and in those regions where it is functional, not all tutors are trained (Van Heerden 2012). Furthermore, it was evident that there was minimal communication between the lecturer and tutor.

Nonetheless, the quality of students coming into the Department of Public Administration falls hugely outside the control of department, as college requirements are used to admit students. Prinsloo (2010) argues that, although many lecturers at Unisa may feel that University should not allow underprepared students into the system, Unisa as the only dedicated comprehensive ODL institution in South Africa and the largest one on the African continent ‘cannot afford to close its doors’. Prinsloo (2010) pointed out that, what could be done is for Unisa to have control over, how it allows these students to Unisa. The new admission requirements therefore mean that no learner will be refused entry at Unisa if they meet the minimum requirement. In spite of that, Unisa should ensure that appropriate students are admitted to Public Administration programs, and that teaching, learning, assessment and support systems are good enough to provide students with a reasonable chance of success. The Department of Public Administration (Unisa) should therefore make an extra effort to ensure learner throughput and success. It could be argued that ICT can play an effective role in improving learner support, online teaching and eLearning in Public Administration. This in turn could ensure improved learner throughput and success. This may also assist the Department of Public Administration becoming an effective fourth and fifth generation ODL provider.
8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Department of Public Administration (Unisa) plays an important role, especially in providing ODL education in SA and beyond. However, its potential to become an effective ODL provider is not yet fully realised. The evidence suggests that Department of Public Administration (Unisa) has some elements of a third generation ODL provider with the use of different digital media such as satellite broadcasting, SMS and MyUnisa to provide information and communicate to students. ICT is not effectively used by the department for online teaching and eLearning.

Furthermore, the move towards a more technologically enhanced University has created challenges for the Department of Public Administration, impacting on the effective implementation of ODL. In this regard learner connectivity and accessibility and ICT training for students should be addressed. ICT does not reach all Public Administration students across SA and beyond, as all students do to have access to the internet and a computer. Accessibility is critical so that students can take full advantage of the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) online services. However, it is argued that the Department of Public Administration (Unisa) ought to address the challenges hampering effective ODL implementation. In so doing, there would be tremendous potential in Department of Public Administration becoming a fourth and fifth generation ODL provider. Furthermore, if fully exploited, ICT has a greater potential of meeting the needs of Department of Public Administration students than traditional print mode of delivery. Therefore the expansion of ICT usage and the penetration of ICT, especially in remote rural communities, will go a long way in using ICT for online teaching and eLearning and ensuring that Department of Public Administration (Unisa) becomes a full fourth and fifth generation ODL provider.

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The Reception of Satellite Broadcast in Public Administration Teaching at the University of South Africa

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Abstract

The University of South Africa (UNISA) is an open learning distance education institution with approximately 220 000 registered students for 2012. Open distance learning (ODL) aims to bridge the time, geographical, and educational distances between the students and the institution by removing barriers to access learning. UNISA currently uses non print interaction, such as face-to-face contact sessions, to promote student success and motivation. Interaction is a crucial element of the UNISA student support conceptual framework, as students engage with their material, their lecturers and with their fellow students to attain success in their studies. UNISA students do not attend regular classes. The average current UNISA student encounters difficulty in mastering the content of material in an isolated learning environment. This led to the need to consider alternative methods of academic support. Satellite broadcast is a live or pre-recorded presentation of lectures or tutorials to students via a television screen at remote venues across the country. The use of satellite broadcast is especially relevant to students in South Africa studying at UNISA, as a large number of students live in rural and remote areas, and do not have contact with their lecturers or their peers. The researcher has been using this method of teaching for the past two years and has found that this teaching method assists the students with their learning processes. The researcher conducted a pilot exploratory study on a small group of students who represent the Public Administration diploma students who attended the satellite broadcast classes. All students who attended the satellite broadcast class were requested to complete the evaluation questionnaire. The perceptions and experiences of the students were ascertained through the use of the evaluation questionnaire. With the questionnaire, the researcher wanted to ascertain the perceptions and experiences of the students of the satellite broadcast class. The researcher found that the students experienced this mode of teaching as generally beneficial to their overall learning experience. This study will serve as a premise for further investigation on the effectiveness of the ODL method of teaching Public Administration subjects so as to improve the throughput of the students.

Keywords: Satellite broadcast, Public Administration, teaching, UNISA, open distance learning, distance education.
1. Introduction

As lecturers in a technologically changing environment, to remain relevant and adapt to changes taking place is a requirement of a lecturer. In previous years, teaching at UNISA required study material posted to the student and the student would learn on their own, at their own location, pace and time, which was known as correspondence teaching. With the advent of computers and changes in education policies over the years, teaching practices at UNISA have also been affected and have changed.

Lecturers are faced with a steep learning curve to stay relevant, and how effective lecturers are, depends on their ability to adapt and learn. For some lecturers it is a welcomed challenge, and for others it is a burden placed on already heavy workloads. Experimenting with innovation in teaching methodologies at UNISA is increasing. Satellite broadcast is one of these teaching methodologies. The researcher’s primary goal is to enhance the students’ learning experiences at UNISA, which has been the driving force behind the use of satellite broadcast as a teaching method. In this article the researcher would like to explore the views of the students on satellite broadcast as a mode of tuition in Public Administration and how the students experience this tuition mode. The aim of this article is to explore the use of satellite broadcast as it influences the tripartite relationship between teaching, learning and open distance education.

2. An Overview of Open Distance Teaching at Unisa

Pityana (2009:2), the previous Principal and Vice Chancellor of UNISA, stated that higher education all over the world is in a state of flux which is exacerbated by the increasing demand for access, decreasing levels of funding, technology which is constantly evolving and the global recession which affects higher education. Education is a driver of change and socio-economic development and Pityana goes further and suggests that education should be re-examined to guarantee its continued relevance, impact and value as education has become a tradable commodity. He is of the opinion that nations in the South, the have-nots, have to adjust to the changing circumstances taking place in the rest of the world or face educational redundancy.

Prinsloo (2012:online) questioned whether higher education is going through an education revolution since higher education is at the cusp of a major upheaval, as universities are preparing students for a future which cannot be clearly described. This uncertainty can be attributed to the rapid technological changes which are taking place, the mobile and social networking which has become the norm, as well as the global knowledge which is freely available on the internet.

UNISA is the largest dedicated open distance learning (ODL) organisation in South Africa and is committed to providing quality education with the vision of connecting the student and the lecturer. UNISA is a mega university and has approximately
220,000 registered students which are dispersed throughout the world with different locations, needs and expectations. UNISA started out in the early 1900s as a correspondence institution and after merging in 2004 with Technikon SA and Vista, the university changed the focus to being learner-centred and a flexible provider of education. UNISA specialises in ODL and different teaching methods are experimented with in order to enhance the experience of the students’ learning. Since so many residential universities are also entering the distance education arena offering distance education courses as well, UNISA has to remain at the forefront of distance education and ensure that as a known and respected provider in the market, UNISA has to remain relevant and in touch with the needs and expectations of the students.1

UNISA is the only dedicated ODL institution in South Africa and as the largest ODL provider on the Continent, UNISA’s successes and failures will have a direct impact on higher education in South Africa (Pityana 2009:5-6). Section 1 of the Open Distance Learning Policy (2008) states that UNISA dedicates itself to becoming the African university in the service of humanity and that UNISA is the only comprehensive dedicated distance education university in South Africa. The Policy (2008) goes further and in section 3 defines ODL as a ‘... multi-dimensional concept aimed at bridging the time, geographical, economic, social, educational and communication distance between student and institution, student and lecturer, student and courseware and student and peers. ODL focuses on removing barriers to access learning, flexibility of learning provision, student-centered, supporting students and constructing learning programmes with the expectation that students can succeed’. Student support is therefore of vital importance to UNISA as the student is at the centre of the learning experience and the student should be taken into account when implementing the policies of the university.

Baijnath (in UNISA 2011:1), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of UNISA, articulates in the publication entitled ‘Celebrating Teaching and Learning at UNISA’ the dramatic change UNISA is experiencing by placing the student at the centre of the teaching and learning process, as the student population has changed in recent years to a younger, full-time, diverse, educationally disadvantaged group. Tait (2003:2), in an article entitled ‘Reflections on Student Support in Open and Distance Learning’, used UNISA as an example of an ODL institution which offered distance education without providing the students with adequate student support. This practice has changed since then, as UNISA is now, according to Pityana (2009:10), regarded as possessing all the elements of a 4th generation ODL institution. A 4th generation ODL institution such as UNISA, provides student support, which was not always the case previously, and student support is now available in various forms such as the provision of a tutor system, podcasts, vodcasts, myUnisa which is web based, satellite broadcast, discussion classes conducted countywide and an e-tutor system. These methods of

1 See the UNISA website at http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=7
student support are implemented at the discretion of the lecturer who decides which teaching methods to employ.

Tait (2003:3) articulates that student support should be integrated in an ODL system as students want the support, and because of the competition in the higher education arena, UNISA offers the flexibility the students say they want. Feedback from students at the Open University in the UK indicates that 90% of the students want interaction with other students although they do not always take advantage of the contact due to demands on time and place that are customary to adult students. McDonald (2002:15) concurs with this view and claims that quality distance education factors which were considered to be important to all distance education technologies included knowing the students and supporting the needs of the students. Knowing and supporting the students can be regarded as standards in the ODL environment, and can assist with the process of defining quality distance education.

Tait (2003:4-5) adds that student support also provides the students with a sense of confidence, self-esteem and progress. Student support in an ODL environment assists students to learn successfully and also facilitates students with their feelings of confidence and self-esteem which will in turn encourage them to be successful in their studies. It is evident that student support therefore plays an integral part in the student’s journey to success. At an international conference of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA), Wessels (2012) states that at UNISA, the students learn at their own pace and the learning experience of the student is dependent on sufficient interaction between the student and the lecturer as the central concern of distance education pedagogy is to bridge the distance between the students and the lecturers.

Baijnath (in UNISA 2011:1) refers to the lecturers at UNISA and states that the lecturers should be instilled with a ‘new culture of learning’ and become life-long learners of new pedagogies and technologies to cater to the changes in the student profile. UNISA has revealed its commitment to the teaching process by appointing a Vice-Principal Academic: Teaching and Learning who manages the portfolio of teaching and learning and all matters associated therewith. Wessels (2012) adds that the lecturer should be flexible and reinvent themselves. Teaching practices are evolving at UNISA as the traditional teaching methods are being supplemented with technology, and it is up to the lecturer to decide on the additional methods of tuition.

Brynard (2004:1) asserts that the traditional delivery of learning necessitated the lecturer, a textbook and additional support material and since the advent of the computer era and internet-based education and training, teaching practices have changed. The lecturers are faced with steep learning curves and the effectiveness of their teaching methods depends on how well they adapt to the computer age. Cant and Bothma (2010:56) refer to the increasingly important role played by technology in facilitating learning in higher education.

Blended teaching and learning is referred to in a UNISA ODL Communique number 2 (17 February 2010) as the teaching process whereby the lecturer supplements the
learning by the use of multimedia. The main teaching takes place through study
guides, tutorial letters and feedback on assignments and in the researcher’s case is
supplemented with the use of satellite broadcast classes, which is the focus of the
research. The Charles Darwin University (2011:online) defines learning as a voluntary
activity which implies that the practice of teaching should be learner-centred, flexible
and meaningful and the lecturer should provide opportunities for social learning and
a supportive learning environment provides for dynamic engagement and deeper
learning, which is the intention of the researcher.

The Department of Public Administration and Management at UNISA presents
various diploma and degree courses and in 2012 has 23 000 students registered for
the various diploma and degree courses. The students receive learning materials in
the form of study guides and tutorial letters throughout the year or the semester,
depending on how the course is presented. The study material is the required
learning material which the student has to be familiar with for assignment preparation
and compilation, and also which the student will be assessed on during the
examination period. The tutorial letters contain all the information on the course such
as assignments, due dates, contact information of the lecturers and any other
information relevant to the course and the students learn at their own pace. The
courses are presented at the lecturers’ discretion, who decides on the additional
teaching methods to be employed. With already large workloads and an
overburdened administrative responsibility, not all lecturers use additional or
innovative teaching methods.

The researcher is of the view that the lecturers have a responsibility to create a
journey of learning for the students, and teach students how to take ownership of
their own learning as they navigate their way through study material, assignments and
examinations which support their acquisition of knowledge in an ODL environment.

3. Satellite broadcast as a teaching method at UNISA

Satellite broadcasting is not a new technology used within the teaching environment,
as it has a long history dating back to the early 1980s where this mode of delivery was
used in India, which was one of the first countries to use satellite broadcast and is
now still used extensively by the Indira Ghandi National Open University. This mode
of education is also used extensively by the Chinese Central Radio and Television
University as well as at the Monterrey Tech in Mexico which has four satellite
television channels operating 24 hours a day and seven days a week, providing two-
way communication through email questions from students, which means that
students watch the broadcast and if they experience any problems can email the
lecturer immediately and the lecturer will respond to the student (Bates 2008:online).
As can be seen for the above examples, satellite broadcasting plays a valuable role in
many developing countries, and by using satellite broadcast, the capacity to reach
many students is possible.
Barker and Platten (1988:44) pioneered in 1986 the use of satellite broadcast in one of the courses taught at the Texas Tech University and is referred to as a one-way video, two-way audio interaction. Satellite broadcast, which was used to reach vast audiences of students, captured the interest of many college and university administrators since the classes are presented at a relatively low cost per student. Abdous and Yoshimura (2010:733) proclaim that satellite broadcast or interactive television makes live audio/video broadcasting possible in real time to remote sites where students are able to interact with their lecturers and peers.” Bates (2008:online) adds to this and maintains that satellite broadcast plays a significant role in many developing countries as many students do not have access to the internet and the message can be reached by many students.

Abdous & Yoshimura (2010:733-741.A) studied the differences in final grade and satisfaction level among students and found that satellite broadcast can bridge the physical distance which exists between the lecturer and the student in such a manner that the student who attends a face-to-face class can attain equivalent grades and satisfaction levels. It is revealed from this study that the students feel as comfortable with face-to-face classes as they do with satellite broadcast classes.

Abdous and Yoshimura (2010:733-741) profess that students from generations which are more familiar with learning in a classroom may prefer satellite broadcast as a teaching method as they welcome the flexibility, convenience and are able to access this teaching mode from remote locations, which is cognisant of the satellite broadcast teaching method. Govender (2012:3), who is a lecturer at UNISA and uses satellite broadcast, is of the opinion that according to the annual booking schedule of UNISA, satellite broadcast is a very popular teaching mode made use of at UNISA.

In a UNISA document entitled ‘Towards an ODL pedagogy’ (2011:10) pedagogy is defined as the methodology of teaching and can also be used to refer to teaching strategies and teaching styles employed within a particular course. According to this definition, satellite broadcast can be referred to as a teaching methodology which is the unit of analysis of this study.

Satellite broadcast at UNISA according to Wessels (2012b:9-11) is used for a live or pre-recorded lecture, where the lecturer sits in the studio and the presentation is recorded and offers the full sight and sound experience to the student. Satellite broadcast allows the lecturer to reach new and specific audiences and it is a manner of addressing the students so as to bridge the gap between the lecturer and the student. Students ask the same questions and experience the same problems, so this is an effective method of dealing with the recurring questions which students have. The lecturer decides on which areas will be dealt with during the class and prepares a PowerPoint presentation, which is also made available to the students. Wessels goes further and explains that the students sit in during the live recording at venues across the country and can interact with the lecturer, asking questions via email, text message or can also call in to the studio, which encourages two-way communication. The classes take place in real-time and the students who are based in the remote
areas can also benefit from this method of teaching, as the class is broadcast at venues countrywide at the various regional and satellite offices of UNISA, and the students can attend the class at a convenient location.

In another presentation, Wessels (2011:3-6) asserts that satellite broadcast is a lonely experience as the lecturer sits in the studio in front of the camera and has to teach to the camera. Satellite classes have been made more interactive by Wessels by posing a question to the students and the students have to respond via an email, text message or a telephone call to the studio. The student who sends in the first correct answer then wins a book prize or other UNISA promotional items. The researcher found that this type of involvement on the part of the students makes them active participants in their own learning process as opposed to passively listening to what the lecturer is saying, which assists in bridging the cognitive and emotional divide. A copy of the DVD of the satellite broadcast class is posted to all students who are registered for the subject, which ensures that the students who were not able to attend the class still benefit from the class conducted.

There are certain guidelines provided to the lecturer in a ‘Standard Operating Procedures’ document (2011) for Satellite Broadcast which relates to aspects such as font size for a PowerPoint presentation, the correct clothing to wear to the broadcast class, training and making bookings to broadcast. Wessels (2012a) adds that the lecturer always has to look and sound professional as the student watches the DVD at home or even at work, therefore the lecturer should look at the camera and listen to what is being imparted to ensure professionalism at all times.

4. The advantages and disadvantages of satellite broadcast

As with any other teaching method employed, there are various advantages and disadvantages of satellite broadcast according to various authors. The advantages of satellite broadcast, according to the ‘Standard Operating Procedures’ of UNISA (2011:2) are as follows:

- Satellite broadcast plays an integral role in bridging the distance between the student and the lecturer.
- Satellite broadcast stimulates a sense of belonging and a sense of being a student.
- This is an interactive teaching and learning mode of delivery.
- Satellite broadcast enhances students’ learning experience in improving pass rate and throughput.
- Satellite broadcast permits the lecturer to reach great numbers of students on a national or regional level.
- Satellite broadcast can be integrated to web 2.0 technologies for interaction.

Wessels (2012b) adds the following advantages of satellite broadcast, and are as follows:
• Students receive the DVD of the satellite class conducted and can watch the DVD of the class a few times if they do not understand the material covered.
• Students who attend the satellite class can ask questions via telephone, email or text message and can have their questions or queries dealt with immediately.
• All registered students have access to the information provided at the satellite class.
• Continual improvement of teaching materials and methods can be implemented as the lecturer is in contact with the students and recommendations and suggestions from the students are incorporated.
• Satellite broadcasting provides a common standard of teaching to all students wherever they may be located.
• This method encourages students to prepare course material ahead of the class in order to partake in the discussions.

Advantages of satellite broadcast according to Bates (2008:online) are:
• This method is the most effective to use when many students need to receive the same message.
• Satellite broadcast provides a common standard of teaching to all students, wherever they may be located.
• Satellite broadcast fits a transmission model for education, where students are expected to remember and understand what is being taught.
• Transmission of information to large numbers of students at a relatively low cost per student.

Bates (2008:online) has also identified various disadvantages to satellite broadcast:
• Satellite broadcast requires very high start-up costs and a high level of technical expertise to launch and maintain.
• Despite the use of alternative technologies for two-way communication (telephone and email), it is difficult to make satellite broadcast very interactive for the students.
• Satellite broadcast lacks the educational flexibility and is not flexible in terms of time or location.
• The need to provide convenient, secure and accessible local reception sites can add to the cost of satellite broadcast.

The disadvantages of satellite broadcast as identified by Wessels (2012b) are as follows:
• There is no direct access to the lecturer when using the satellite broadcast teaching method, implying that the lecturer cannot be spoken to directly, only via email or telephone.
• Not all the students can attend the class due to work responsibilities.
• Not all the students can watch the DVD as they do not have access to a DVD player or a computer.
• There is an increase in the workload when using this teaching method.
• Not all the students use the opportunity to ask questions as they want to listen to the lecturer and not miss the information provided.

The advantages of satellite broadcast far outweigh the disadvantages as the students are of the opinion that this contact with the lecturer assists them with their studies and motivates them. The advantages of satellite broadcast to the lecturer is that large numbers of students can receive the information presented in the satellite class and explanations can be provided to the student. A further advantage is that the researcher is able to ascertain during the class whether there are more areas of difficulty with the courseware which can be established during the class and dealt with.

5. Method of research

Cross (2001:online) contends that the job of the lecturer is to convert the subject knowledge into that which the students can understand and an effective approach, meaning joining together what is taught with how it is taught. A method to ascertain the effectiveness of teaching on students is to use classroom research whereby the lecturer uses their classrooms as laboratories for the study of learning, as this research process is embedded in the regular ongoing work in the class. The researcher used the satellite broadcast class as the laboratory for the study of learning to ascertain the reception of the satellite broadcast in teaching Public Administration at UNISA.

The researcher has used satellite broadcast as an additional teaching method during 2010 and 2011 in the four subjects taught, as the pass rate for the subjects dropped while the researcher was on sabbatical leave. The researcher decided to implement an additional teaching method to try to improve the pass rate. Three classes were conducted per subject for the four subjects over the two year period, which is 2010 and 2011. The first satellite class consisted of a discussion of the course requirements and completion of assignments. The second class consisted of discussions and explanations of the course content. During the third class, the researcher focused attention on the preparation of the course content for the examination as well as information on the examination process. Questions and concerns which the student had were also dealt during the class. The subjects involved in this research intervention are Public Decision Making 1, Public Service Delivery 1, Inter-sectoral Collaboration 3 and Public Service Delivery 5. The researcher found that at the end of 2010 that the pass rate for all four subjects in 2010 had increased by 30% (Wessels, 2011).

The teaching method utilised is satellite broadcast and the instrument used for this article is an evaluation questionnaire completed by the students which allowed for
self-administration. An exploratory study has been conducted to ascertain the views of the students with the use of this teaching method. The researcher could not manipulate the variables and can only report on the responses provided by the students. A total of 321 questionnaires were completed in two of the classes conducted during 2011 out of a possible number of students who were registered for that year.

6. Findings and discussion

The overall findings from the questionnaires were very encouraging as the students experienced the satellite broadcast very positively. An overwhelming majority of students felt that they gained an understanding of the information provided in the study guide and that they were clearer on the information in the study guide than before the class. Some of the students were of the opinion that the other lecturers should also use this as a teaching method as they gained from the satellite class conducted and they could obtain clarity on uncertainties and also obtain information on how questions are asked and how to answer them. The students mentioned that the satellite broadcast class provided them with an opportunity to ask questions about the sections in the study guide which they did not understand and were provided with answers immediately.

The majority of the students felt that this teaching method assisted them to prepare effectively for the assignments and the examinations. The vast majority of the students were of the opinion that they used their study material effectively during the satellite classes. A small number of the students pointed out that they cannot listen, watch and take notes at the same time. A few students felt that they cannot listen to the class and answer questions at the same time. Only some students indicated that a disadvantage was that more explanation of the study material was required. A small number of students were of the opinion that a disadvantage was that there was not enough time allocated for the class and that there was too little communication with the lecturer.

The recommendation made by a great majority of the students was that more satellite classes should be conducted. A concern to some of the students was that the class should be rebroadcast as they don’t always get time off from work to attend the classes. A large number of students indicated that the class should be over a weekend or in the evenings. A few students indicated that they cannot afford airtime to send a text message to ask a question. An overwhelming majority of students indicated that clarity was obtained on how questions would be asked in the examination and how to answer the questions in the examination.

The trends identified by the research were that a small number of the students felt that the researcher was focussing on how to write an assignment and they felt that they knew how and they wanted to learn about the content of the subject instead. A large number of the students indicated that an advantage of satellite broadcast was
that the class reaches all the students at the same time, throughout the country. A small number of the students specified that a disadvantage was that there is no direct one on one communication with the lecturer and that they would like to hear the questions which were asked by other students, since the questions asked by students telephonically were not aired. A large majority of the students felt that the satellite broadcast provided them with a clear understanding of the module. While not statistically significant, there is evidence of some students not being happy with the technology at their specific regional offices.

A large majority indicated that the class was advantageous as they are now able to answer questions and assignments in the correct manner. A large majority of the students were of the opinion that they have more understanding of what is expected of them. A few students indicated that they enjoyed seeing who their lecturer was, even if it was not face-to-face. An overwhelming majority of students indicated there appreciation for the class as distance education is not easy. A large number of students felt that support in any form is beneficial to students’ studies.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, this study was dependent on the number of students who willingly completed the evaluation forms after the class and the researcher was also dependent on the regional offices sending the evaluation forms. The sample was selected based on the responses received from the students which may create a self-selection bias, which may in turn affect the results of the study. Secondly, the overall level of student responses was lower than expected, which also limits the generalisation of the results. The researcher relied on the administrative staff at the various regional and satellite offices to send the evaluation forms, and found that in some cases, evaluation forms were not sent from some offices, even though students attended the classes and completed the evaluation forms. Thirdly, the study was conducted with satellite broadcast classes presented in the field of Public Administration thus the perception may differ in other fields. Future study is warranted in this area.

The lessons which the researcher learnt from the study are that students appreciate any type of contact which the university provides. Studying at UNISA is lonely as the students are so removed and distanced from the teaching and learning process. Lecturers should accept that learning about teaching is a lifelong learning process and if not wanting to learn, will become教育ally redundant. In a highly digital world, lecturers cannot be left behind, as the lecturers set the pace for the students, thus should always be one step ahead of the students and be familiar with what is happening in the teaching environment. The researcher has found this a very effective teaching methodology as more of the senses are involved in satellite broadcast teaching. Using different types of teaching methods will also ensure that more students are reached from the different generational groups.
7. Conclusion

ODL at UNISA is a multi-dimensional concept aimed at bridging the time, geographic, economic, and social and communication distance between students and institution, lecturers, courseware and peers and focuses on removing barriers to access learning and provides flexible learning options. The teaching processes at UNISA should be student centred which is why the researcher conducted this study, to obtain the views of the students and place the student at the centre of the teaching and learning experience.

In the 21st century, advancements and improvements in technology have become part of the teaching and learning landscape which has also been the case at UNISA, and students need to be prepared. Satellite broadcast as a teaching method has been implemented by the researcher and offers the students an opportunity for real-time communication and interaction with the lecturer at a convenient location to the student and provides the student with the full sight and sound experience. The student has the opportunity to see the lecturer, listen to the lecturer, make notes and send text messages or emails or make telephone calls to the studio on any clarification required. Satellite broadcast can be used to bridge the gap between the student and the lecturer. The more teaching methods used, the more students are reached as students learn differently. From the study conducted, it is evident that satellite broadcast has been used effectively in teaching Public Administration and the researcher has found that this teaching method greatly assisted students with their assignment and exam preparation and improved their overall marks thus increasing the student pass rate for the individual subjects.

What the researcher found to be interesting about using satellite broadcast teaching, was that it allowed for the exploration of new methods of teaching and provided an innovative way of thinking about teaching the subjects, which had become the normal practice. The researcher also found that the use of satellite broadcast provided fresh and new ideas about teaching and made the researcher think more about the student and less about the content to be taught.

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Progress and Challenges of Service Delivery in South Africa Since 1994

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Abstract

The new South Africa came into existence in 1994. The incoming government faced a massive task of fiscal, political, social and economic transformation, all of which would require an effective public service capability. Yet the public service itself had been subject during the Apartheid era to the same limitations as other key South African institutions. Due to the lack of know how in 1994, South Africa needed an overwhelming transformation of public service focus, culture and procedures. Yet, 15 years after the democratic dispensation’s arrival, many people still lack access to the most basic of necessities. Woolard (2002) in Burger (2005:483) argues that it is visible that poverty is South Africa’s priority as it is estimated that approximately 37% of South African households, and probably more today, survive on less than R1 000 in a month.

Keywords: Social Transformation, Service Delivery Protests, Corruption, Personal Sanitation and Hygiene

1. Introduction

Hirschowitz and Orkin (1997) used data from the 1994 October Household Survey (OHS) and analysed living conditions according to race, gender, urbanisation and employment. They found stark contrasts between different groups at the national level. Africans, who constitute 76% of the population, were more likely to be affected by inequality and relative deprivation. Africans were found to be more likely than other population groups to live in shacks in urban areas and in traditional dwellings in non-urban areas, and to have less access to domestic infrastructure such as water, sanitation and electricity. Budlender (1999:205) examined access to basic services across ten types of households on the basis of income. She used the 1995 OHS and Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) and found that access to household services is closely correlated with income. For example, in the bottom strata, 18% of households relied on water sources that are situated more than a kilometer from their dwelling; in the top three strata, this was the case for less than one percent of households. Her conclusion was that a household that has poor access to basic services will enjoy lower levels of well-being and have fewer opportunities to earn income. In a similar
fashion, Møller and Devey (2003: 468) used the October Household Surveys of 1995 and 1998 to examine trends in living conditions and satisfaction among poorer, older South Africans. They found that access to services is strongly correlated with income, but that over the period 1995 to 1998, poorer and older households did record gains in access to clean water, electricity and home ownership.

Ngwane et al. (2003: 556) examined deprivation in terms of basic needs by comparing the progress in service delivery at the provincial level between 1995 and 1999, using the October Household Surveys. They found that nationally, the lack of formal housing seemed to be on the increase, while the proportion of households deprived of safe water was unchanged over the period. The analysis highlighted disparities between rural and urban areas in South Africa. An example is the differences in the use of electricity as an energy source for heating: in 1999, approximately 77% of households in urban areas were using electricity, compared to 16% in rural areas (Ngwane et al., 2003: 560). The comparisons of provincial progress also showed the more rural provinces to be at a disadvantage, for example, a relatively high proportion of households in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo Province still did not have any latrine facilities. Le Roux Booisen (2003: 42) examined the progress that the provinces had made in delivering the RDP, through the use of reconstruction and development indices. The analysis employed data from surveys by the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Advertising Research Foundation, the Institute of Race Relations, the Health Systems Trust, the Election Task Group, the South African Policy Service and the 1996 Census. He found that provinces that are more urbanised have advantages over the more rural provinces in the delivery of infrastructure, the facilitation of demographic transition and the improvement of standards in secondary education. The Leibbrandt et al. (2006) study examines patterns of access poverty and inequality with a comparison of 1996 and 2001 Census data. They argue that in both 1996 and 2001, almost two thirds of households occupied formal dwellings. In the period between census takings, the proportion of Africans in formal dwellings increased from 53% to 60%. The proportion of households in formal dwellings increased in all provinces, especially in Limpopo. As regards other basic services, Leibbrandt et al. (2006) results show improvements in access to water, electricity, sanitation and refuse removal, specially for the Black population and across all provinces. It is clear that the literature paints the familiar South African picture of disparities in access to basic services and improvements since 1994. However, in all of the above cases, the level of geographical disaggregation was limited to studies of the urban-rural divide or comparisons of provinces. The analysis did not allow for further distinctions of the performance of local governments in meeting the basic needs of their communities. The Human Sciences Research Council survey of 5700 South Africans’ perceptions of service delivery in 1995 was also done to determine service delivery progress (Møller & Jackson, 1997). Within this line of work, it was also possible to distinguish between urban and rural settings. With specific focus on cities, Møller (2001: 233-234) reported on the quality of life in the
Durban metropolitan area. She found that background factors, such as access to formal housing and access to services, accounted for only 10% of the variance in life satisfaction. However, general neighborhood satisfaction along with the background factors, explained 33% of variance in life satisfaction. In a more rural setting, Sotshongaye and Møller (2000: 117) examined self-assessed development needs among rural women in Ndwedwe in KwaZulu-Natal. The women, from the better-serviced Mavela ward, cited piped water and electricity in the home as important development needs. In the more remote Cibane ward, the women indicated that more basic needs such as safe water, housing and access to roads were priorities.

Poor service delivery has led to protests and unrest. The Centre for Development Support at Free State University has published four case studies of delivery failures and protests in Phumelela, Khutsong, Phomolong and Nelson Mandela Bay municipalities (cf. Botes et al., 2007). They found that poor service delivery has been caused by poor governance, individual political struggles within local government, a lack of communication, an inactive client interface, inefficient management and issues of affordability and unfunded mandates. The national level databases show improvements in basic service delivery in accordance with the RDP commitment made in 1994. Interesting variations between communities may be hidden by the level of aggregation, and earlier studies typically show that the rural areas lag behind. Closer inspection of service delivery at local level is required.

Russell and Bvuma (2001:243) list the changes that have taken place in the South African Public Service to include the following:

- The rationalisation and amalgamation of former national, provincial and homeland public services into a single unified public service structure, and the building of a new public service whose values and culture support the new nation. Until 1994, there had been a national public service and separate public services in each of the then four provinces and six self-governing and “independent” homelands. In 1994, nine new provinces replaced the four provinces and six self-governing and independent homelands and the separate bureaucracies were amalgamated. One by-product was the creation of significant numbers of committed public personnel in some provinces.

- The creation of new central personnel agencies designed to provide strong leverage for change. The incoming government appreciated the centrality of public service change to achieving what was expected of it, and it took important early steps to provide an institutional framework that would give government a powerful tool to effect change. Soon after the new government took office, central public service powers were taken from the very powerful Public Service Commission (PSC) and divided. A new Department of Public Service and Administration was created. The Public Service Laws Amendment Act, 1997 assigned to the Minister for Public
Service and Administration the most powerful and contentious public service management roles, including responsibilities for creating and abolishing departments and agencies, for employment, personnel practices, classification and pay, and those for transformation and reform. The Public Service Commission’s role was defined by Section 196 of the 1996 Constitution as to: promote values and principles, set out in the Constitution at section 195, throughout the public service; to investigate, monitor and evaluate the organisation and administration and personnel practices of the public service; to propose measures and to ensure effective and efficient performance of the public service. This tasking shaped the PSC’s role to emphasise advisory and consent roles such as the promotion of equal employment opportunity, ethical behavior and management approaches.

Apart from these central personnel agencies, key influences on public service evolution were placed with the Departments of Treasury and State Expenditure, which were able to exercise financial controls. A Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs is also a significant player through its influence on provincial and local government, since South Africa has a unitary constitution and hence both national and provincial public services form part of a single public service some 980,000 strong. Reform initiatives in the South African public service thus are typically directed at departments and provinces.

- New public service legislation and regulations were enacted. As well as these central agency reforms, further legislation passed in 1996, and regulations adopted in 1999 provided for the devolution of most personnel powers to Ministers and Heads of Departments.

- English became the language of administration. The traditional South African public service had generally conducted business in the indigenous South African language of Afrikaans, a Dutch-sounding language founded by white European settlers, representing a barrier for those communities that spoke other languages. The scope of the public service reforms was further extended by the extensive adoption of English and the associated need to translate much administrative documentation into English and to produce the new Public Service Regulations in English.

These were followed by other changes in the public service such as the introduction of a public service delivery approach and philosophy of Batho Pele (meaning people first in the native Sotho language). Russell and Bvuma, (2001:243) further note, that an increase in partnerships between public sector agencies and private sector entities was observed. In return, there was a realization of alternative service delivery avenues and opportunities for the public sector and private sector customers. Public service
delivery areas such as the provision of proper sanitation and water service delivery became one of many critical service delivery areas that suffered from poor planning, lack of adequate administration and robust strategic public sector thinking.

2. Sanitation and water service delivery

After the end of Apartheid South Africa’s newly elected government inherited huge services backlogs with respect to access to water supply and sanitation. About 15 million people were without safe water supply and over 20 million without adequate sanitation services. The government thus made a strong commitment to high service standards and to high levels of investment subsidies to achieve those standards. Since then, the country has made satisfactory progress with regard to improving access to water supply: It reached universal access to an improved water source in urban areas, and in rural areas the share of those with access increased from 62% to 82% from 1990 to 2006. However, much less progress has been achieved on sanitation: Access increased only from 55% to 59% during the same period. Significant problems remain concerning the financial sustainability of service providers, leading to a lack of attention to maintenance. The uncertainty about the government’s ability to sustain current funding levels in the sector is also a concern. 55% of wastewater treatment plants, especially smaller ones, do not meet effluent standards and some do not even measure effluent quality. South Africa has a fairly strong research and training infrastructure in the water sector. The Water Research Commission (WRC) supports water research and development as well as the building of a sustainable water research capacity in South Africa. It continues to find more solutions to the water problems faced by South Africans. This can be compared with world statistics.

In 2004, only 59% of the world population had access to any type of improved sanitation facility. 4 out of 10 people around the world have no access to improved sanitation. They have to use open or unsanitary facilities, with a serious risk of exposure to sanitation-related diseases. While sanitation coverage has increased from 49% in 1990, a huge effort needs to be made quickly to expand coverage to the MDG target level of 75%. Investing in sanitation infrastructure involves a long project cycle. If the MDG sanitation target is to be achieved, innovative approaches need to be developed to reduce the time span from policymaking to services delivery. The global statistics on sanitation hide the dire situation in some developing regions. With an average coverage in developing regions of 50%, only one out of two people has access to some sort of improved sanitation facility. The regions presenting the lowest coverage are sub-Saharan Africa (37%), Southern Asia (38%) and Eastern Asia (45%). Western Asia (84%) has the highest coverage among developing regions. Out of every three persons unserved, two live in Southern Asia or Eastern Asia. Human excreta have been implicated in the transmission of many infectious diseases including cholera, typhoid, infectious hepatitis, polio, cryptosporidiosis, and ascariasis. WHO (2004) estimates that about 1.8 million people die annually from diarrhoeal diseases where
90% are children under five, mostly in developing countries. Poor sanitation gives many infections the ideal opportunity to spread: plenty of waste and excreta for the flies to breed on, and unsafe water to drink, wash with or swim in.

The health impact of inadequate sanitation leads to a number of financial and economic costs including direct medical costs associated with treating sanitation-related illnesses and lost income through reduced or lost productivity and the government costs of providing health services. Additionally, sanitation also leads to time and effort losses due to distant or inadequate sanitation facilities, lower product quality resulting from poor water quality, reduced income from tourism, due to high risk of contamination and disease, and clean up costs. Increases in female literacy due to increased school attendance where proper sanitation facilities exist contribute to economic growth. Every dollar spent on improving sanitation generates economic benefits that far exceed the required sanitation investments. The cost of inaction is enormous. Achieving the MDG for sanitation would result in $66 billion gained through time, productivity, averted illness and death. It is estimated that a 10 year increase in average life expectancy at birth translates into a rise of 0.3-0.4% in economic growth per year.

In regions where a large proportion of the population is not served with adequate water supply and sanitation, sewage flows directly into streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands, affecting coastal and marine ecosystems, fouling the environment and exposing millions of children to disease. Particularly in the context of urbanisation, domestic wastewater, sewage and solid waste improperly discharged presents a variety of concerns from providing breeding grounds for communicable disease vectors to contributing to air, water and soil pollution. The results of poor waste management also contribute to a loss of valuable biodiversity which is detrimental to future generations.

Le Roux Booysen (2003:669) concluded that fewer people residing in rural areas and smaller urban settlements have access to medical aid, compared with people residing in larger urban centers. This is because the main criterion for access to medical aid is formal employment, and unemployment levels in rural areas and small towns are generally high compared with larger urban centers. Only 5.5% of people in rural areas have medical aid, whereas 22.6% of people in urban areas have coverage. Just more than a quarter (26.9%) of people residing in metropolitan areas have access to medical aid, compared with 18.7 and 14.7% of people residing in smaller cities and towns respectively. As a result, people in rural areas and smaller urban settlements, as shown elsewhere in this article, are generally more dependent on public service delivery for health care. He added that the evidence also shows that the public–private divide in health care delivery means that people in rural areas are generally more dependent on public and other health care services than on private services (Le Roux Booysen, 2003: 672). At present, a bill has been proposed and sent out for public scrutiny and contributions about providing a National Health insurance (NHI).
The Water Research Commission (WRC) study presented 18 case studies of different types of sanitation systems in different provinces, in which between 4 and 12 years of operational history have been evaluated based on 1,000 interviews. The key recommendation was that planners must choose the easily-maintained sanitation options such as movable VIP – ventilated improved pit latrine latrines – (with lightweight top structures), twin pit VIPs (with relatively shallow and therefore more empty able pits) or single or double pit urine diversion latrines. It was found that there was no single type of sanitation that fared uniformly well. “For example, at Ntuthukoville in Pietermaritzburg the waterborne sanitation which was provided in 1996 as part of the services upgrade to an informal settlement has worked very well, but the municipality is left carrying bad debts to the total of tens of thousands of rands per home”. In another example, in Newline, Mpumalanga, the VIPs (ventilated improved pit latrine) continue to fulfill their function with no significant problems 11 years after construction, whereas at Mbazwana in northern Kwa-Zulu Natal, after a similar time period, five out of 25 VIPs inspected had collapsed; at Inadi, 15 out of the 27 inspected were full. Similarly, the urine diversion latrines at Bereaville, Kammiesberg and eThekwini are reported to be working well, whereas those at Koel Park and Ekurhuleni have been disastrous.

A common lesson learnt was that failure to properly involve the community in the sanitation choice, in the sanitation implementation, and in health and hygiene education was likely to result in poor functioning of the resulting latrines. “Urine diversion type latrines have proven successful in some cases, but not all. They have two important selling points: the first is that they can be relatively easily managed by users themselves; second is that they allow the users to capture a waste product (urine) which has great value as a liquid fertilizer.”

City of Cape Town’s water and service standards preliminary draft concluded that the major challenges faced by South Africa in promoting sustainable, affordable and efficient service delivery, includes:

- Promoting the Water Service Development Planning Process, within the framework of the Integrated Development Plan, as the key instrument for planning, monitoring and regulating water services, with full community involvement. Service provision should be demand-responsive rather than supply driven to ensure appropriate choices of technology, lower costs, better uses of resources and more sustainable services. The Water Service Development Plan should guide strategies related the choice of service levels and technology implemented;

- Developing an appropriate regulatory framework that ensures the effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable provision of at least basic sanitation services to all people living in South Africa, and cost-effective, reliable services to businesses and institutions;
• Finalisation of the institutional framework. Currently the local government structures must deal with a range of approaches to service provision that span both urban and rural areas. The allocation of powers and functions between district municipalities and local municipalities needs to be resolved;

• Rationalising the financial framework in order to support sustainable service provision, specifically with regard to the provision of free basic services and implementing appropriate pricing for services.

3. Local Government

The Bill of Rights as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 provides the communities with fundamental rights to access social services. In the same token the MDGs are emphatic that local government sphere should work towards the realization of basic socio-economic rights that contribute to human development. The argument advanced is that the contemporary focus on attainment of the MDGs constitutes a major shift in development thinking because it places improvement of the human conditions at the centre of world progress. In this regards local government sphere has an obligation to work towards the realization of these goals. These goals are:

• Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger;
• Achieving universal primary education;
• Promoting gender equality and empower women;
• Reducing child mortality;
• Improving maternal health;
• Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
• Ensuring environmental sustainability; and
• Developing a global partnership for development.

For the construction of a basic service delivery index per local municipality, access to basic services can be measured as:

• the percentage of households with piped water inside the dwelling;
• the percentage of households that use electricity for cooking, heating and lighting;
• the percentage of households with a flush latrine;
• the percentage of households whose refuse is removed by the local authority; and
• the percentage of households that live in a brick dwelling.
The delivery of social and economic development requires intensive effort and a more coordinated approach from local government. Since 2004 an unprecedented wave of popular and violent protests has flowed across the country. With the recent service delivery protests between 2009 and 2012 the protesters explained that they took to the streets because there was no way for them to get to speak to government, let alone to get government to listen to them. Local government sphere is the least trusted of all public institutions in the country and that has been the case since the first elections in 2000. This is evidenced by the study undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council’s Social Attitude Survey for 2003 which shows that only 43% of South Africans actually trust local government. This shows that while the new system of local government has been established with genuine intentions to positively affect democracy and to bring about social and economic delivery to the people, the system has not lived up to expectations. The general feeling in the hotspots is that political leadership lack responsiveness to issues raised by communities, incompetent, prone to corruption and with high degree of disregard for the communities.

The other contributing factor is that local political structures such as ward committees are not fully operational, resulting in poor communication with communities. Ward committees have been the focus of considerable attention by government as well civil society, with substantial investment already made in an attempt to ensure that these structures have the necessary capacity and resources required for them to fulfil their envisaged roles as the voices of communities. At the same time, questions that are often asked is how effective are these institutions; whether they are useful conduits for community involvement in local governance; whether, as created space for public participation, they are inherently capable of playing the critical role expected of them; and whether they create opportunities for real power-sharing between municipalities and citizen. Smith (2008: 11) lists the following as limitations faced by ward committees:

- the politics of representation;
- structural limits to power;
- the vagaries of councilor and party politics;
- skills of the ward councilors;
- access to information;
- influence on decision-making; and
- the councilors relationship with other structures.

The mention of ward committees typically solicits quite negative views. Communities appear to be critical of ward committees, arguing that ward committees are not functioning as intended. Moreover, ward committees are usually viewed as highly partisan structures aligned to party political agendas. These protests reflect the crisis of local democracy. It is the nature of local democracy that needs to change. The
present developmental local government model is premised on recognition of the primacy of linkages between development, service delivery and local citizen participation, defined as the organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions by groups and movements excluded from such control. The White Paper on Local Government, 1998 urges: “building local democracy is a central role of local government, and municipalities should develop strategies and mechanisms to continuously engage with citizens.” Participation is mandated in four major senses:

- as voters to ensure democratic accountability;
- as citizens who through a variety of stakeholder organisations can contribute to policy processes;
- as consumer and end users who expect value for money and affordable services; and
- as organised partners engaged in resource mobilisation for development objectives.

Brynard (1996:44) in Kakumba and Nsingo (2008) outlines the following as the objectives of local government sphere in promoting citizen participation:

- provide information to citizens;
- get information from the citizens;
- improve public decisions, programmes, projects, and services; and
- protect individual and minority group rights and interests.

It should be noted that while the causes of the protests differ from one province to the other and from one municipality to the other, in all instances people want to be heard and to be taken seriously. The protesters are aware that they are citizens with rights and that they should be treated accordingly. The protests took a turn for the worse in May 2008 when foreign immigrants were attacked and displaced from various townships around the country. Blamed for reducing job, and other economic, opportunities for South African citizens, their stores were burnt, their shops looted, and their belongings stolen. Some analysts argue that this is to be expected given the poor levels of service delivery which are at the heart of the government’s effort to ‘create a better life for all’.

Many reasons for these protests are offered. The primary reason is dissatisfaction with the delivery of basic municipal services such as running water, electricity and latrines, especially in informal settlements. Unemployment (officially at around 25.7%), high levels of poverty, poor infrastructure, and the lack of houses add to the growing dissatisfaction in these and other poor communities. This comes in the wake of political promises during the election period of May 2011 that all or most of these issues will be addressed once the new local government is in place. According to
some protesters this has been a recurring theme with every elections since 1994. The 2004 elections were followed by similar demonstrations in 21 local communities in different parts of the country and for the same reasons. In this regard it is perhaps also worth considering the fact that the South African elections normally takes place in the April/May period, immediately before winter when its harsh realities exacerbate the absence of life’s immediate necessities.

A number of other reasons for are also provided. These include allegations of rampant corruption and nepotism within local government structures. Some protesters blame poor service delivery on the deployment of ANC ‘comrades’ to positions for which they are not qualified. The death of one protester in the Free State town of Ficksburg on 13th April 2011, allegedly at the hands of the South African Police service (SAPS), outraged many people across the country. The protests in Ficksburg occurred as a result of poor service delivery, lack of consultation and lack of good governance and, unfortunately, turned violent. It was reported that the protestor was attacked by at least six policemen simultaneously and the scene was shown to millions around the country that evening by national news channels. This further highlighted the lack of service delivery in South Africa. Other cases are the unavailability or sharing of either open or closed latrines, in Cape Town, Free State and recently Limpopo. This is a violation of the rights of South Africans as sanitation is among the services envisaged in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Other protests that occurred earlier in 2009 include the ones that took place in the Thokoza Township outside Johannesburg that followed a riot one week earlier in Diepsloot also near Johannesburg as well as others in Mpumalanga. Only in 2009, there were 24 protests compared to 27 that had occurred in the previous year.

It is widely felt that the decisions in South Africa do not respond adequately to the needs and values of the communities, especially the poor and disadvantaged sectors of the community. As a result, planning including the budgets and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) has not sufficiently been reflective of the needs of the community. This is a contradiction to local government legislative framework underpinning local governance and popular belief that some form of stakeholder involvement in decision-making is necessary in planning on issues that affect people’s lives. Protesters are adamant that for as long as government officials continue to assume that mandate at the polls gives them a mandate to act in a unilateral and top-down manner these protests will continue. This approach undermines public participation which is intrinsic to the core meaning of democracy. The Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 requires municipalities to “take reasonable steps to ensure that the resources of the municipality are used effectively, efficiently and economically”. Good financial management is the key to local delivery. It is quite disturbing to note that most municipalities are generally associated with the worst form of financial management. Corruption, financial mismanagement and non-compliance with financial legislation are common in most municipalities. This results in poor performance; thus the delivery of social services is compromised.
financial viability of the impoverished municipalities needs some consideration. These municipalities cannot perform their functions due to fiscal distress. These municipalities do not have extensive powers to raise their own revenues through property and business taxes and to impose fees for services. Furthermore such municipalities are overburdened to deliver. The State of Local Government in South Africa Report, 2009 admits that “the national government may have created expectations that local government cannot fulfil, or placed a burden on municipalities that perhaps only the strongest amongst them can carry”. This is the reality for local and district municipalities which largely depend on municipal grants and equitable share.

Municipalities with weak revenue base cannot survive on the current municipal infrastructure grant and equitable share funding allocations to fulfil their mandate. Such allocations are insufficient to ensure universal access to adequate services and will not enable poor and small municipalities to eradicate backlogs. Thus municipalities with financial limitations cannot translate their IDPs to workable socioeconomic programmes. The State of Local Government in South Africa Report, 2009 further notes that the “distribution of the equitable share always favours metros over local municipalities and that the national government has failed to devised a sustainable strategy for supporting municipalities that are inherently different and confronting unique problems that are linked to their location in a distorted spatial economy”.

Municipalities also face a shortage of skills. The State of Local Government in South Africa Report 2009, points that skills deficit within municipalities remains a major challenge. A significant number of municipalities do not have the managerial, administrative, financial and institutional capacity to meet the rising needs of local people. This situation is exacerbated by the decline of municipal professionals and poor linkages between local government and tertiary education sector. As a result these municipalities cannot meet their required performance standards hence impacting adversely on the delivery of services.

The Empowerdex report, 2009 was done to highlight the plight of the people at the bottom of the poverty ladder hence the poor of the poorest. Graaf Reinet in the Eastern Cape came out top of the heap with 96.4% of provision of formal housing, water, sanitation, electricity and waste removals in its households. Saldanha Bay scored a close second on 95.9% for actual service delivery. Berg River and Beaufort West in the Western Cape were third and fourth respectively. Witzenberg was one of the worst performing local municipalities in service delivery improvements, Nkandla Local Municipality, (the birthplace of President Zuma), only provides services to 32% of its population, although its improvement index scores higher than the national average. The worst performing local municipality was Msinga in KwaZulu-Natal, with only 18.6% of its households receiving basic services. Eight of the lowest ranking local municipalities were in the Eastern Cape and KZN. The top scorers were in the Northern Cape. At provincial level, the Western Cape also topped the log in service
delivery, with Limpopo on 46% bringing up the rear. The index was compiled from data supplied by Statistics South Africa. It measures improvements in service delivery over a period of time, comparing the results of the 2007 Community Survey with the 2001 Census.

4. Cities and Poverty Reduction

Intergovernmental transfers are therefore directed to a significant extent to areas with high rates of poverty. Indeed, there has been some concern that greater attention needs to be paid to the role that “wealthier” municipalities play in the economy. Over 80% of South Africa’s economic activity is concentrated in 15 urban centers. While these cities have larger revenue bases than other municipalities, their expenditure needs are also proportionately greater. For example, cities require sophisticated transport infrastructure to provide access and mobility to large numbers of people. Poverty-targeted subsidies are meant to alleviate poverty. However, the long-term goal is poverty reduction, and this will only be brought about by sustained economic growth. With so much economic activity concentrated in urban centers, it is likely that this is where most economic growth and job creation will take place. One of the ways in which to ensure that major urban centers can underpin economic growth is to provide them with local taxes that are related to economic activity. While regional services levies are problematic in some ways, they are closely related to economic activity. Metropolitan municipalities retain all their levy income, but levy income in the large non-metropolitan urban centers is collected by district municipalities and spent mostly in the rural hinterland. Metropolitan municipalities therefore have access to a source of revenue related to economic activity while secondary cities do not. This inconsistency needs to be addressed. It is important to ensure that all major urban centers have access to a second major source of revenue (besides property rates) that can be used to invest in the infrastructure that is required to underpin economic activity and growth.

5. Public Participation

Nzimakwe (2010: 502) states that public participation is a complex and ongoing process through which people are enabled to exercise varying degrees of influence over development and governance issues and activities that affect their lives. Participation is therefore an active process whereby participants take the initiative and action stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control. Public participation and engagement is the involvement of citizens in a wide range of administrative policy-making activities, including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects, in order to direct government programmes towards community

Public participation in South Africa is facilitated by the following legislation; it is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 through the Bill of Rights which mandates service delivery institutions especially municipalities to encourage the process of communication, consultation and co-production. The White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery, 1997 considers the citizens/public as customers who must be given priority in terms of the Batho Pele (People First) principles. This means the public must be involved and heard in the decision making process to ensure efficient, effective and economic service delivery. On the other hand, the White Paper on Local Government, 1998, provides a new vision of a developmental local governance system. It suggests ways in which municipalities across the country can engage the public and community institutions in the affairs of the municipality in their capacities as voters, citizens affected by municipal policies, consumers and end-users of municipal services, and partners in mobilising resources for the development of a municipal area. Chapter 4, Part 4 of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998, deals with the establishment, functions and powers of ward committees in the South African local governance system while the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 requires municipalities in South Africa to develop a culture of municipal government that complements formal representative government. In terms of Section 16 South African local communities must be encouraged to participate in the affairs of the municipality. Public participation takes place through political structures, public meetings, consultative sessions, report back sessions with the local community and through mechanisms such as izimbizo. The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 was passed to give effect to Section 32 of the South African constitution, i.e. the right of citizens to access any information held by the state. It seeks to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public institutions. Another purpose of the Act is to promote a society in which the public have access to information, in order to empower them to exercise and protect their rights. Lastly, the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 41 of 2003 stipulates that traditional leaders should be part of democratic leadership and governance structures at the local government sphere. In this co-operative relationship with municipalities, traditional leaders should facilitate public participation, especially in policy and service delivery decisions that affect rural communities.

Improving and encouraging the culture of public participation that will promote inclusive participation and actively incorporate public inputs on vital governance issues remains vital in this democratic era. It should be stressed that public participation is a key tenet of democratic governance. Municipalities should engage and consult civil society more frequently in policy formulation and implementation and incorporate them in governance structures.

In fact, the process to ensure community participation is a core principle of legislation. There is a wide consensus that local democracy entails participatory and
inclusive decision-making processes in which the beneficiaries have a substantial say in determining local government developmental agendas. To achieve this, it is essential that community awareness of rights and obligations should be enhanced so that citizens can play an instrumental role in municipal affairs and in implementation of MDG-related activities in their localities. For local government to live up to its potential, it depends not only on availability of skilled personnel and financial resources but also on the role played by communities in the structures. President Zuma indicated in his 2010 State of the Nation Address that he would work hard to build a strong developmental state, which responds to the needs and aspirations of the people, and which works “faster, harder and smarter.”

6. Curbing Corruption and Promoting Financial Compliance

Section 215 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 prescribes that the budgets prepared by the national, provincial and municipal governments must promote transparency, accountability and effective financial management. The Constitution is the foundation for good governance in the financial management of the State. The Public Finance Management Act, 1999 as amended by Act 26 of 1999 (PFMA), was created to modernise the system of financial management in the public sector and to move away from the rule driven and highly centralised system of expenditure control to the management of public financial resources by the head of the department. The PFMA allows the managers to manage public funds in a responsible and transparent manner. They are further responsible and accountable for the use of resources to deliver services. The Act focuses on:

- financial reporting;
- independent auditing and supervision of internal control systems;
- improved accounting standards;
- output and performance; and
- increased accountability at all levels.

Fourie (2005: 683) suggests that the more the public engages in the budgetary process which is aimed at educating citizens, the distrust of government amongst the citizens will decrease as public opinion has a great impact on decision making.

The effectiveness of municipalities to deliver on their mandate is largely dependent on their ability to plan and allocate public resources in a developmental and sustainable manner. Therefore, it is significant that municipalities carefully integrate community needs in their development plans and when allocating budget. It is essential to note that the IDP is informed by the resources which can be afforded and allocated through the budget process. Therefore, the budget must, in turn be aligned with the IDP and its objectives and strategies. The processes are, therefore, not separate and distinct; they are integrally linked and are symbiotic. Furthermore,
municipalities must ensure that the budget supports the achievement of the objectives set in the IDP and the attainment of the overall vision of the council. This again requires high levelled community participating in the formulation of IDP’s and budget allocations. After all, the content of the IDP must represent consensus reached with the community through various community participation processes. The significance of this is clear in that it enables the community to hold the council accountable for the attainment of the goals and targets set in the IDP.

Koelble and LiPuma (2010:584) argue that the most worrisome occurrence that is becoming a norm in the public service is the increasing occurrence of corruption, nepotism and self-enrichment. There is an urgent need to think of innovative ways of curbing corruption and some other administrative malpractices within municipalities. Local government transformation in South Africa has exerted considerable pressure on municipalities to manage their financial resources effectively, economically and efficiently in order to meet their developmental mandate. Therefore, municipalities need to improve sound financial management requirements as envisaged in the statutory framework by appointing qualified and capable officials, including chief financial officers and internal auditors, with right and appropriate skills. Importantly, municipal officials must account for results, not only for budget spending and as more resources are transferred to local government there is a need to strengthen the institutions that enforce accountability of public resources. To fight the scourge of maladministration, mismanagement of municipal finances, fraud and corruption, municipalities need to strengthen and review their existing internal control systems that detect the above-mentioned deficiencies. These include verifying the quality and appropriateness of internal audit and audit committees. Therefore, this requires effective monitoring by the officials in managerial positions. Examples of corruption in South Africa include the Travelgate scandal, in which 40 members of parliament were found to have illegally used parliamentary travel vouchers worth R18 million for personal use. The Oilgate scandal is another example in which the petrol company Imvume Holdings was accused of paying R11 million of state money to the rulingANC party during the 2011 local government elections. The Fidentia Asset Management scandal also serve as an example of corruption in the South African public service wherein an estimated amount of R2 billion went missing. A number of investors including the Transport Education and Training Authority (state subsidised), with a R245 million stake, lost their investments. Living Hands Umbrella Trust with a R1.47 billion investment in Fidentia Asset Management, which pays money to the Mineworkers Provident Fund to widows and orphans of mine workers killed in mine accidents, also lost their investments (www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa). These cases serve as examples amongst many cases of corruption. Thornhill (2006: 323) adds that financial management of a municipality is more complex, as when using an external entity, the municipal manager through the chief financial officer has to provide for mechanisms to monitor the financial affairs of such entity. If an external entity should
collapse as a result of financial mismanagement or corrupt activities, the municipality will be required to continue rendering the services, financing it from own resources. On the 24th of November 2011, the Sowetan Newspaper reported that the Moqhaka municipality in Free State, which was earlier embroiled in a scandal about unenclosed latrines, had spent more than R9-million of taxpayers' money to benefit organisations other than the public including Premier Soccer League clubs.

This was after the South African Human Rights Commission found that the Municipality ‘failed to adequately conceptualise, plan and implement its project which resulted in the residents being forced to use unenclosed latrines. The Commission also found that the Municipality’s ‘explanation that it lacked resources was not justified and therefore unacceptable’. This was a violation of the residents’ human rights of dignity, privacy and a clean environment.

7. Political and Administrative Tensions

The political/administrative interface is the grey area within which politics has to be distinguished from administration and management. If there is lack of trust or lack of clarity regarding the respective responsibilities, the executive institution cannot provide the services required. It should also be stated that to be able to separate the political and administrative functions to some extent, one has to assume that sufficient educated and talented people are available to fill both offices (Cameron, 2003:58). It is crucial that current prevailing political and administrative tensions are resolved in order to enhance and deepen local democracy. The relationship between politics and administration should ensure that partisan concerns do not compromise the management of the administration which is the core element of ensuring delivery. For instance, this relationship should guarantee that councillors do not exert pressure on officials to act in the interest of particular constituencies and it must also ensure effective, efficient and economic service delivery.

8. Interventions

On the 6 November 2011, The Minister of Human Settlements, Tokyo Sexwale, unveiled a task team, headed by the chairperson of the Sanitation Committee in the Department of Human Settlements, Ms Winnie Madikizela-Mandela to advise on the issue of unclosed and or incomplete latrines in the country. This occurred after the media exposed the inhumane practice in Makhaza, Moqhaka and Moutse before and during the local government elections in May 2011. The expose made it clear to the department that the magnitude of the problem might have been unknown, since the sanitation function had recently been transferred to the Department of Human Settlements from Water Affairs. In his address, the Minister added: “These incomplete or unclosed latrines strip our people of their dignity and they are unhealthy. The team
is tasked with identifying and locating such structures in-order to have them fixed. This sordid chapter must be brought to an end.”

The task team was given three months to finalise its work and establish the following:

- the scale of the problem;
- its nature;
- its geographic spread, i.e. urban or rural;
- identify irregularities and malpractices.

_The Sowetan_ reported on the 5 November 2011 that about 100 unused latrines, worth R1,2 million and built in 1997 in Moutse, had been vandalised while government officials wrangled about who was responsible for the project. The latrines formed part of a second phase of the now-defunct state-led policy initiative of Reconstruction and Development Project in which 100 houses were to have been built. But that never happened and 14 years later people of Matlelerekeng village near Dennilton are still waiting. Until 2006 the area was under Mpumalanga but was placed under Limpopo in that same year.

Addressing the media in East London, Eastern Cape, as part of a five-day programme to assess the state of sanitation facilities, Madikizela-Mandela said: “There are serious shortcomings in the implementation of the sanitation programme. I have personally been shocked at how grave these shortcomings are, especially as they seem to expose our weakness 17 years after 1994.” She mentioned that the problems included irregularities and malpractices during the implementation phase, non-compliance to norms and standards such as the case of open latrines in Free State and Khayelitsha as well as unlawful disposal such as the illegal sale of latrine facilities. All these needed further investigation. A number of townships in the Eastern Cape are reported to be still using the bucket system largely due to service providers who left incomplete projects. Such companies had been threatened with being blacklisted if they did not complete the work given to them. These include parts of Bedford, Fort Beaufort, Joza in Grahamstown and Chris Hani informal settlement in Uitenhage. Another issue that arose was the multi tasking of companies between project which further incapacitated them.

On the 3 November 2011, Nelson Mandela Bay was visited by Ms Madikizela-Mandela who vowed to address housing and sanitation problems and dismissed mayor Zanxololo Wayile’s concerns over lack of funding as in her opinion ‘There’s was no shortage of money in government to deal with the problems had been raised.”

The next stop was in Mpumalanga, Doornkop Middelburg on the 9 November 2011. The Task Team has discovered that most sanitation problems in the Mpumalanga province are due to lack of water supply. Here she added that all those who had been involved in corrupt activities especially in the delivery of sanitation would be prosecuted as all cases of maladministration throughout the country would be investigated.
9. Conclusion

The delivery of sanitary services in parts of South Africa such as Moqhaka, Makhaza, Middelburg and Nelson Mandela Metro has proven to be a violation of human rights especially towards human dignity, freedom, privacy and equality. Access to adequate sanitation is therefore fundamental to personal dignity and security, social and psychological well-being, public health, poverty reduction, gender equality, economic development and environmental sustainability. Institutional and financial challenges at the local government level, coupled with a lack of political will, are causes for concern, and contribute to continued compromised access to sanitation by millions of people living in South Africa. Women, the disabled and people living with HIV/AIDS are most affected by a lack of access to adequate basic sanitation. The latter are particularly prone to diseases like diarrhea, and require ease of access to sanitation facilities, as well as a continuous supply of safe water. Lack of adequate sanitation at schools and clinics across the country is cause for concern. For households living with waterborne latrines, access to sanitation requires a continuous supply of water for flushing. Without access to sufficient water that is affordable, households can have extremely compromised access to sanitation. More still needs to be done by the Departments involved in the delivery of sanitation and water services.

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Factors Influencing the Formulation of A Viable Urban Development Policy in South Africa

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Abstract

At the time of the 1994 democratic elections, South African cities were characterised by sub-standard housing, service delivery backlogs and serious problems in municipal spending. Indeed, there were, and still are, spatial anomalies associated with “apartheid cities” and the struggle to dismantle local government structures reminiscent of apartheid administrations. High unemployment and poverty-stricken households further exacerbated the urban policy landscape. Nevertheless, the way forward was directed by the ANC’s Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that aimed to address basic human needs. That same development programme provided the backdrop for a South African Constitution (1996) that proclaimed inalienable rights for all South Africans – housing being one of those paramount rights. Sadly, urban policies for human settlements were hastily developed and driven by political agendas that focused too far into the future, failing to address immediate housing needs. Moreover, urban policies were at times simplistic and at times too complex, serving only to make policy formulation much more difficult. This article discusses policy for urban development in the context of the political economy of South Africa. The aim is to explore the challenges and barriers to formulating an urban policy.

Keywords: Urban Development, Housing, Informal Settlements, Housing Policy.

1. Introduction

At the time of the 1994 democratic elections, South African cities were characterised by sub-standard housing, service delivery backlogs and serious problems in municipal spending. Indeed, there were, and still are, spatial anomalies associated with “apartheid cities” and the struggle to dismantle local government structures reminiscent of apartheid administrations. High unemployment and poverty-stricken households further exacerbated the urban policy landscape.

Nevertheless, the way forward was directed by the ANC’s Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that aimed to address basic human needs. That same development programme provided the backdrop for the South African Constitution (1996) that proclaimed inalienable rights for all South Africans – housing being one of the paramount rights. To that end, the White Paper on Local Government (1998) was
historic, as it facilitated an opportunity to transform local government in terms of urban policy, among others (Pillay, Tomlinson & Du Toit, 2006:1). Consequently, there was a sense of enthusiasm in those early post-apartheid years spurred on by local government negotiations and the National Housing Forum (South African Government Information, 1994).

Still, the policy formulation process was too simplistic in setting targets and failed to provide for a developmental agenda. Transforming local government was seen as a complex matter encompassing demarcating municipal boundaries, restructuring institutions, coordinating financial resources and municipal fiscal policies. There was an absence of a coordinated approach to building democratic local government structures and developmental institutions. Moreover, there have been significant challenges and barriers to formulating a viable urban policy in South Africa, for example a policy for the transformation of informal settlements and other types of human settlements. Recently, informal settlements have become an all too common part of the urban and suburban landscapes, creating an urgent need for an urban policy to accommodate the influx of migrants from rural areas. To address overcrowding in informal settlements in the interim, coordinated removals have taken place to relocate migrants, but uninformed forced removals have been met with bitter resistance.

Importantly, the urbanisation of South Africa’s migrating population has been taking place at an alarming pace. Migrations from the rural areas are a challenge that requires the attention of municipalities and local governments. Most migrants live close to or below the poverty line and are in need of essential basic services that they cannot pay for. The inability of local governments to provide essential basic services has exacerbated the migration problem. The aim of this article then is to discuss policy for urban development and renewal in the context of the political economy of South Africa. A second aim is to explore the challenges and barriers to formulating urban policy.

2. Urban Policy

Formulating an urban policy entails the study of decision processes that involve collective consumption, relating to a series of public services (Craythorne, 1997:84). Public services include education, health care, social welfare services, public transport, housing and urban planning itself.

Critical factors to consider in policy formulation include the accelerated growth of cities resulting from the influx of workers from large informal settlements on the periphery, inner-city decay, outdated infrastructure, pressure on the education system and an inability to implement primary health care systems. These factors impact urban development policy, especially as it pertains to economic development, job creation and effective law enforcement. Rugged individualism (a desire to solve one’s own problems) and minimal government involvement have also impacted policy for urban
development. As the 20th century drew to a close in South Africa, technological advancements and telecommunication have improved social interactions, contributing to population density and growth. Craythorne, (1997:85) notes that accelerated growth of cities has changed the operations of local government and made it much more complex in organisation and structure.

3. The Context for Urban Policy Formulation

The context of urban policy includes the size of an urban population, its geographic location and how rapidly the population is growing and where it is growing. Pillay et al. (2006:4) highlighted four types of urban areas: (1) tribal areas; (2) rural formal/commercial farming area; (3) an urban formal area; and (4) an urban informal area. At the time of the 2001 census, South Africa’s population was nearly 45 million strong, with about 57 per cent of the population living in urban areas and 43% in rural areas.¹

The most highly urbanized provinces were Gauteng (nearly 96 percent), Western Cape (86 percent), and Northern Cape (73 percent). The population of Northern Province, in contrast, was only about 9 percent urban, according to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (Country Studies, n.d.) The 2001 census further revealed that urban growth occurred mainly on the periphery of South African cities. Urban growth on the periphery was due to the subsidising low-cost housing from as early as 1994. Creating a culture of generational dependency, subsidised housing projects seem to perpetuate the marginalisation of the poor and limit their access to employment and social services. Service delivery, for example remains to me optimised urban areas on the periphery. In 1994, the government committed itself to developing more liveable, equitable and sustainable cities. Key to this commitment was a more compact urban structure that could accommodate higher population densities. The strategy called for mixed land-use development, integrating land use and public planning to ensure more diverse responsive environments. Despite all these well-intended measures, the inequality and inefficiency of apartheid linger on.

4. Household Growth: Housing and Services Backlogs

Pillay et al. (2006:8) noted that South Africa has experienced a sharp decline in household size despite a marked increase in the number of households. The two descriptive are important because rapid population growth coupled with declining household size accentuates the housing and services backlogs in an area. Possible explanations for changes in household size include:

¹ At the writing of this article, the 2011 census data and findings were not yet released.
South Africa has a very young population and the rate at which younger people enter the housing market exceeds the growth rate of the general population, leading to smaller average household sizes;

- Migrants from South Africa’s northern neighbours come as individuals and not necessarily as families, thus reducing the average household size;

- Reportedly, the National Treasury has suggested that the availability of the housing subsidy causes families to disperse, separate or live apart in order to obtain the subsidy.

### 4.1 Household Incomes

Households that have incomes above the margin are able to afford private housing and services Consequently, they are able to contribute to the tax base and pay municipal rates; this minimises the need for capital and operating subsidies for municipalities. The provision of social grants in South Africa has a perverse negative effect, because it tends to nurture dependency and discourage self-reliance. In 1994, the government spent R10 billion on social grants to support 2.6 million beneficiaries.\(^2\) Owing to social grants there has been a decline in households with an income of less than R800 per month. On the one hand this is positive, but on the other hand a sense of dependency and entitlement has developed. Yet still, owing to ever-increasing unemployment there has been an increase in households with incomes of less than R3 500 ($412 USD).

### 4.2 Challenges to Urban Policy-Making

In the field of local government, the political environment is generally smaller but more intense, because local government is closer to the people. However, every community has its own political environment and that environment shapes the actions of a council and how it operates. Outside of formal political structures are the structures of civil society that insist on being heard. The elected councils have to determine policy in a political environment that is not only influenced by political parties, but also by the structures of civil society. An example of such a scenario is the informal settlement of Plastic View, near Moreleta Park in Pretoria. People moved in and occupied vacant land. Some moved to Plastic View because it was close to their workplaces, while others thought they would find work in the area or they could start informal businesses there. The municipality tried to intervene. However, civil society of Plastic View, which insisted on being heard, refused to be moved far away from their places of work and informal businesses. The municipality had no choice but to

\(^2\) Comparatively, the government supported 12.4 million social grant beneficiaries by 2009 (SouthAfrica.info, n.d.).
provide water tanks and communal ablution facilities (toilets), while trying to negotiate with the community to move. This example shows that it is difficult for government to maintain a viable urban policy because there are so many unexpected changes.

4.3 Socioeconomic Environment

The socioeconomic environment relates to the nature of a particular society in terms of social advantage, or disadvantage, and economic states. In a town or city, there are people ranging from well-educated and trained professionals who earn high salaries, people who have recently arrived from a rural area, and people who may never have received any formal education. Taken together, the social elements of a society are economically interdependent, but they are separated into economic classes by education, training and skills. Despite this, all people still need public goods and services from their local authority.

4.4 Public Needs

The South African population is a blend of races, societies and cultures, and the majority generally has fewer assets than the minority. This means that real public needs cannot be overlooked or ignored. If they are, the country will be consumed by negative dissatisfaction. While no single local authority can prevent this from happening, municipal administrators, by applying their professionalism and expertise, can bring public needs to the notice of the political decision-makers.

4.5 Interest Groups

Craythorne, (1997:91) states that the activities of interest groups should not be underestimated. This is indeed the case. Interest groups could be general or localised and parochial, such as ratepayer or resident associations. Local ratepayer associations tend not to be very that representative, but because they can influence the choice of candidates at election time, they often receive a careful hearing. In addition they represent a form of contact with the local population.

4.6 Laws and Controls

The laws passed and controls imposed by other spheres of government affect the making of policy at local government level. The more the law-giver places obligations on local government to follow particular policies, the less room there is available for municipalities to formulate their own policies. Likewise, where legislative and administrative controls are imposed, the result is the same. Excessive control and regulation not only deaden the ability of local councils to frame their own policies, but
also diffuse accountability and open the way for manipulation for ulterior purposes. Externally imposed laws and control are some of the biggest problems that have a huge impact on urban policy.

4.7 Physical Environment

The term physical environment is defined as the “aggregate of surrounding objects, conditions and influences that influence the life and habits of man or any other organism or collection of organisms” (Craythorne, 1997:94). A key phrase in this definition is the reference to influencing the “life and habits of man”. A society that destroys its natural environment is a society permanently impoverished. The question arises: what does this have to do with urban policy-making? An informal settlement springs up next to a natural forest and the inhabitants start chopping down the bushes and trees for construction materials and firewood. The solution here would be to provide electricity to the shacks and to provide building timber at a minimum cost. In such a situation, financial resources need to be allocated to a problem that has just emerged. Firm leadership is required during such phases to ensure that only those solutions are identified that are practical, feasible and likely to solve the problem in the most satisfying way and with the means available. It is a frequent fault in the practice of public administration that officials promote solutions that strain resources and that, if accepted, leave little or no resources for the solution of other issues. South Africa simply does not have the resources to guarantee the standards and quality of service of advanced countries such as the United States of America. Sometimes, strange as it may sound, the ideal solution could be to do nothing and to leave the issue to the community or to be sorted by the rule of law.

5. Contextualising Challenges: Informal Settlements

When families move from rural areas to urban areas, they are always faced with the problem of finding housing. Firstly, the family must find and buy a piece of land – a building stand – on which to live. Secondly, the family must buy a house that may already have been built on the building stand selected. However, if there is no dwelling to live in, the family must build a house. Most people who move to urban areas are relatively poor or extremely poor, and they cannot buy land on which to build or a house. The result is that poor people settle on land belonging to municipal authorities, public bodies or private individuals. These people then construct buildings from all sorts of material that are often unsuitable for building purposes, for example tin, cardboard, pieces of plastic and low-quality wood. No provision is made for the proper division of the land into building stands and for streets and other essential services, such as water, electricity and rubbish removal. Cloete and Thornhill (2005:10) noted that it must be borne in mind that informal settlements provide homes for the poor. Such people have homes, even though these homes leave much to be desired,
where they have their friends and know their enemies. The inhabitants can also live cheaply, albeit possibly dangerously, because of unhealthy conditions in their settlements. Owing to the relatively low cost of living in such areas, the people reconcile themselves with the unsatisfactory surroundings where they have houses and enjoy essential services. When this stage is reached, the informal settlement is regarded as an established settlement, which often creates challenges for municipalities. Information on the number of people living in informal settlements is often limited, since inhabitants are often only inadequately covered by formal settlements. Challenges often arise when decisions have to be made about the number of people living in informal settlements and the environmental health risks they pose.

5.1 Johannesburg's Park Station

If people have to stay close together in large numbers in urban areas, it is essential that conditions that could possibly endanger them should not be allowed to develop. Therefore rules have been made in all urban areas made to prevent people from constructing unsatisfactory houses or other buildings. However, even when such rules are enforced, it is possible, as the result of poverty, that people may neglect their houses or allow the buildings on their land to decay until they reach a stage where they are dangerous to live or work in. Neglected and unsatisfactory houses and other buildings can also result from economic and social changes in urban areas. For example, the area around Park (Transportation) Station in Johannesburg is surrounded by old decaying buildings that are nearly inhabitable.

A village grows into a town and over time into a city. The houses and buildings in the central area go out of fashion and may no longer be economically viable. The result is that these houses and other buildings in the central areas of the cities degenerate. In every urban area, the authorities are on the lookout to prevent properties from developing into slums. If the owner of the property that has become a slum neglects to carry out orders to repair and clean the property, he or she will eventually be ordered to break down the buildings and to clean up the stand on which the buildings stood. It is not as simple as it may seem, as there is often resistance from owners who provide a minimum maintenance and service support.

5.2 Knoppieslaagte – Laudium, South Africa

A vacant farm near an industrial park in Laudium, Gauteng Province, has been occupied by people in order to be near their places of work at the industrial park. Others who come from rural areas where there are no job opportunities work as domestic workers and gardeners. The government had no choice but to acquire the land from the farmers, who had to abandon their farms as a result of land invasions in the area. The local government, in partnership with other agencies, provided
communal toilets and mobile water tanks. The government is currently involved in a process to formalise the establishment of a township with the view to provide services such as the building of infrastructure (roads, health centres and the provision of electricity and water). Relevant departments have been instructed to make the necessary budgetary allocations to allow for the provision of services as soon as the land has formally been acquired and a township has been proclaimed.

5.3 Diepsloot Informal Settlement

Diepsloot, a former informal settlement west of Johannesburg, has recently developed into a big township. Some sections of Diepsloot are still informal settlements. Infrastructure developments such as roads, electricity and water are provided by different government departments in partnership with other agencies. Schools have recently been built. Owing to high rates of crime in the area, Diepsloot is in need of an operational police station. The nearest fully operational police station is more than eight kilometres away.

6. Olievenhoutbosch – Centurion, South Africa

The whole of Olievenhoutbosch (Oliven) was a vacant farm before an informal settlement was established there. Initially the Council of Centurion wanted to remove the squatters forcefully from the land, but their efforts were met with resistance. Olievenhoutbosch has now been acquired and proclaimed as a township. Large parts of Olievenhoutbosch are still underdeveloped and many residents still live in shacks. Houses (RDP houses) are slowly being provided and sites are allocated to those who can build their own houses. Banks such as Absa and property development companies are now providing mortgages on houses to those who have higher incomes. Roads, water and electricity are now provided, except in areas that are still considered to be informal.

7. Conclusion

In almost all the cases cited in the article, government does not seem to have a clear urban planning policy, but there is often reactionary response, as people invade land and refuse to be moved to alternative sites. There are often legal challenges with regard to forced removals and evictions. Sadly, during the 20th century people became urbanised to such an extent that most of them came to live in towns and cities, and as a result became dependent upon the goods and services provided by the local authorities. To counteract the influx of migrants, factors such decreasing job opportunities and decreasing employment in the cities, the prevalence of urban crime and violence, high infrastructure costs, the high cost of land and housing, and the continued social relationships with rural communities need to be considered by the
authorities who are designing policy. South Africa in particular is undergoing an accelerated phase of urbanisation, which means that cities are growing in size and larger cities will increasingly exhibit the symptoms of urban growth, such as large informal settlements, inner-city decay, pressure on the education and primary health systems and the like. The effect of this is an increasing need to consider and analyse urban policy realistically and in the light of the real circumstances. The real circumstances will largely turn on the needs of both informal settlements and leafy suburbs within the context of economic development and job creation, primary health care, housing provision, meeting recreational needs and effective law enforcement. There has been insufficient research into urbanisation patterns in the many years after 1994 and there are currently more questions than answers. Once there is a better idea of how migrants can be accommodated at their destinations most effectively, so that they can achieve their maximum economic potential as soon as possible, a new set of questions should be posed. Given these insights, the paucity of government information about different types of migration becomes a real constraint in the design of policy. There is simply not enough information about how many people are moving to different kinds of destinations, from where, for what reasons and what skills they have. It should also be noted that there is a growing trend towards reverse urbanisation, as people leave large cities and move to small towns in rural areas. Given this information, it is to be expected that it will be a demanding task for politicians, planners and administrators to find a system or a number of systems (or even a policy plan) for local government that will give general satisfaction and incorporate all these changes.

References


The Nigerian Budgeting Process  
A Framework for Increasing Employment Performance 

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Abstract 

There have been several systematic inquiries into the functioning of Nigeria’s budget implementation process, and employment performance, particularly over the past few decades in order to diagnose the country’s budget implementation problems. This article reports on an investigation into the effects of the formal budgeting process, budgetary participation, sector size, and ownership on the employment performance of Nigerian ministries, departments, agencies and parastatals. The study drew on observations from the area of financial planning and control and its influence on employment performance, and was conducted to fill the gap in previous literature about how budgeting practice affects employment performance. Hopefully, this theoretical exploration will provide fresh insight into the possible correlation between budgeting practice and employment performance. A combination of financial and non-financial measurements is suggested to reflect the effectiveness of budgeting practice on employment performance. The findings provide more evidence regarding the impact of the budgeting process on employment performance, and suggestions for increasing employment performance level in Nigeria are provided, thus providing possible solutions to similar challenges faced by other developing countries. 

Keywords: MDAs (ministries, departments, agencies and parastatals), ownership, federal government, sector size, FCSC (Federal Civil Service Commission), employment, Nigeria 

1. Introduction 

The role of the budget in an economy cannot be overemphasized. A budget is an important instrument of national resource mobilization and allocation, and fiscal and economic management. It is an economic instrument for facilitating and realizing the vision of the government in a given fiscal year. If a national budget is to serve as an effective instrument for promoting the growth and development of a country, proper linkage and management of all the stages of budgeting are necessary. A budget has to be well designed, effectively and efficiently implemented, and adequately monitored; moreover, its performance must be effectively evaluated. If administered wisely, budgeting drives management planning, provides the best framework for judging subsequent performance, and promotes effective communication and
coordination among various segments of the organization (Horngren, 1977:125). The above view also reflects the process character of budgeting in private and public business organizations (Covaleski, Dirsmith & Jablonsky, 1985; Ahrens & Chapman, 2006). With regard to Nigeria’s budgets over the years, as expected, there is a sharp contrast between budgeting under a military regime and budgeting under civilian administration. Whereas the former took place on an arbitrary basis, the latter is subjected to scrutiny at various stages by the executive and legislative arms of government before the budget is finally approved. However, irrespective of whether the government is military or civilian, the budget process has always been abused. The most visible bottlenecks are associated with budget implementation. Complaints frequently relate to the non-release, partial release or delay in the release of approved funds for budgeted expenditure. It has been observed that on occasion, funds allocated for a particular quarter are made available only at the end of that quarter (Patterson, Okafor & Williams, 2006; Douglasson & Gbosi, 2006). This naturally has negative implications for institutional planning and management as well as the overall impact of the budget on the development and welfare of the people. As civilian administration was ushered in, people had very high expectations that the budget would support laudable programs that would lead to poverty reduction in particular and promote their welfare in general. The stage was therefore set for the administration to strengthen budgetary practices in order to fulfill the policy objectives of the government and, by implication, satisfy the aspirations of the people. Faleti (2010) states that the reform of the budget process was a significant aspect of the public service reform (PSR) embarked upon following the introduction of civilian administration in 1999. Prior to this the country was under military rule, during which the budget process was thrown into total disarray. However, the manner in which budgeting is conducted does not appear to be conducive to fully achieving the employment performance objective in ministries, departments, agencies and parastatals (MDAs).

2. Budget Control

Flamholtz (1983) and Otley and Pollanen (2000) view budgeting as a critical element of management control. It is an economic instrument for facilitating and realizing the vision of the government in a given fiscal year, the latter being divided into quarters, or sometimes months, as the primary building blocks of the control system. Budgets provide a basis for directing and evaluating the performance of individuals and private and public segments of organizations, and also function as the decision-making environment (Bruns & Waterhouse, 1975). They function as control devices governing the performance of public organizations. This has been the subject of previous research, for instance by Brownell (1985), Merchant and Manzoni (1989), and Kren (1992), emphasized the function of budgeting in management control processes and sought to explore the influence of budgetary controls on organizational behavior.
Budgetary participation is one of the budgetary control factors. As Schiff and Lewin (1970) report with regard to the role of financial budgets in the corporate planning and control process, since financial budgets are planning documents, they become extremely important in measuring the performance of the control system. These authors define budgetary participation as the process of involving managers in the budgetary process and their influence over the setting of budgetary targets. They further describe participative budgetary control as a response to the need by public organizations to gain an understanding of their environment. Participative budgetary control assists in problem-solving, and, more important, promotes information sharing among administrative levels and enhances performance in public sector organizations. Brownell (1990) and Kren (2003) considered budgetary practice to be a controversial research topic because its results are difficult to integrate, and sometimes even conflicting. Brownell (1990) reported that good budgetary practice is associated with improved managerial performance in difficult situations. With regard to performance, there is an important relationship between budgetary practice and task difficulty. Budgeting may be used as a coercive instrument by top management to “impose” its objectives on subordinates in the organization. However, a participative environment is important for maximizing organization objectives and individual satisfaction. Reports from in-depth interviews show that the budget process influences decisions and budgetary outcomes. Participative decision-making results in slack, which managers can incorporate into their budgets. As Milani (1975) reports, the link between budgetary practice and performance is, “at best, weakly” supported. He emphasizes that participation has a significant effect on performance only during the months of January and February. Harrison et al., (1994), Awasthi, Chow and Wu (1998) and Chow, Shields and Wu (1999) examine management accounting techniques such as budgeting and standard costing from a cultural point of view, and report that management control tools and management practices found to be effective in one environment could be ineffective or even dysfunctional in another. They highlight the importance of the sector, which includes the size, age, and degree of decentralization of the organization, and conclude that budget-related behavior is contingent on various aspects of the organizational structure such as decentralization, autonomy, and the degree to which activities are structured. They therefore define budget-related behavior as the activities and actions of and interactions between managers that relate, either directly or indirectly, to budgeting.

The study reported on in this article was designed to focus specifically on two aspects of the employment performance growth context, namely the formal budgeting process and the performance of MDAs. These two factors for testing efficacy were selected for two reasons. First, the formal budgeting process is one of the most popular independent variables, and has been widely used as a control variable in previous research, quantitative research in particular. Second, when research is related to effectiveness, MDAs are usually considered an important factor affecting effectiveness. In Nigeria, most budget practice undergoes certain processes
before becoming both a law and an economic tool. Budgetary process involves all centers, programmers and administrative units involved in the development of periodic budgets. It refers to the totality of the processes a budget undergoes before it finally becomes a document. It involves all the executive and legislative processes, collection of estimates from the various government departments, defense before the various committees of the legislature and debates in the floor of the Houses, passage into law, and final implementation and monitoring. Budget preparation primarily involves identifying and setting developmental goals. This involves setting budgetary thrusts and policies based on the development plan. In the federal government, the responsibility of the president for the preparation and submission of the budget is well established. At state level, it is the statutory responsibility of the governor to prepare and submit the budget. At local government level, the chairperson invariably has complete control over budget preparation, but is assisted by the finance committee and other department heads. As part of the budgetary reform measures, steps were taken in 2005 to develop a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) which places emphasis on three-year multi-year budgeting. In Nigeria, the MTEF seeks to improve macro-economic balance through the development of a consistent and realistic resource framework, employment creation, and improving the allocation of resources to strategic priorities, among other things. Based on previous research, the study reported on here was an attempt to analyze the process character of budgeting in the context of increasing employment, and to investigate the effectiveness of and the difficulties relating to the budget process and implementation in the context of employment in the Nigerian civil service. The budgetary reforms embarked upon between 2000 and 2007 introduced a number of innovations into the budgetary process. For the first time in the history of public sector budgeting, the nation witnessed the articulation of a medium-term revenue framework, a medium-term expenditure framework and medium-term sector strategies in the preparation of a federal budget. The country is still largely dependent on oil revenue and the budget therefore continues to be exposed to the volatility in the international oil market. The issue of diversification of the economy looms large in ensuring that the budget works effectively as an instrument of macroeconomic management. Despite the advantages of the MTEF, however, its adoption should not be regarded as the panacea for fiscal weaknesses and mismanagement in an economy. For the MTEF to succeed, sustained political commitment is required; this, in turn, requires purposeful leadership.

3. Research Methodology

As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) have reported, the validity and reliability of the information a researcher collects, as well as the response rate achieved, depend to a large extent on the design and structure of the researcher’s information. A theoretical framework showing all assumed relationships between the formal budgeting process and performance was developed for the study described in this
article. A quantitative method was identified as the main study paradigm. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire. A modest survey involving 75 MDAs from small and medium-sized sectors was used as input for the quantitative analysis of the study. Of the 75 respondents, 36 were from medium-sized sectors and 39 from small sectors. The two dominant business types were government-owned sectors and government-owned corporations, accounting for 39 and 21 of the total number respectively. The majority of the respondents (31, or 41%) were senior managers, followed by departmental heads/managers of organizations (26, or 35%). The larger the sector size, the more financial managers responded. 11 financial managers (31%) from medium-sized sectors and 7 financial managers (18%) from small sectors returned questionnaires. Four types of businesses were represented, namely ministries, departments, agencies, and parastatals. Most of the parastatals and some of the agencies had government-owned corporation ownership rights. Differing from ordinary government-owned sectors, these sectors represent the most profitable government-owned corporations in Nigeria. The structure of parastatals is based on clear ownership rights that legally separate this sector from government administration and encourage investors to buy government stocks. In this sense, the structure of agencies and parastatals mobilizes capital in a way that best suits the needs of the market and improves the competitive capability of sectors themselves. While parastatals diversify their equity structures, agencies include two different kind of capital: some are mainly public but with foreign capital, while others retain government-owned corporation ownership. To distinguish the parastatals and agencies from the ordinary government-owned sectors, the descriptive statistics in this study reflect the majority of government-owned ministries (6 out of 8), agencies (6 out of 7) and parastatals (12 out of 21) as being medium-sized sectors. However, most departments (27 out of 39) are small. All variables involved in the study were operationalized. Factor analysis and Cronbach’s alpha tests were conducted to check the correlations and reliability of all the instruments. The statistical techniques and calculations were carried out using SPSS, Version 14. The formulas provide a foundation for understanding and organizing the data output and subsequent analysis. The study was an empirical analysis of data pertaining to the budgeting process. A simple bivariate model determined the relationship where the beta slope ($\beta$) revealed either a linear or non-linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Through multivariate analysis, the influence of other variables was taken into consideration. It is acknowledged that the sample size was small and that the statistical approach applied was non-probabilistic.

4. A Theoretical Framework for Budgeting

In terms of the model devised by Wijewardena and De Zoysa (2001), the formal budgeting process is defined as the formal financial planning and the formal financial control process. These aspects of the formal budgeting process are important
contributors to employment performance, especially with regard to increasing the level of employment growth in public sector organizations. These authors emphasize that the sectors using detailed budgets (or “comprehensive budgets”) for planning recorded significantly higher performance than those having “no written budgets”. Sectors using more comprehensive budget variances also achieved better performance compared with sectors using less comprehensive budget variances.

The central question of our study, which was empirical and quantitative in nature, was: How does the budgeting process impact the employment performance of MDAs? The model applied comprised three aspects.

The first related to redefining the concept of the formal budgeting process by adding more dimensions. Budget goal characteristics, including goal clarity and goal difficulty, are stressed in the work of Yuen (2004). A “tight but attainable” budget goal is shown as being the most effective means to encourage employee performance. Clear goals reduce budgeting process uncertainty and improve employment performance. Studies such as those conducted by Steers (1976), Imoisili (1989), Mia (1989), Ezzamel (1990), Hirst and Lowy (1990) are relevant in this regard. In addition, studies on the formal budgeting process and performance relationship have dealt with budgetary sophistication, which is defined by scholars such as Merchant (1980) and Peel and Bridge (1988) as greater use of computers, technical staff, and advanced financial modeling. As reported by Merchant (1980), empirical results show that budgetary sophistication enhances the accuracy of the budget plan and the degree of information accuracy, and results in higher performance. Combining the models devised by Yuen (2004) and Merchant (1980) with that of Wijewardena and De Zoysa allows us to redefine the formal budgeting process as the entire formal budgeting planning process, budget-goal clarity and difficulty, budgeting sophistication, and the formal process of budgetary control.

The second aspect of the model concerned the introduction of budgetary participation into the budgeting practice of Nigerian MDAs. The study was prompted by the paucity of empirical data from national sources and, more important, the fact that almost all studies on the budgetary participation and performance relationship (BPP) are based on large sectors. The characteristics of budgetary participation in MDAs and its effects on employment performance growth are unclear. To explore the relationship between budgetary participation and employment performance, the model developed by Parker and Kyj (2006) was adopted.

The third aspect of the model related to performance measurement. In this context, most of the existing literature on budgetary participation uses managerial performance as a dependent variable. Some studies use non-financial performance, which includes budgetary performance and sector performance. However, measurement in the study included not only financial performance, but also non-financial performance, sector performance and managerial performance.

The theoretical framework adopted in the study was derived from the combined models emanating from several studies, covering the formal budgeting process,
budgetary participation, and the measurement of performance (Wijewardena & De Zoysa, 2001; Yuen, 2004; Merchant, 1980; Parker & Kyj, 2006). The conceptual model consisted of boxes representing variables and links connecting them to denote relationships. Hypotheses were also included in the model.

Table 1: The Basic Conceptual Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sector Size [SIZE] / Ownership (Federal Government)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hypothesis (H₁)

**The Formal Budgeting Process (X₁)**
- **H₁a:** Formal budget planning (X₁a)
- **H₁b:** Budget goal clarity (X₁b₁)
  - Budget goal difficulty (X₁b₂)
- **H₁c:** Budgeting sophistication (X₁c)
- **H₁d:** Formal budget control

**Employment Performance (Y₁)**
- Financial performance (Y₁a)
  - Growth of sales revenues (Y₁a₁)
  - Growth of profit (Y₁a₂)
- Budgetary performance (Y₁b)
  - Budget goal achievement (Y₁b₁)
  - Motivation from budget setting (Y₁b₂)
- Sector performance (Y₁c)
  - Vacancies declared (Y₁c₁)
  - Placement offered (Y₁c₂)

### Hypothesis (H₂)

**Participation in Budgeting (X₂)**
- H₂: Budgetary participation

**Managerial Performance (Y₂)**

5. Hypotheses

According to the conceptual model, the hypotheses explain the relationships between variables.

1. **The Formal Budgeting Process and Employment Performance**

   **Hypothesis 1:** *The more formalized the budgeting process, the better the employment performance*
In terms of this hypothesis, the formal budgeting process functions as the independent variable and employment performance as the dependent variable. Employment performance includes financial performance, budgetary performance, and sector performance. A positive effect of the formal budgeting process on employment performance in MDAs is expected. To test hypothesis 1, the following regression model (Model 1a) was used:

\[(Eq. (1a)): \quad Y_1 = a_1 + b_1X_1\]

(2) Budgetary Participation and Managerial Performance

**Hypothesis 2: The higher the budgetary participation, the better the managerial performance**

This hypothesis highlights the relationship between budgetary participation and managerial performance. It is assumed that budgetary participation (the independent variable) will have a positive impact on managerial performance. To test hypothesis 2, the following regression model (Model 1b) was used:

\[(Eq. (1b)): \quad Y_2 = a_2 + b_2X_2\]

The concept of the formal budgeting process was re-defined accordingly. Hypothesis 1 was divided into the following sub-hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1.a: The more formalized the budgeting planning, the better the employment performance**

**Hypothesis 1.a1: The more formalized the budgeting planning, the higher the growth of sales revenues**

**Hypothesis 1.a2: The more formalized the budgeting planning, the higher the growth of profits**

**Hypothesis 1.b1: The clearer the budget goals, the better the budgetary performance**

**Hypothesis 1.b11: The clearer the budget goals, the better the budget goals achievement**

**Hypothesis 1.b12: The clearer the budget goals, the better the motivation from budget setting**

**Hypothesis 1.b2: The more difficult but attainable the budget goals, the better the employment performance**
Hypothesis 1b21: The more difficult but attainable the budget goals, the higher the number of vacancies declared

Hypothesis 1b22: The more difficult but attainable the budget goals, the higher the number of placements offered

Hypothesis 1c: The more sophisticated the budgeting, the better the employment performance

Hypothesis 1c1: The more sophisticated the budgeting, the better the financial performance

Hypothesis 1c11: The more sophisticated the budgeting, the higher the growth of sales revenues

Hypothesis 1c2: The more sophisticated the budgeting, the higher the growth of profit

Hypothesis 1d: The more formalized the budgetary control, the better the employment performance

Hypothesis 1d1: The more formalized the budgetary control, the better the financial performance

Hypothesis 1d11: The more formalized the budgetary control, the higher the growth of sales revenues

Hypothesis 1d12: The more formalized the budgetary control, the higher the growth of profit

An equation (Eq. 1a) is shown below to reflect the statistical relationship between all variables under the general variable of the formal budgeting process and employment performance.

\[ Y_1 = a_1 \cdot a + b_1 \cdot a_1 X_{1a} + b_1 \cdot a_2 X_{1b1} + b_1 \cdot a_3 X_{1b2} + b_1 \cdot a_4 X_{1c} + b_1 \cdot a_5 X_{1d} (1-a) \]

Where:

\( Y_1 = \) employment performance; \( X_{1a} = \) formal budgeting planning; \( X_{1b1} = \) budget goal clarity; \( X_{1b2} = \) budget goal difficulty; \( X_{1c} = \) budgetary sophistication; \( X_{1d} = \) formal budgeting control.
6. The Measurement of Variables and Data Set

The formal budgeting process, budgetary participation, sector size, ownership, employment performance, managerial performance and sector performance were measured accordingly, as shown in Table 2 below. First, it was important to determine the instrument or indicators used for measuring each variable. The reasons have already been explained, and some instruments were adopted directly from previous studies, while others were self-developed. Second, it was necessary to check the invariance and interrelation among the indicators. Cronbach’s alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was also applied to test the consistency among the indicators.

Table 2: Measurements of the Variables in the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent variables (X):</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal budgeting planning (X₁a)</td>
<td>Frequency and extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal clarity (X₁b₁)</td>
<td>Kenis (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal difficulty (X₁b₂)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgetary sophistication (X₁c)</td>
<td>Gorden, Larcker &amp; Tuggle (1978)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal budgeting control (X₁d)</td>
<td>Frequency and extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Budgetary participation (X₂)</td>
<td>Milani (1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control variables:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector size (SIZE)</td>
<td>Employment growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership (OWNE)</td>
<td>State-owned sector [federal government]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent variables (Y):</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment performance (Y₁)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial performance (Y₁a)</td>
<td>Growth of sales revenues and profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgetary performance (Y₁b)</td>
<td>Budget achievement and motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector performance (Y₁c)</td>
<td>Vacancies and placement growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial performance Y₂</td>
<td>Mahoney, Jerdee &amp; Carrol (1963)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. The Formal Budgeting Process

The formal budgeting process as an independent variable was measured by four sub-variables as indicated in Table 2, namely formal budget planning (X₁a), budget-goal clarity and difficulty (X₁b), budgetary sophistication (X₁c), and formal budgeting control (X₁d). For each sub-variable, the method of measurement is explained below.

(1) The Formal Process of Budget Planning

The questionnaire designed for this study contained three items to assess the formal budget planning in a sector, namely:
1. How often are budgets prepared to qualify a sector’s plan for the future period?

2. To what extent do you think budgets are prepared to qualify different areas of operation in your sector?

3. Please report what are those operation areas that budgets cover in your sector?

The first two questions were used to rate and grade the respondents, using a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (never/not at all) to 7 (quite often/to a great extent). The last question was accompanied by a list of operational areas such as sales, production and employment growth, which respondents were required to mark. Respondents who indicated “no budget use” in their sectors in response to the first question were not required to answer the second and third questions, whereas those who responded that budget planning was adopted in their sectors were asked to continue to questions two and three. Thus, the result of factor analysis revealed a high degree of correlation among the three indicators of formal budgeting planning. The variance was 82.09%; the Eigen value was 2.46; and the internal reliability assessed by means of Cronbach’s alpha for the three items was 0.89.

(2) **Budget Goal Characteristics**

The budget goal characteristics were tested in terms of two dimensions: budget goal clarity and budget goal difficulty.

- **Budget goal clarity**

Budget goal clarity was described using a three-item instrument devised by Kenis (1979). The three items are:

1. My budget goals are very clear and specific. I know exactly what my budget goals are.

2. I think my budget goals are ambiguous and unclear.

3. I understand fully which of my budget goals are more important than others. I have a clear sense of priorities on these goals.

Respondents were asked to provide ratings on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “extremely disagree” (1) to “extremely agree” (7). Factor analysis indicated that these three items were loaded adequately into one factor. The Eigen value was 2.09
and the variance 69.76%. These values can be considered good. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient yielded for budget goal clarity was 0.77, indicative of a high internal reliability.

- **Budget goal difficulty**

To measure budget goal difficulty, a five-item instrument developed by Kenis (1979) was used. The five items are:

1. I should not have too much difficulty in reaching my budget goals. They appear to be fairly easy.
2. My budget goals are quite difficult to attain.
3. My budget goals require a great deal of effort from me to achieve them.
4. It takes a high degree of skill and know-how on my part to fully attain my budget goals.
5. In general, how would you characterize the budgetary goals of your unit?

A 7-point Likert-type scale instrument ranging from 1 (extremely disagree) to 7 (extremely agree) was used for the first four items. For the fifth item, the response format was a list of five points of view about budget goal (too loose; fairly loose; just right; tight but attainable; too tight). Participants were required to tick a budget goal. The 5-item questionnaire for budget goal difficulty showed a low internal reliability (Cronbach’s alpha 0.50). Therefore, we also used factor analysis as an additional method. Two factors were extracted, representing 59.45% of the total variance of all indicators. The Eigen value was 1.16. The results from the factor analysis indicated that the last three items of the five-item instrument for budget goal difficulty could be grouped into one factor. These results also indicated that the first two items for budget goal difficulty could be classified into another factor. When the last three items were placed together to be checked, a reliability test revealed that its Cronbach’s alpha increased to 0.63.

(3) **Budgeting Sophistication**

The instrument devised by Gordon et al. (1978) was further developed to measure budgeting sophistication. The original instrument included only one item rated on a five-point scale relating to the sophistication of computer support; this was modified into a three-item instrument. As mentioned before, greater budgeting sophistication includes three dimensions, namely greater use of computers, technical staff, and
financial modeling. It was necessary to measure each dimension. Therefore, all respondents were asked:

1. To what extent does software support the budget setting in your sector?

2. How many technical staff members are involved in the budget setting in your sector?

3. In your sector, to what extent is financial modeling used in the process of budget setting?

The response format was a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (representing very low budgeting sophistication) to 7 (very high budgeting sophistication). Again, factor analysis was undertaken to ascertain the uni-dimensional nature of the three items of budgetary sophistication. The Eigen value was 2.19; it was sufficient to use a single indicator to reflect the overall level of budgetary sophistication. The internal reliability of the three-item measure assessed by means of Cronbach’s alpha was 0.81.

(4) The Formal Process of Budgetary Control

The formal process of budgetary control was captured using a five-item instrument. The five items appear below.

1. How often do you think your organization calculates the difference between actual performance and budgeted performance?

2. To what extent do budget variances (calculating difference between actual performance and budgeted performance) cover, with respect to different items of operation activities, revenues, and cost for taking appropriate corrective action?

3. Please report which operation areas are covered by budget variance in your sector.

4. In your sector, will any corrective actions be undertaken if negative budget variances occur?

5. Are rewards given in the case that positive budgetary variances occur?

A 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (representing low budgeting control) to 7 (representing high budgeting control) was used for the first two items. For the third item, the response format was a list of operating areas covered by budgeting control,
and participants were required to tick relevant answers. “Yes” and “No” answers were required in response to the last two items. Factor analysis was used to analyze correlation among the indicators of formal budgeting control. This revealed that only one factor was derived, which explained 81.49% of the total variance, with an Eigen value of 2.45 (over 1.000). The Cronbach’s alpha of 0.87 for the five items measured indicated an acceptable level of internal reliability.

8. Budgetary Participation

Budgetary participation was a further independent variable measured. Based on Milani’s (1975) six-item questionnaire, a nine-item participation continuum scale to assess owners’ and employees’ perceived degree of participation was developed. These items measured the subjects’ perceptions of the extent to which an owner or lower-level manager influenced or was involved in a jointly set budget. A three-item instrument was designed for senior managers and a six-item instrument for financial managers or heads of department/front-line managers. The level of perceived participation was rated on a seven-point Likert type scale. The six-item instrument has been extensively used in earlier studies and has provided high internal reliability (Mia, 1989; Harrison, 1992; Subramaniam & Ashkanasy, 2001). The three-item instrument for senior managers comprised the following questions:

1. Which category below best describes your activity when the budget is being set?
2. How much influence do you feel you have on the final budget?
3. How do you view your contribution to the budget?

The six items for lower level managers were:

1. Which category below best describes your activity when the budget is being set?
2. Which category below best describes the reasoning provided by your superior when budget revisions are made?
3. How often do you state your request, opinions, and/or suggestions about the budget to your superior without being asked?
4. How much influence do you feel you have on the final budget?
5. How do you view your contribution to the budget?
6. How often does your superior seek your requests, opinions, and/or suggestions when the budget is being set?

The managers rated their level of perceived participation in budgeting for each of the six items on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Factor analysis was repeated to check the correlation between the three and six items. In the case of the three-item instrument for senior managers, one component was extracted, and in the case of the six-item instrument for lower level managers, although two components were extracted, the first component contributed 58.20% of the total correlation and its Eigen value was 3.35. The reliability test showed that the Cronbach’s alpha was 0.75 and 0.83 for the three-item and six-item measures respectively.

9. Overall Employment Performance

(1) Financial Performance

Sales revenues and profit (before tax) were selected to measure the financial performance of MDAs. In light of the inherent reluctance of small business managers to disclose exact financial data, as revealed in previous studies, the respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of growth in sales revenues and profit over the previous three financial years.

(2) Budgetary Performance and Budget-Related Attitude

Self-rated budgetary performance was measured by asking the respondents to indicate on a five-point scale how often they met their budget goals (or had favorable variances). This provided a reflection of goal achievement. The possible answers ranged from “never” to “always”. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of budget motivation during budget setting, budgetary motivation being taken as a measure of budgetary performance. Budgetary performance measures were partly based on the model devised by Kenis (1979).

(3) Sector Performance

In our study, sector performance referred specifically to vacancies declared by sectors and placements offered. Likert-type questionnaire items, scored from one to five, were used to measure vacancies and placement growth. For vacancies growth, the scale was intended to measure the increase in the number of employees in the sector. For placement growth, the scale was intended to measure the extent to which employees identified physically and psychologically with the sectors.
(4) Managerial Performance

A subjective measure of managerial performance was adopted. Managerial performance was assessed by means of the following eight-item self-rating performance measure (Mahoney et al., 1963; Heneman, 1974):

1. Planning: Determining goals, policies and courses of action; work scheduling; budgeting; setting up procedures; programming.
2. Investigating: Collecting and preparing information for records, reports and accounts; measuring output; inventorying; job analysis.
3. Coordinating: Exchanging information with people in your organization in order to relate and adjust programs; advising and liaison with other personnel.
4. Evaluating: Assessment and appraisal of proposals for reported or observed performance; employee appraisals; judging output records; judging financial reports; product inspection.
5. Supervising: Directing, leading and developing your personnel; counseling, training and explaining work rules to subordinates; assigning work and handling complaints.
6. Staffing: Maintaining the work force of your organization; recruiting, interviewing and selecting new employees; placing, promoting and transferring employees.
7. Negotiating: Purchasing, selling or contracting for goods or services; contacting suppliers; dealing with sales representatives.
8. Representing: Attending conventions; consultation with other sectors; business club meetings, public speeches, community drives; advancing the general interests of your sector.

Respondents made use of a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from “well below average performance” to “well above average performance” to reflect their own perceived performance in terms of these eight sub-dimensions of managerial performance (Brownell & Hirst, 1986; Gul, 1991; Tsui, 2001). Factor analysis was conducted to check the correlation among the eight indicators of managerial performance. Two components were extracted, representing 55.95% of the total correlation. The Eigen value was 1.16, and the Cronbach’s alpha 0.79.

10. Conclusion

The central question of this empirical study was whether the budgeting process significantly and positively impacted on the employment performance of Nigerian MDAs. The empirical results summarized above provide some evidence of the positive effect of the formal budgeting process on employment performance. First, it was
found that more formalized budgeting planning led to higher employment performance and sales revenues growth. This finding confirms the results of an earlier study conducted by Wijewardena and De Zoysa in 2001. Second, budget goal characteristics were shown to strongly affect the budgetary performance of Nigerian MDAs. More important, this reveals that clear budget goals led to higher goal achievement. Difficult (but attainable) budget goals increased the motivation of employees to achieve budget standards; thus, budget goal difficulty was found to lead to improved employment performance of Nigerian MDAs. Third, the results revealed that more formalized budgetary control tended to lead to higher employment performance and greater profit of a sector. This could be explained by the fact that owing to management control, the total expense of a sector would be minimized, resulting in employment performance growth and profit. It is interesting to note that formal budgeting planning and formal budgetary control differed in terms of their effect on financial performance. Formal budgeting planning had a greater impact on the employment performance growth and sales growth of MDAs than formal budgetary control. However, its impact on employment performance and profit growth was very weak, and formal budgetary control, in contrast, exerted a strong influence on the growth in employment performance and profit in MDAs.

A number of the findings from the study were not in accordance with the expectations, since the results were either insignificant or negative. Budgetary sophistication had an insignificant impact on employment performance growth and sales. Its impact on employment performance growth and profit in MDAs in fact turned out to be negative. A possible reason is that, for most Nigerian MDAs, improvement of their level of budgetary sophistication entails a costly investment involving the installation and implementation of advanced financial modeling software, and training and education of technical staff, among other things; all these expenses would bring about a decrease in net profit. The relationships between budget goal clarity and job satisfaction and between budget goal difficulty and job involvement were also insignificant. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that there could be more important factors influencing job satisfaction and job involvement in Nigerian MDAs. Alternatively, budget goal clarity and budget goal difficulty might, together with other factors, affect job satisfaction and job involvement.

The study produced further interesting and unexpected results. First, better budgetary performance was shown to lead to higher employment performance growth such as job satisfaction and job involvement. This conclusion is drawn based on the two findings from the Lisrel estimation, that is, goal achievement is shown to have a very strong and positive effect on job satisfaction, and budgetary motivation has a significant and positive effect on job involvement. Second, although sector size had an insignificant impact on employment performance growth and sales revenues, it did have an impact on employment performance growth and profit. Small sectors were found to have a lower employment performance growth and lower profit growth than medium-sized sectors. The reason for this may be cost-control inefficiency in
small sectors. This would lead to greater increases in operating expenses in small sectors than in medium-sized sectors. However, identifying the exact cause of this situation would require future detailed case studies. Another interesting finding is that government-owned sectors such as ministries and departments in Nigeria were shown to offer better job satisfaction and higher job involvement than government-owned corporations such as agencies and parastatals. It is reasonable to assume that employees, in general, may feel more secure and stable working in government-owned sectors than in government-owned corporations. This psychological factor would promote higher job security and stability within government-owned sectors, in turn resulting in a higher level of employment performance growth such as job satisfaction and job involvement.

**Table 3:** Results Summary as Indicated in Statistical Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₁a₁</td>
<td>Formal budgeting planning</td>
<td>Growth of sales revenues</td>
<td>P +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁a₂</td>
<td>Growth of profit</td>
<td></td>
<td>P +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁b₁₁</td>
<td>Budget goal clarity</td>
<td>Goal achievement</td>
<td>P +</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁b₁₂</td>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>P +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁b₂₁</td>
<td>Budget goal difficulty</td>
<td>Goal motivation</td>
<td>P +</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>E +</td>
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<tr>
<td>H₁b₂₂</td>
<td>Job involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>P +</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>E /</td>
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<tr>
<td>H₁c₁</td>
<td>Budgetary sophistication</td>
<td>Growth of sales revenues</td>
<td>P +</td>
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<td>E /</td>
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<tr>
<td>H₁c₂</td>
<td>Growth of profit</td>
<td></td>
<td>P +</td>
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<tr>
<td>H₁d₁</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>E /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₁d₂</td>
<td>Growth of profit</td>
<td></td>
<td>P +</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>E +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂</td>
<td>Budgetary participation</td>
<td>Managerial performance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E +</td>
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**Control Variables:**

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Sector size</td>
<td>Vacancies growth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Placement offered</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Budgetary motivation</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes: “P” stands for “predicted result”; “E” stands for “empirical result”; “+” represents a significant and positive impact; “/” represents an insignificant impact; “–” represents a significant but negative impact.

References


Perceptions of Hostel Dwellers
The Conversion of Hostels into Family Units

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Doi:10.5901/mjss.2012.v3n12p214

Abstract
The establishment of hostels during the apartheid era was seen as immediate and long term solution to accommodate black male migrant workers who were primarily from the Southern Africa region, who were contracted to work in the mines and industries. These hostels were built next to townships that were designated as black residential areas located, far from the cities and towns that were inhabited by whites. These camps offered cheap and affordable accommodation for the poor migrant workers who lived in forlorn poverty. The initiative of the National Department of Housing in launching the Public Sector Hostels Re-Development Programme with the initial funding of R325-million to change the deploring, congested and filthy hostels into a clean habitation suited for occupation by families was embraced by hostel inmates as a critical government's muscle to integrate them into local communities and making them more homely. This article argues that, although the government's effort in converting hostels into family units was seen as the right step in restoring human dignity and social fibre in muddled families, there are obstacles that make dreams of thousand hostel dwellers not realised in good time.

Keywords: Hostels in South Africa, Human Settlements, City of Tshwane

1. Introduction
Hostels as transit camps created by the South African apartheid regime centuries ago were utilised to accommodate mainly male migrant workers who left their families and homes behind in rural areas and neighbouring countries in search of employment in the cities. The institutionalisation of hostels as residential places for single men in South Africa during the apartheid era came as a result of the mineral revolution that took place in the late 19th century. The revolution gave rise to a migrant labour system that saw the rise of cheap labour from within the borders of South Africa and neighbouring countries. The cheap labour that was provided by migrant workers, men that were recruited from over twenty regions, who left their families in poverty stricken rural areas in search of work in the developed urban areas was seen as a solution for the demanding work in the mines, farms and factories that were owned by whites. The main areas that supplied such
According to Ntuli (2003: Online), the township was established in 1953 and is situated about 20km in the eastern part of Pretoria (Tshwane). It was built for black residents that were forcefully removed from other areas of the city because of the Group Areas Act that was introduced in 1950, that ensured Blacks reside far from the city. It is one of the Tshwane townships that is poverty stricken but with a high population; about 45% of residents are unemployed, and therefore are economically inactive. Its population is estimated at about one million in a radius of 25 km. The Mamelodi hostels were built in 1954 to accommodate male migrant workers, mostly from Limpopo Province. These hostels have been the property of the City of Tshwane, and had a capacity of 8 000 residents, but accommodated residents in the excess of 10 000 - 12 000. Quite a number of units have been demolished and residents relocated to other hostels around the area. The conversion of these hostels into family units started in 2000 but was not very successful due to poor implementation of the National Housing Policy and lack of consultation with relevant stakeholders by the municipality. Although the City has made progress in building 98 new family units at a cost of approximately R40million, a unit costing more than R400’000, there are about 9 500 residents that still need to be taken care of at a cost of more than R600 million. Currently there are 98 hostel units that have been converted into family units, and it is planned by the municipality to have 3 000 units converted in by 2014. It was envisaged that by the end of 2010 there will 148 units completed, and approximately 300 temporary residential units completed to accommodate residents currently occupying blocks to be demolished. Van Garderen and

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1 Transkei was one of the areas designated to Xhosa speaking South Africans, this being their homeland during the era of apartheid in the south-eastern region of South Africa. The area was established to promote the policy of separate development instituted by the apartheid regime.
Du Plessis (2010: Online) state that the demolition of one part of the Mamelodi hostel commenced on the 15\textsuperscript{th} and the 16\textsuperscript{th} November 2009 in which residents witnessed the hostel roof being forcefully removed, in the process exposing them and their belongings to the to the very cold wind accompanied by rain, and the residents’ property was damaged in the process. The residents took the City of Tshwane to the Northern Gauteng High Court to prevent the City from demolishing the hostels. Although the City of Tshwane argued that it was not eviction but relocation, an interim order by the court to stop the eviction was issued on the 18\textsuperscript{th} November 2009, citing that the removal of residents was illegal and not procedural. The argument was also based on the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act (“PIE”), which states that any eviction has to be sanctioned by a court. In their case the residents also alluded to the fact that they were not properly consulted on their relocation, and therefore felt left out of the process. The City of Tshwane had to pay the legal costs and restore the removed roof.

3. Literature Review

Statistics released by United Nations in 2002 estimated the number of migrant workers, both men and women, in Africa in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century was at 20 million, and the South African mines were the biggest employer, followed by factories and farms. The number of migrant workers from South Africa and its neighbouring countries like Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Mozambique in 1902 was 174,402 and increased to 230,687 and 267,894 in 2002 and 2006 respectively. In 2012 the number of migrant workers in South Africa were estimated to be 3,255,406, mainly from the South African Development Community (SADC) region.\(^2\) Approximately 63\% of the number were unskilled or semi-skilled South African contract workers who moved from rural areas in search of better job opportunities (Kanyenze 2004:5). To ensure that the migrant labour provides a flexible cheap work force, at the same time the mining industry making huge profits, the government made certain that African migrant workers were working under highly controlled labour system, and had to sign a contract before assuming duty. The migrant workers had to survive on meagre salaries to keep their rural homesteads running (Lehulere 2008: Online).

Migrant workers who were often young and uneducated were separated from their families, friends and homes because of the restrictive laws such as the Urban Areas Act and the reference book that strictly controlled movement, and ensured that these workers are not accompanied by wives and children to cities, thus adversely affecting the social fibre of communities. Initially migrant workers were men, but the growth of industry in urban areas and the removal of restrictive laws saw families united. The temporary movement of South Africans for the purposes of work changed and was “... replaced by the more permanent movement and settlement of people at or nearer to their places of

\(^2\) SADC region is formed by Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
employment” (Richmond 2010: 1). It meant that women also had to leave their homes in search of greener pastures, and served mainly as domestic workers and farm labourers for the affluent white families (Michigan State University 2005: Online). The 2002 migration pattern showed that of the 12 136 migrant cases, 67% were driven by work and 6% were looking for work. The mostly affected ages were between 15 and 55 (Statistics South Africa 2006).

The two studies conducted by Kok and Collinson in 2005 revealed that the permanent migration of individuals happens when: (a) their expectations in their current become lower than those in respect of an alternative place of residence; (b) they are influenced by the information received about the alternative place of abode from relatives and friends living there; (c) they become sufficiently dissatisfied with their lives in the current area of residence; and (d) high poverty levels in the (local government) area where people reside are an inhibiting factor in the decision to move away permanently. The study further revealed that the younger unmarried adults between the years 18–29 migrate as compared to their older, married counterparts, and that those who have migrated before are likely to migrate again. Although there are those who migrate because of higher education attainment, there are few of them who would use hostels as their dwelling place (Statistics South Africa 2006).

According to Hartleb (2005: Online) this rapid urbanisation caused a fast growing housing demand and therefore caused pressure on the government to deliver more than it could afford. By 2004 the urban growth rate was 4%, two times higher than that of Latin America and Asia. There were already 2,4 million informal households, and 800 000 were on government’s waiting list. The three identified areas greatly affected by rapid urbanisation and house shortages were Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni.

4. Data and Methods

This article is based on a qualitative and quantitative study that was conducted between 2010 and 2011 in the formerly black township of Mamelodi situated in the eastern parts of the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The available literature on hostels and housing obtained from journals, books, thesis, and electronic media served as valuable sources of secondary data. The primary data was obtained through questionnaires. To ensure reliability of the research and its findings it was imperative for the researcher to use questionnaires that were directed to 25 occupants of the new family units and 25 prospective occupants of the new family units who were still occupying old hostels that were randomly selected. Of the 50 distributed questionnaires 40 were returned, providing a response of 80%. The questionnaires were divided into two sections: Section A was on biographical details of the respondents such as gender, occupation, income, number of dependants, age, language, and education level. It was imperative to have this information as it informed the researcher of the socio-economic background of the respondents. Section B had both closed and open-ended questions. The latter was designed to allow respondents to elaborate on information provided that was not
captured in the closed-ended questions. The researcher administered 20 questionnaires, and the 30 remaining questionnaires were administered by two research assistants (each administering 15 questionnaires) who were trained on how to ask questions on the questionnaires.

5. Analysis and Interpretation of Results

For purposes of this article only specific questions pertinent to the topic were analysed and interpreted.

5.1 Respondents by Age

As shown in Figure 1, about 55% of the respondents were between ages 25 and 34, and of the ages 35-44 were 24%. The majority indicated that they came to the urban area in search of job opportunities, and would prefer to stay permanently. This concurs with the survey conducted in 2006 by Statistics South Africa (mentioned earlier on), which suggests that urbanisation is common among young people of the ages 18-29 who not only seek jobs but also permanent residence in urban areas. Only 6% were 55 years old and over, and these indicated that they intend going back to their rural homes when they reach the age 60 (retirement age).

Figure 1: Respondents by Age

5.2 Respondents by Monthly (Rands) Income

About 33% of residents earn between R1 001 and R2 499 (approximately $113 and $282) per month, with 28% earning between R2 500 ($282) and R3 499 ($396), and 17% earning between R0 and R1 000 ($113) per month. For the reason that the majority do not earn much, it becomes a challenge for them to afford the repayment of the new family units; as a result the culture of non-payment is prevalent.
5.3 Respondent by African Language

The majority of hostel residents are migrant workers who come from Limpopo, and therefore the three languages mostly spoken by hostel residents is SePedi (32%), XiTsonga (25%) and Tshivenda (18%). There are Mozambicans that have been here for long acquired South African citizenship, and therefore add to the number of the Xitsonga speaking residents.

5.4 Respondents by Marital Status

According to Figure 4 below, 75% of residents are married, although the majority of them do not live with their families. One of the reasons mentioned is that the family units that have been built so far are limited in number. However, it became apparent that because of the challenge of unemployment, and 61% earning less than R5 000 ($565), some that
occupy family units cannot afford paying for these units, and therefore end up letting them out to raise money.

**Figure 4: Respondents by Marital Status**

6. The Need to Convert Hostels into Family Units

On the question whether there was a need to convert hostels into family units, the majority of respondents, about 94%, expressed the fact that the conversion of hostels into family units was long overdue. They felt that hostels were destructive to families and social fibre of societies. The appalling conditions of hostels were not conducive for human habitation and outdated. The rubble of dirt, the unattended and often blocked toilets, the filthy kitchens, the long uncut grass that breeds rats and often used as toilets by other hostel dwellers, and the leak of sewage pipes that cause sewage waste “dams” are a health hazard not only to the residents but also to the surrounding communities. The lack of electricity makes life difficult for hostel dwellers that have to look for wood in order to make cooking fire. The absence of electricity also is a problem as it makes hostels a den of robbers at night. On the other hand the remaining 6% were of the opinion that the hostel redevelopment project was not necessary because they have houses in areas where they come from, and therefore could not afford to maintain two houses.

7. Community Participation

About 72% of the respondents, who were mainly hostel dwellers that have not received units as yet, complained about their participation in the process of conversion of hostels into family units. Although they knew that hostels were going to be converted to family units, they were not properly consulted on the issue of when the hostels were going to be demolished. The hostels are in an inhabitable state; the toilets have no running water,
resulting in blockages and an unbearable stench, the leaks in the showers render them unusable, the refuse in and around the hostels piles up, which may be seedbed of diseases, a number of broken windows, and a roof that is leaking. The challenges in the area include the refusal of residents to move out of the hostels. Although the municipality established the Local Negotiating Group that is chaired by ward councillors to enhance communication between the municipality and prospective occupants of the units, communities affected by the move still feel they are not thoroughly consulted.

8. Fairness in the Allocation of Units

There is an alleged corruption by officials who do not follow the registration list when assigning units to residents. 65% of respondents believe that councillors who are responsible to allocate residents new units give first preference to those who have money to bribe them. One respondent claimed that some officials were paid up to R1 500 by individuals to jump the queue, and also that the units were given to relatives and friends of officials to occupy, and that these relatives and friends pay less than market related rentals. When the pilot project started in 2000, according to another respondent, many hostel residents were moved out and promised to be brought back after the conversion was completed. That did not happen; instead the improved units were allocated to different people that were not even hostel residents, not even in the waiting list. The displaced residents have to stay in old hostel blocks that do not have basic services. The action of the municipality prompted residents to take the municipality to court, as they felt that the prescribed processes in the allocation of renovated units were not followed.

9. Transparency and Equity in Awarding Contracts

51% of residents alluded to the fact that the awarding of contracts to contractors has not been transparent, as some of the contractors are either friends related to municipality officials, and that local women were not fairly represented in the empowerment; out of fourteen emerging contract companies awarded the tender to revamp the hostels, there were only four contract companies owned by women.

10. Temporary accommodation Displaced Residents

97% expressed the fact that the programme turned to be disruptive to lives of the intended recipients of the new units. Residents of the hostels that were supposed to be demolished have to be moved to nearby hostels, and those that have been moved already complained of overcrowding. Again, residents of old hostels of units resist moving to the new units because of the reduction of number of occupants of the unit. In the old hostels 12 people would share a room, but each new unit houses one or two families, leaving the rest displaced with no accommodation. It is not only about space but finances also as explained by one official who explained that finding alternative
accommodation to house the displaced hostel residents proved to be an expensive exercise for municipality that is already operating in the negative.

11. Culture of Non-Payment

The culture of non-payment of rent makes it difficult for municipalities to recover the money that was used to build these units, and also to raise more revenue to build more units, and has negative impact on the maintenance and provision of services such as water and sanitation, electricity and refuse disposal. The non-payment has also caused the private sector investors not to contribute anymore to the project. Some of the reasons for non-payment cited by residents are unemployment and inability to afford maintaining more than one household. According to recent statistics the unemployment rate in the three townships is at 25, 3%, and hostel residents form a bulk of this percentage. 30% of the respondents indicated that they were either not employed or do not have a fixed job. As far as affordability is concerned, some residents mentioned the fact that they have houses in rural areas, and therefore find it difficult and expensive to run and maintain two households. They would have preferred to either rent the units at a very low cost, occupy these units free of charge or even given the units free. Even though they had agreed to pay for rental at an agreed amount, they discovered later that they could not afford because of either the loss of jobs or demands from families left in rural areas.

12. Revamping Maintenance Costs

As expressed by the municipality official, the programme turned to be costly because of the devaluing of the rand that caused the rate of inflation to soar. The revamping process was not only about subsidising beds but also included the replacement of roofs, repairing the drainage system and broken windows, replacing of unwanted grass and weed by planting lawn and using bricks in paving other portions of the hostel grounds, and the construction and replacement of storm water drains. The culture of non-payment of rent makes it difficult for maintenance. This survey revealed that 22% of those occupying new units do not want to pay rent as they own houses in rural areas.

13. Conclusion

This article was aimed at evaluating the progress made in the conversion of hostels into family units programme in the Tshwane Metropolitan area, namely Mamelodi. The article gave a background on the establishment of hostels in the apartheid era, and the impact the migratory laws had on families and how the apartheid laws influenced the socio-economic conditions of individuals and communities where these hostels were built. The conversion of hostels into family units by the present government, in line with the principles of democracy as enshrined in the Constitution, was an attempt to bring back the inherent dignity that needs to be respected and protected. The National Department
of Housing in addressing the housing crisis in the country took upon its shoulders to ensure that the transformation of hostels into family units is implemented, thus the introduction of The Hostels Redevelopment Programme that serves as the Policy for the Upgrading of Public Sector Hostels. However, the implementation of the programme met with some challenges that have led to its delay as far as completion is concerned. Some of the challenges identified by the research are alleged corruption by officials in the allocation of units, the unexpected inflation and non-payment of rent by residents that led to the escalation of revamping costs and the lack of maintenance of the units that have already been built, the displacement of residents due to demolition of some of the old units, and lack of proper stakeholders’ participation.

In conclusion, for the redevelopment programme to be successful there is a need for the officials to be transparent in the allocation of the new units to prevent suspicion and allegation of corruption and nepotism. It is also imperative that the monthly income of individuals who are supposed to be occupying the units be taken into consideration to avoid non-payment of rent by the occupants. Again, consultation and involvement of the intended recipients of the new units is crucial. The Local Negotiating Group has to work hand in hand and consult thoroughly with hostel residents in every matter that affects them, and that the consultation and engagement should be within the parameters of the law and all housing legislation.

References


