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Preface

In this volume, authors tackle pertinent issues facing local government in South Africa, Thailand and Uganda. While participation in decision-making processes in the structures of local government remains a topical issue, violent service delivery protests in South African municipalities have dominated the discussions in this volume. Three out of eight articles in this volume took issue with the theme of service delivery. Thus, the first three articles - one, two and three, focus on service delivery at local government level and the factors that led to spread of violent service delivery protests nationally in recent years. Article four moves away from the issue of service delivery and focus on the impacts of the Thai Constitutions of 1997 and 2007 on decentralization of local government, which began with the transfer of responsibilities and activities from central government to local administrations through the 1999 Decentralization Act and 2000 Decentralization Plan. Article five examines Local Economic development (LED) as a strategy for development. It takes issue with the fact that while in advanced or industrialized countries LED has achieved significant successes it is largely in its infancy in most of the African continent, with the exceptions of South Africa. The design and implementation of LED by local government is complicated by a number of factors such as differences in the understanding and interpretation of the concept; differences in the ideological paradigms which inform the chosen path of LED; and variations in terms of the design of the strategy. Article six assesses the impact of quiet corruption on accountability and service delivery in Iganga District in Uganda. The author refers to quiet corruption as all types of malpractices of frontline providers (teachers, doctors, inspectors, and other government officials at the frontline of service provision) that do not involve monetary exchange. Article seven examines the leadership challenges faced by the Msinga local municipality in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa, with specific reference to the co-existence of councilors and traditional leaders in their attempt to create an effective, efficient, and responsive municipality capable of meeting people’s needs and development demands. Finally, article eight examines the participatory communication patterns about community sustainable forest management of Tambon Tha-i-boon Forest in Lomsak District, Phetchabun Province, Thailand. I have no doubt that this growing body of knowledge and literature will point out possible solutions to some of the challenges facing local government, not only in South Africa, Thailand, and Uganda; but also globally.

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A Critical Analysis of Factors Underlying Service Delivery Protests in South Africa

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Abstract

Service delivery has become a political hot potato for the African National Congress (ANC)-led government. The ANC came to power on the wave of popular support for its determination to improve the lives of ordinary South Africans. Although significant achievements have been made in the provision of services such as water, electricity, and sanitation, there is still simmering dissatisfaction. The first signs of discontent surfaced in 2004 when a wave of protests gripped urban and metropolitan areas of all nine provinces. At its zenith, in May 2008, frustration with service delivery issues led to the death of 61 people. The protest phenomenon, commonly dubbed ‘service delivery protests’, is topical, of immense public interest and requires serious study and understanding. Although the media often reports on communities embarking on protests citing lack of, poor, or slow service delivery, seldom does it probe deeply into the actual reasons behind the protests. Service delivery protests have become a weapon of choice for rural communities and marginalized urban communities hoping to be heard in order to have their needs met. Proper understanding of factors underlying the protest phenomenon should focus the attention of local, provincial and national authorities on developing strategies to address key issues. Based on a critical analysis of four documented case studies and relevant literature on social protests, this paper uncovers not only service delivery issues, but also a number of extraneous factors implicated in the ubiquitous protest phenomenon. Structurally, the article is divided into three sections. Section one, the introduction, highlights the pervasiveness of protests in South Africa, points out controversy surrounding the phrase ‘service delivery protests’, indicates analysis of four documented case studies and the literature as the method of study, provides motivation for the investigation, briefly outlines history of the protest phenomenon in South Africa, and gives a theoretical framework. Section two, the core of the article, analyses the cases and literature, bringing out key factors. The concluding section suggests that vicious structural factors, including poverty, inequality, and unemployment, and the dual economies phenomenon, need to be comprehensively
addressed. This will give meaningful and dignifying lives to citizens, while concerted and relentless efforts are targeted addressing systemic/institutional challenges such as corruption, nepotism, and self-enrichment and lack of administrative, technical, and financial skills.

**Key words:** Service Delivery, Community Protest, Parliament, Urban Predominance

**Introduction**

Since 2004, community protests, or what are popularly called ‘service delivery protests’, have become a fairly established phenomenon. In fact it is claimed South Africa could be the protest capital of the world (Tong & Lei, 2010; Soong, 2006). Part of the problem in studying the protest phenomenon is lack of a common definition for ‘community protest’. According to Karamoko and Jain (2011:3), Municipal IQ identifies ‘major’ municipal service delivery protests as “those where communities oppose the pace and quality of service delivery by their municipalities”. Karamoko and Jain (2011:3) broaden the definition to include protests where complaints such as corruption or housing are raised by protesters without explicitly referring to inadequate service delivery. The justification for a broader definition is two-fold. First, difficulty in establishing concerns of protesters makes it necessary not to exclude any protest on the basis of it not being of a ‘service delivery’ nature. Secondly, a broader definition facilitates distinction between protests in which protesters’ complaints fall within the domain of local government and those where complaints go beyond local government mandate.

The reasons behind the boiling cauldron of ‘service delivery protests’ in South Africa are multifaceted. Often originating from the media, which has been accused of wanton sensationalism and labeling all community protests as having service-delivery related content without any critical analysis, the phrase ‘service delivery protest’ is controversial. Underpinning protests often lay deep and complex factors which can be uncovered only through careful analysis. Without taking an initial position on appropriateness of the phrase, this paper critically analyses four documented case studies on community social protests in South Africa and relevant literature on the protest phenomenon. This way, factors accounting for the spate of protests emerge, providing clarity on the accuracy of the phrase, which has fairly established itself in the discourse of (local) government performance. Finally, the paper examines some characteristics of ‘service delivery protests’, including frequency/pervasiveness, violence, seasonality, and urban prominence.
Motivation for this study springs from two sources. First, Sinwell (2011:66) indicates that, although serious attention has been given to protest and resistance in the literature of post-apartheid South Africa, treatment has been limited and superficial, and the voice of the poor has often been dismissed. Secondly, Duncan (n.d.;n.p.) laments the absence of research by South Africa’s research institutions and universities, hence the little knowledge we have about protest action and its underlying processes, despite “… the centrality of protest in our national politics”. According to Duncan, the dearth of research leaves a gap in the ethnography of protest, making it impossible to fully understand this ubiquitous phenomenon. This paper represents an attempt at addressing these concerns.

The four documented case studies used in this investigation are: Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (May 2005), Matjhabeng Municipality Phomolong’s ‘volatile Molotov Cocktail’ (February-mid April 2005), Phumelela uprising (September 2004) and Voortrekker’s calling smoke (June 2009). They are chosen for two reasons. First, they present substantial and diverse complaints raised by protesters. Secondly, they highlight increasing violence associated with prominent involvement of the youth, unemployed, poor, marginalized, ‘voiceless’, and informal settlement dwellers and/or township residents in service delivery protests. Finally, the cases represent community protests, devoid of calculated xenophobic attacks that might conflate the investigation. Kirsten and von Holdt (2011:3) highlight “a peculiar combination of absence and unnecessary and provocative violence” of the police and the prominent role of the youth, particularly young men, in collective violence. These issues are not pursued in this paper.

The case studies and literature analysis on which the paper is anchored focuses on the period 2004 to 2011 for three reasons, even though statistics are not provided for the entire period. First, in 2004, South Africa had been under majority rule for 10 years, a reasonable time during which South Africans would have had enough time to reflect on and assess how far they had moved away from the political and socio-economic situation imposed by apartheid and feel justified in venting their discontent in ways that “exposed some uncomfortable truths about the state and wellbeing of local governance in South Africa” (van Donk, 2011:6). Secondly, according to Alexander (2010:25), ‘service delivery protests’ could be traced back to apartheid days, to the 1900s and even to the emergence of social movements after 2000. However, Alexander (2010:25) states that scholars such as Atkinson (2007), Booysen (2007) and Pithouse (2007) agree on dating the current social protest

To contextualize ‘service delivery protests’ sweeping across South Africa since the beginning of the millennium, it is important to acknowledge that the struggle for meaningful social change to bring about a just society has a long history and is by no means over. ‘Service delivery protests’ is a contentious expression. The Ad Hoc Committee on Co-ordinate Oversight on Service Delivery disputes correctness of the phrase ‘municipal service delivery protests’, and refers to it as a misnomer (Parliament of RSA, 2010:5), because local government tends to be blamed for shortcomings that fall outside its mandate (housing, for example). Similarly, Alexander (2010:1) takes issue with the phrase because it does not reflect the variety of issues protestors put forward, does not account for the high degree of violence which characterizes the protests and does not describe the main social forces behind the protests. Alexander and Pfaffe (2011:5) have similar reservations. In place of ‘service delivery protests’, Alexander (2010) and Alexander and Pfaffe (2011) proffer rebellion of the poor as a more appropriate label. On the basis that the protests tend to originate from poorer neighborhoods, shack settlements and townships, rather than suburbs, Alexander (2010:26) describes them as “local political protests” that “place demands on people who hold or benefit from political power”. According to Alexander (2010:26), the protests take on an array of forms: “mass meetings, drafting of memoranda, petitions, toyi-toying, processions, stay-aways, election boycotts, blockading of roads, construction of barricades, burning of tires, looting, destruction of buildings, chasing unpopular individuals out of townships, confrontations with the police, and forced resignations of elected officials”. These forms characterize ‘service delivery protests’ in South Africa. Mitra (1991:9) states that similar forms of protests have been used in India to achieve political ends: stopping all public activity (‘hartal’), refusing to clear an area (‘dharna’), encircling managerial staff (‘gherao’), defying laws in order to get arrested (‘jail barao’), and blocking traffic (‘rasta roko’).

Todes (2006) indicates that, with the adoption of a neo-liberal policy framework in 1996, the poor have increasingly been abandoned in the policy-making process in favor of monetary implications. Gibson (2006) suggests post-apartheid South Africa’s new social movements not only challenge neo-liberal capitalist globalization, but also aim to present alternatives and assert the essence of being human. Thus, rebellion of the poor is an accurate description of attempts by the poorer and marginalized sections of the South African population to initiate social change from the bottom. Duncan (2009:4) points out that, with
the adoption of neo-liberal policies by the Mbeki regime, “protest action became a significant feature of political life in South Africa during Mbeki’s term of office”. Continuing with the neoliberal policies of his predecessor, more ‘service delivery protests’ occurred in the first seven months of Zuma’s presidency than in the last three years of Mbeki’s administration (Alexander, 2010: 28). Williams (2009:9) observes that “these current struggles for social justice are essentially in opposition to neoliberalism, which largely privatizes the basic needs of ordinary people on the ubiquitous market, consequently resulting in the commoditization of every aspect of society”. Against this background, one notes recurrence in service delivery discourse of issues such as grinding poverty, increasing inequality, and rising unemployment, mostly affecting black South Africans. However, Sinwell (2011:66) denies the protests are a challenge to neo-liberalism.

**Historical outline of protest phenomenon**

Williams (2009:6) outlines seven phases of the protest phenomenon in South Africa, namely:

- **Pre-1976**: a strategic dormant participatory phase, marked by a quest for liberation in the face of oppression and exploitation.
- **1976**: the Soweto revolt, which marked the beginning of the struggle by the youth against ‘gutter’ education and in pursuit of national liberation.
- **1977-1983**: the death of Steve Biko made the need for community organization, mobilization, and control at grassroots level paramount, culminating in the formation of the United Democratic Front.
- **1984-1989**: escalation of struggle into international arena, leading to divestment and boycotts.
- **1990-1994**: unbanning of liberation movements and beginning of politically negotiated settlements such as Reconstruction and Development Program and the 1994 Constitution.
- **1996-2000**: establishment of ‘development’ partnerships/programs based on a need for visible, experientially significant forms of social change following adoption of the post-apartheid Constitution, Act 108 of 1996.
- **2000-2004 and beyond**: euphoria and hope of post-democratic South African experience of past ten years’ experience fading into disappointment and existential despair.
According to Mottiar and Bond (n.d.:3-4), Ngwane (2010), categorizes post-apartheid South Africa’s ‘protest movement’ into three distinct phases:

- **Phase 1 (mid- to late-1990s):** protests during this phase occurred over dissatisfaction with municipal services, housing, and lack of infrastructure. The anti-privatization strike organized by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and protest by the Mass Democratic Movement, which fell out with the Mandela administration shortly after it assumed power, are examples.

- **Phase 2 (early 2000s):** new urban social movements such as the Anti-Privatization Forum, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee and the Treatment Action Campaign came to the fore during this period. Also prominent was the Concerned Citizens’ Forum of Durban’s Chatsworth Township, which, according to Desai (2002), pioneered a new class politics. The main objective of the new social movements, a motley collection of organizations, was to mobilize the poor and marginalized to take on the state regarding failure or lack of policies for social change.

- **Phase 3 (current protest actions):** refers to non-ideologically inspired local community protests and violent national strikes organized by the Mass Democratic Movement in the 1990s, or new social movements of the 2000s.

Alexander and Pfaffe (2011:1) label protests occurring since 2004 ‘rebellion of the poor’, while Mottiar and Bond (n.d.:21) refer to them as ‘popcorn protests’, because of their tendency to “rise to giddy heights, but fall back quickly, and if the wind blows rightward in a xenophobic way, so too are protesters without ideological background and political training, drawn to attack immigrants as proximate causes for their socio-economic grievances”.

Alexander and Pfaffe (2011:1) note the sweeping of an uncoordinated, widespread and often-violent *rebellion of the poor* across South Africa, a phenomenon whose nature has not been recorded “anywhere in the world in the recent past and nothing similar in South African history”. Given South Africans’ history of employing civil unrest to achieve social and political objectives (Karamoko & Jain, 2011:35), it is perhaps not surprising that protests are a prominent feature of post-apartheid South Africa. It must, however, be emphasized that, even if current protests parallel those of the apartheid era, they are different in terms of their objective. Protests under apartheid were ultimately aimed at bringing down the regime, whereas contemporary protests seek to draw government’s attention to the socio-economic conditions under which some citizens live.
Ramjee and van Donk (2011:11) observe that there is a growing trend for public protests involving communities of interests mobilizing outside of state-sanctioned spaces for engagement. According to the authors, recurrence of protests point to two intricately linked issues. The first is a lack of response by the state and local government to communities’ needs and concomitant failure to clearly communicate reasons for inadequate addressing of citizens’ needs and concerns. The second relates to the inadequacy and failure of structures and processes established by local government legislation for expression of dissent to provide an avenue for fair and inclusive voice of the poor and marginalized. The protests have highlighted “acute gaps in delivery on basic services as well as exposed weaknesses in local government” (Ramjee & van Donk, 2011:12). More importantly, the protests might be an indication that citizens’ participation through formal or official structures, such as voting at elections, izimbizo, ward committees and Integrated Development Plans, are ineffective, resulting in the use of informal participation such as marches, memoranda, and establishment of community structures.

Theorizing community protests

Four theories on social protests are advanced here in an attempt to explain the protest phenomenon in South Africa. The first is the insurgency theory advanced by Piven and Cloward (1997). The authors feel that the only strategy open to poor people to advance their social and economic progress agenda is insurgency. Thus the protest phenomenon in South Africa is seen as insurgency or rebellion (Alexander, 2010; Alexander & Pfaffe, 2011), reflecting similar events in other parts of the world. Mass disruptions and defiance have been shown to be effective in achieving the aims of the poor and the working class in the United States of America, especially racial minorities in the 1930s and 1960s. The theory also explains the success of anti-International Monetary Fund protests in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1970s and 1980s. Further, Bolivian social movement activism against state-business involvement in water and gas between 2000 and 2005 led to the formation of a political movement that eventually unseated a neoliberal government. Albritton (1979:1003) echoes the insurgency theory, in asserting that insurgency is the only channel available to the poor for compelling social and economic progress and advancing their interests.

Without stretching the insurgency theory to breaking point, it could be argued that the poor in South Africa have taken a cue from the anti-apartheid struggle and are mobilizing an ‘insurgent citizenship’ to counter ‘differentiated citizenship’ (Hanson, 2008:7-9, cited in von

The second theory on social protests derives from Polanyi’s (1957) ‘double movement’. ‘Double movement’ refers to the claim that (re)structuring of the economy and society based on ideals of the self-regulating or free market inevitably leads society to reassert itself against the commoditization of land, labor, and money. There are two aspects to the ‘double movement’. The first refers to the late-18th and early-19th century push for a self-regulating market. The idea of separating the economy from the system of societal norms and practices is referred to as “separateness” or “disembeddeness”, as contrasted with “embeddedness” (Polanyi, 1977:48). The second aspect refers to counter movements which Polanyi argues necessarily and spontaneously mobilize against the push for free market reforms. This aspect seems to explain South Africa’s social protests. In the early 1980s, neo-liberal micro-economic and micro-development policies caused disaffection and led to social protests orchestrated by the South African National Civic Organization. The same policies have influenced the protest phenomenon since the late 1990s, especially in the Mbeki era, when costs associated with the commoditization of water, sanitation, and electricity rose alongside increasing poverty, inequality, and unemployment.

The third theoretical perspective is presented by Buccus, Hemson, Hicks and Piper (2007), who see protest as an informal form of participation in local government, complementing formal electoral participation (voting) and participation via official structures (‘invited’ spaces) such as izimbizo, ward councilors and participation in Integrated Development Plans. Cornwall (2002:3-4) carries the protest-as-participation argument further, indicating that two kinds of spaces with different sets of power relations co-exist: ‘invited’ and ‘claimed’/’invented’. Sinwell (2010) defines ‘invited’ spaces as formal channels of participatory democracy, while ‘invented’ spaces reflect ‘self-activity’ spaces citizens create for themselves. The author points out that those participating in ‘invited’ spaces may have to do so within the parameters of those who have done the inviting, leaving them with little freedom to act on their own. In other words, ‘invited’ spaces are formal and constricting.

According to Cornwall (2002:17), ‘invented’ spaces “emerge more organically out of sets of common concerns or identifications … These may be ‘sites of radical possibility’ where those who are excluded find a place and a voice … What distinguishes them is that
they are constituted by participants *themselves* rather than created for the participation of *others*. Citizens may choose to ignore ‘invited’ spaces of participation in favor of autonomous forms of action (protests), which enable them to “create their own opportunities and terms of action” (Cornwall, 2002:3-4). Thus, ‘claimed’ spaces are unbounded. When ‘invited’ spaces are unlikely to yield desired results, citizens resort to ‘claimed’ spaces. To borrow Booysen’s (2007:22) terminology, South Africans now exercise their democratic right “with the ballot and the brick”. This means “… changing gears – away from a sole reliance on the mechanism of voting and representation and towards the grass-roots application of mechanisms, using both voting and protest as a means to obtain more effective service delivery”. Booysen (2007:31) adds that “the South African local electorate … appears to believe that ‘voting helps and protest works’ when it comes to deciding on a repertoire of action to optimize service delivery in communities”, hence the ballot and brick strategy.

Thompson and Nleya (2010:1) state that: “the importance of protests in overcoming the apartheid state remains etched in the psyche of many South Africans”. This might explain the propensity for citizens to resort to protest action and the consequent high number of such actions recorded between 2004 and early 2011. The authors echo Cornwall (2002) in acknowledging that protests occur on a continuum of participation. In the view of Thompson and Nleya (2010:19), “protests are in fact a sign that citizens engage in ways that allow them to define their citizenship and their place in South Africa’s democratic trajectory in a favorable way”. Ramjee and van Donk (2011:22) reflect this view in suggesting that state-provided or ‘invited’ spaces restrict citizens’ ability to effectively voice their concerns, asserting that “it is hardly surprising that communities have elected to engage the state in their own spaces and on their own terms”.

The fourth and final theory is the resource mobilization theory which, according to Klandermans (1984), underlines the salience of structural factors such as availability of resources to an organization or group and the position of individuals in social networks. This theory is diametrically opposed to traditional social-psychological theories, which focus on what attracts people to participate in social movements. Rather, the theory predicates participation in protest on a rational decision-making process, where individuals weigh the costs and benefits of participation. According to this theory, then, protesters make rational choices based on what they perceive they might gain or lose by engaging in protest and act according to their assessment. That protest action is ubiquitous in South Africa would seem to suggest protesters realize some gains, however defined.
Analysis of Documented Case Studies: Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality protest

On 12 May 2005, service delivery related unrest started at Kwadonga, Motherwell, in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan (NMBM) area or Greater Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape. The unrest eventually spread to surrounding areas. The youth, particularly the unemployed and school children, many of whom lived in informal settlements, played a leading role.

According to Botes, Lenka, Marais, Matebesi and Sigenu (2007:77), four categories of reasons account for the unrests, namely: structural, systemic, locality-specific and program or project-specific factors. These are explored in the following sections.

**Structural factors**

Structural (or external) factors, discussed by Botes et al., 2007:78), refer to factors beyond the control of the municipality. These factors included issues such as prevailing conditions of poverty, inequality, unemployment, past legacies, and other negative circumstances. These factors are, in themselves, ideal sources of social protests and need to be addressed alongside service delivery, rather than service delivery being superimposed on them.

A major factor in the protests was poverty, with its accompanying socio-economic conditions, and unemployment, which South Africa, as a developing country, faces. These problems pose a formidable hurdle to service delivery and sustainable development.

A second factor was the amalgamation of Uitenhage, Despatch, and Port Elizabeth into the NMBM municipality. The incorporation had adverse effects on the ability of these municipalities to render normal service delivery and maintenance functions optimally, since it took time to integrate the different administrative systems of the different entities.

Thirdly, retrenchment of key qualified and experienced technicians as a consequence of the amalgamation resulted in weak capacity, because scarce specialist knowledge and skills had been lost. With more administrative staff, fewer technical personnel and the municipality’s inability to replace the latter, managing infrastructure and maintaining quality service delivery were severely affected.

South Africa’s slow economic growth rate of five percent at the time made it difficult for the NMBM municipality to keep pace with providing adequate services because of supply
problems in the built environment sector. This was exacerbated by national government’s erratic allocation of housing subsidies to provinces to meet housing needs.

There has also been tension between demographic and economic growth, on the one hand, and the municipality’s ability to provide adequate services, on the other, rapid population growth of 2% per annum was fuelled by rural-urban migration from depressed areas of the province, where local economies are unable to provide employment opportunities. Combined with the then high economic growth rate at the time, it resulted in shortage of serviced land. This has put pressure on infrastructure and local service-delivery systems in the metropolitan area. To exacerbate the situation, the manufacturing sector had been declining.

Finally, the much-talked-about dual economies phenomenon, which characterizes post-apartheid South Africa and produces economic inequities, has been held to account for the NMBM area unrests. The Eastern Cape, and Nelson Mandela Bay by extension, exhibits the sharpest contrast of the dual economies phenomenon. In the metropolitan area a modern, expanding motor industry valued at 27% of South Africa’s poorest families co-exist.

Systemic factors

The second layer of reasons for the protests, extensively discussed by Botes et al. (2007:79-90, are related to issues such as policies and practices of national and provincial government; weak inter-governmental relations; unfunded mandates; inefficient municipal governance; inadequate management; improper functioning of local governments; and poor municipal service delivery.

One major factor in the unrest was housing delivery challenges. A number of specific housing issues exacerbated housing delivery, including housing delivery policies and strategies. First, housing policy has undergone three different phases (1994-1999, 1999-2004 and 2004-present) which, since 1994, has affected both the pace and quality of housing. Secondly the lack of housing delivery caused a number of difficulties, namely lack of technical skills among emerging contractors, under-spending by the provincial housing department, non-completion of houses and poor quality of materials used. Other factors were selective housing allocations and process of housing delivery; lack of horizontal equity in housing delivery; and unavailability of serviced residential land.
The second major issue related to unfulfilled promises about housing delivery made by local politicians just before the local government elections. Thirdly were issues of governance. Inter-governmental relations showed up poorly. Spheres of government accused each other of failed promises and under-performance in delivering houses. Local authorities blamed provincial government and private developers; councilors blamed municipal officials, while community groups accused local councilors of insufficient communication. In turn, the municipality blamed provincial government for bureaucratization and failing to release housing subsidies in time. The provincial government pointed out limited capacity for quality delivery in the local authority (Botes et al.:2007:84). Delays on housing delivery resulted from the provincial and local government financial year being different.

An already bad situation was worsened by the provincial government’s role in funding new housing. It placed a moratorium in 2004 and 2005 on the grounds that the municipality was under-spending and had not completed some projects.

At local government level, the role and responsibilities of councilors and accountability relationships are unclear. Although councilors select and monitor programs and projects, they do not manage. This has led to their being labeled anti-developmental and unresponsive. Also instrumental in the unrests was disjuncture between development objectives in Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and broader community needs, as well as issues relating to corruption and self-enrichment.

The fourth factor related to the role of the media in escalating the protests through sensationalism, that is highlighting issues protesters had not even complained about, while and a rift between the ANC and the South African Communist Party constituted the fifth factor. Also, ex-councilors were said to be behind the scenes, strategizing for the forthcoming local government elections.

**Locality-specific factors**

These included issues at the local (ward) level, such as personality clashes between ward councilors and the people they represent of differences over issues, developmental issues affecting specific areas or yet-to-be-resolved issues (Botes et al., 2007:77).
Project-specific conflicts

These factors related to favoritism and nepotism relating to employment on government housing projects, particularly, allegations of the municipality favoring people aligned to politicians, leading to discontent and work stoppage and conflicts between the municipality and developers (Botes et al., 2007:90).

Briefly, then, a number of structural factors, particularly the ubiquitous poverty, inequality and unemployment phenomena, featured in the unrest, as did systemic issues such as housing delivery challenges, dysfunctional governance, and politicians’ activities. Locality-specific and project-specific factors were also important, even if not as prominent as structural and systemic issues.

Phomolong’s ‘volatile Molotov Cocktail’

Writing in the Sunday Independent of 20 February 2005, Schmidt described unrest that started in the Matjhabeng Municipality town of Phomolong on 4 February 2005 as “a volatile Molotov Cocktail of genuine grievances and about the slow pace of delivery and a runaway rumor of half-baked allegations of corruption”.

According to Botes et al. (2007:7), general concerns about service delivery, nepotism, corruption, and slow delivery of housing were ostensibly reasons for the Phomolong protests. Before Phomolong, however, there had been protests in late 2004 and early 2005 in Odendaalsrus (Kutlwanon) and Virginia (Meloding) about preference in appointing Lesotho citizens in the mines over locals; awarding of municipal tenders to outsiders; dissatisfaction with prevalence of the bucket system of sanitation; housing delivery processes; non-communication of municipality’s intentions for the area (Botes et al., 2007:17).

Botes et al. (2007:20-25) cite protesters’ grievances for the Phomolong unrest, which were contained in a memorandum of complaints submitted to the Matjahabeng Council. The complaints fell into seven categories, namely: allegations against Councilor Tshabangu; interference with tenders allocated in Phomolong; fronting illiterate community members in connection with the local town hall, RDP houses and municipal service accounts; demand for immediate dismissal of the councilor; immediate launch of investigation into all tenders that had taken place in Phomolong; service delivery; implementation of the Free Basic Electricity policy; tardy provision of waterborne sanitation; a failed promise by the Department of Health to provide a 24-hour clinic in place of the day clinic; housing delivery; uncompleted
housing units, for which action for dereliction of duty was requested; accusations of maladministration; alleged granting of housing subsidies to some people earning above the maximum income limit; allocation of houses to some beneficiaries who had not applied for them; and housing subsidies not having been granted to some people who had applied for them.

Horizontal equity: Phomolong residents did not receive houses built on serviced stands, whereas Hani Park residents did; economic development and employment; residents not benefiting from municipal tenders; greater youth development through learner-ships and youth development by the Department of Labor; leasing of municipal commonage land to white farmers rather than it being used for community benefit; employment and appointment procedures at Matjhabeng Local Municipality; unavailability of job application forms at the Hennenman municipal office at Welkom; advertisement of and employment on merit.

Regional identity: A review of municipalities’ boundaries; unavailability of bursaries for local students; Ward committees; dissolution of Ward Two committee (Tshabangu’s ward); disbanding of Ward Three committee (Democratic Alliance ward); Integrated Development Planning processes; need to launch public educational campaign on IDPs to overcome ignorance and facilitate participatory processes; insufficient and ineffective community participation; lack of regular feedback about progress with the IDP.

A critical evaluation indicates that the list of complaints contained a variety of issues: genuine service delivery concerns, concerns about economic development and employment, housing, alleged corruption and governance issues relating to IDP and ward committees. It is particularly important to note that housing, which is not a local government mandate, and the national issue of corruption feature prominently among the grievances.

**Phumelela unrest**

The Centre for Development and Enterprise report (CDE, 2007) on the Phumelela Local Municipality unrest paints a disturbing picture. In the municipality of three small towns (Vrede, Warden, and Memel) and their respective townships of Thembalihle, Ezenzeleni, and Zamani, poverty and economic stagnation provided the background to an explosive situation. Poverty is reported at 78.2%, making Phumelela the third poorest municipality in the province. Unemployment is at 38.6%, fifth in the Free State (CDE, 2007:9). While the local
economy is declining, an influx of poor, unemployed, low-skilled farm workers has increased the rural/urban population ratio to 40/60, putting a severe strain on service provision.

Infrastructure provision for Vrede, Warden, and Memel is a problem. In 2004, Vrede experienced both water supply problems and poor water quality, with diseases such as diarrhea and skin irritations confirmed. Sanitation became problematic when two of the town’s three pumping machines broke down, resulting in a sewerage spill causing health problems among the town and Thembalihle residents.

In Warden, the water supply was insufficient because of poor planning for drought. Water quality was poor and old pipes often broke. In Ezenzeleni, residents were unhappy about the collection and disposal of sanitation buckets, which were often uncollected for weeks and improperly washed. Sewerage was also being disposed of close to houses. The water system did not work well (CDE, 2007:11).

Water was unpurified and often unavailable in Memel, and sewerage flowed in the streets. Zamani residents complained about non-functioning water-borne toilets and electricity was erratic. Roads in Ezenzeleni and Warden were almost unusable because of potholes.

As a result of problems with water, electricity, sanitation, roads, and service delivery bottlenecks, businesses were negatively affected in an otherwise potentially prosperous tourism environment. The municipality was also said to have failed to engage with business people meaningfully. As a result, no sub-division and rezoning of land for business took place.

Violent illegal protest action, organized by black unemployed people and youth of school-going age, under the banner of ‘Concerned Youth Groups’, started on 14 September 2004 in Thembalihle, and spread to other areas, joined by white ratepayers’ associations. This protest action continued until early November.

During a legal protest march to Phumelela municipal offices in Vrede on 22 September 2004, the following complaints were made: poor condition of roads; high salaries of officials; poor service delivery; inefficient officials; insufficient sport facilities; dirty water; poor condition of roads in Thembalihle; nepotism; allocation of housing subsidies to people earning above the prescribed limit for housing grants; inappropriate spending of available money (CDE, 2007:13).
A demand for the municipal manager to vacate office within seven days was also made.

In Warden, a memorandum of complaints presented on 21 October included the following: inadequate water supplies; pumping of sewage into the local dam; frequent breakdown of water pumps, and failure to repair timeously; erratic removal of sanitation buckets; frequent sewage spills in Ezenzeleni; frequent electricity cuts; erratic voltage; unqualified staff working on electricity system; poor gravel roads in Warden and Ezenzeleni; corruption in allocation of housing subsidies (CDE, 2007:13-14).

During a violent protest in Memel, protesters demanded the following: a functional toilet system; better lighting; sports facilities; action in respect to employment; allocation of sites for housing; a community hall; completion of community projects; another school; land for a cemetery; a clinic; allocation of land for business projects and clean, running water for residents of Extension Two (CDE, 2007:14).

In a combined Zamani/Memel legal protest on 24 September, residents handed in a memorandum of complaints drawn up by the Chamber of Commerce and the Ratepayers’ Association, which listed as complaints: quality of municipal water; lack of bins in Zamani and Memel; lack of maintenance of sewerage pipes; poor condition of streets; blocked gutters; high salary of a never-available municipal manager (CDE, 2007:14).

A demand was made for immediate action

From a critical analytical perspective, it is clear discontent resulted from poor and insecure living conditions, occasioned by poverty and unemployment. Other issues made the unrest inevitable, including: governance problems such as a divided and malfunctioning council, the role of the mayor, conduct and competence of councilors, and empty promises; administrative problems: lack of good labor relations and human resource management, poor relationship between the mayor and municipal manager, bad financial management, weak management, and corruption and nepotism; and provincial government’s housing policy: providing large housing units with low levels of infrastructure, which resulted in inability to phase out the bucket system of sanitation. In short, genuine service delivery issues associated with water, sanitation, electricity, and infrastructure were involved, as were multiple governance and administrative-related and policy issues.
Voortrekker’s calling smoke

In June 2009, Voortrekker Township was the first place to explode following President Zuma’s rise to power. Although the protest ended within 48 hours, its impact was disastrous: three lives were lost and property destroyed. It took place in the context of growing poverty and inequality in South Africa. At the time of the unrest, 80% of Voortrekker’s employed population earned less than R3200 per month and unemployment was about 33% (Dlamini, 2011:34).

According to Dlamini (2011:35), five sequential events culminated in the collective violence: discontent over a disorganized sports event in April 2009; public launch of the Concerned Group; compiling of a memorandum of complaints on June 15 which was faxed to the Premier, district mayor and President Zuma in Johannesburg; a mass peaceful march from the township to municipal offices; failure of the Mpumalanga Premier to arrive for a mass meeting on June 28 to hear residents’ long-standing complaints about corruption and poor service delivery.

A memorandum of grievances drawn up on 15 June by the Concerned Group, “a group of political entrepreneurs” which “grew out of political and personal divisions within the municipality” (Dlamini, 2011:40) and instrumental in organizing the protest, included the following: inadequate service delivery; tariff increases, without any indication of how the money is spent; misappropriation of funds; nepotism and other unacceptable employment practices; poor implementation of the municipality’s development plan; failure by the municipality to deal with community concerns; corruption in the local traffic licensing office; lack of accountability among councilors (Dlamini, 2011:41-42)

According to Dlamini (2011:35), poor organization of the Mayoral Cup, for which R150 000 had been budgeted for refreshments, prizes and cash, and with 70 signed up teams, caused widespread discontent. The immediate cause of the protest and accompanying violence, however, was failure of the Mpumalanga Premier to come for a pre-arranged meeting with residents at the local stadium on 28 June, to hear their complaints. This was construed as a slight, reflected in the following statement: “The premier undermines us. He’ll see the smoke we’re calling him” (Dlamini, 2011:35-36), which the author correctly interprets as using collective violence to coerce the powerful to acknowledge the dignity and legitimacy of the powerless and hear their collective demands.
Protesters burnt tires, erected barricades and stopped all vehicular traffic. The community clinic, community hall, public library, municipal offices, three private cars, three municipal trucks, the mayor’s house, and two councilors’ houses were set alight. Foreign traders, mainly Indian and Pakistani, were driven out of their shops, which were looted. The mayor and four councilors were forced out of the township.

According to Dlamini (2011:44), the protest had three major themes. First was a sense of injustice based on different forms of exclusion; secondly, corruption and indifference within the municipality; thirdly, ANC factionalism. Exclusion involved three aspects: political exclusion, particularly from participation in decision-making; exclusion from services essential to living a productive and dignified life, which amounted to structural violence; exclusion from respectful treatment by municipal officials, representing ‘symbolic violence’.

The Voortrekker violence was triggered by three main factors (Dlamini, 2011:41-43). First of all, genuine grievances existed, including poor material conditions such as bad roads, inadequate housing, electricity, sanitation, and unreliable water supply. The state of roads in Voortrekker was so bad as to warrant a comment that: “We do not have potholes here. We have graves. Our potholes are so big you can bury a child in them” (Dlamini, 2011:42). Secondly, there were deep existing divisions within the executive branch of the municipality and among ANC councilors. Corruption, in the form of patronage networks, ‘politics of excess’ to support extravagance, and ‘local intimacies’ existed. Consequently, the municipality was dysfunctional, distant, and indifferent to the plight of the poor. Finally, internal battles within the ANC to advance factionalism interests and/or acquire wealth constituted the third leg of the triad of trigger factors (Dlamini, 2011:43).

In short, the unrest resulted from a mixture of factors: poverty, inequality, and unemployment; genuine service delivery issues involving provision of water, electricity, and sanitation; bad roads, inadequate housing; bad governance, involving corruption, nepotism, and misappropriation of funds; and factional infighting among ANC members.

**Literature Analysis**

In analyzing factors implicated in community protests from relevant literature, two clarifications are necessary. First, given the volatility that accompanies protests, the media, which often has high visibility during outbreaks and which collects most protest data, does
not routinely interview protesters to establish their motivations. Instead, the media tends to rely on information on placards and reporters’ own evaluations of protesters’ motivations. Secondly, protests do not ordinarily arise from a single complaint. On the contrary, multiple factors are typically involved, although one or a few may be the immediate cause or most prominent. Therefore, while analysis may point to a number of separate issues protesters’ are complaining about, in reality complaints tend to be interlinked.

From 604 community protests occurring between February 2007 and May 2011, Karamoko and Jain (2011:31) identified four major protesters’ complaints of varying instrumentality. Fifty-one percent of protest action related to these complaints. Housing, which featured in 214 instances of protests (21.23%) was the most prominent, almost double the combined second and third major complaints. Specific issues with housing related to lack of access to affordable or adequate housing, deficient, inadequate or unfinished houses and having to wait in vain for RDP houses. This finding is of particular interest because housing is not specifically a local government mandate.

Electricity was the next major complaint, featuring in 109 instances of protests (10.81%). Specific complaints included: unavailability of electricity, high rates for consumed units, and disconnection of their illegal connections. Inaccessibility of clean water was the third major complaint, featuring in 107 protests (10.62%).

Poor service delivery by itself was cited in 100 instances. Inadequate sanitation systems, involving insufficient refuse collection and unsanitary toilet systems, were also a major complaint, occurring in 89 instances of the protests (8.83%). Corruption on the part of government officials was cited in 26 instances, and in 71 instances in combination with other grievances. Other than housing, protesters cited other issues outside the domain of local government, including unfavorable court orders or council decisions (35 instances), unemployment (24 instances), acts such as being prevented from illegally accessing electricity or occupying houses (16 instances), and poverty (seven instances).

Other issues of concern to protesters were broken promises by state officials (38 instances), incompetence/need to hold government officials accountable (33 instances), infrastructure, unemployment, and living conditions. At the bottom of the scale were health, land surveys/allocation, education, safety/crime, complaints against a specific person, poverty, wrongful arrest of another person, police misconduct, and inadequate disaster relief.
In brief, according to Karamoko and Jain (2011), housing, electricity, water and sanitation, and poor service delivery by itself were major motivations behind the community protests. Excluding poor service delivery, the other four accounted for 51.49% of all protests.

‘Service delivery protests’ have achieved such a high degree of notoriety as to engage the attention of Parliament. In August 2009, the House Chairperson Committees on Oversight and ICT commissioned a report on ‘service delivery protests’. The findings revealed a number of causes.

- Lack of/poor service delivery in critical areas such as water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal.
- Lack of/inadequate housing; evictions; high rate of unemployment; lack of communication with communities; lack of leadership in the municipality; corruption; nepotism; maladministration; financial mismanagement (Parliament of RSA, 2009:ii).

In sum, most protests occurring between 2007 and 2011 were not solely or even mainly service delivery driven. Admittedly, service delivery in itself was a factor, but the fact that housing, which is not a local government mandate, topped the list of complaints, with almost twice as many protests as electricity and water issues combined, is instructive.

**Characteristics of service delivery protests**

Citing Municipal IQ’s data, based on its Hotspots Monitor and employing their own data, Karamoko and Jain (2011) provide insight into community protests from which a number of features are discernible. Five main features stand out, namely: frequency of protests (average number of monthly protests), violence associated with them, seasonal variations, provincial distribution, and urban bias.

**Frequency of protests**

Table 1 indicates the frequency of community protests, according to Karamoko and Jain (2011:4-5).

Table 1: Average number of monthly community protests (2007-2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td>8.80*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*This figure represents January to May average

Having increased slightly in 2008, community protests peaked in 2009, but have since been on a decline.

**Violence**

Service delivery protests are often characterized by violence. Violent protests are defined as those where protesters engage in physical acts that either cause immediate harm to persons, or where such acts are likely to result in harm (Karamoko & Jain, 2011:10). Non-violent protests involve marches to hand over memoranda of grievances or instances where protesters peacefully assemble in public areas. This definition includes protests where threats of violence are initially made, but not carried out. Karamoko and Jain (2011) admit the distinction is subjective, as it fails to differentiate between initially peaceful protests and those later turning violent because of circumstances such as police action. Nevertheless, the violent/non-violent protest dichotomy is important in providing insight into the regularity with which protests turn violent, an indication of protesters’ discontent. Acts of violence include a range of practices: blockading of major highways, erection of barricades, burning of tires, burning of public buildings and politicians’ houses, looting of shops, stoning of police, and immobilization of armored vehicles (Alexander & Pfaffé, 2011:4). Table 2 provides statistics indicating a trend towards increasingly violent protests, which is thought to be closely associated with the size of the protest.

Table 2: Percentage of violent protests showing peaks and troughs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>41.66</td>
<td>38.18</td>
<td>44.16</td>
<td>55.64</td>
<td>59.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>52.38</td>
<td>73.33</td>
<td>61.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>34.28</td>
<td>21.95</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>55.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from Karamoko and Jain (2011:12)

*Up to July
According to a Parliamentary report on service delivery protests (Ad Hoc Committee of Parliament, 2009:iv), violent protests are attributable to a number of factors, including:

- Aggression occasioned by frustration
- Ramifications of economic downturn
- Reinforcement of violence as being ‘acceptable’ in families and communities
- Xenophobia and competition for jobs and resources
- Availability of, and easy access to, fire-arms and other weapons
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Exploitation of protests by gangs or criminal elements

**Seasonality**

Winter months tend to have more protests than summer months. Statistics in Table 3 support this. According to Karamoko and Jain (2011:9-10), four reasons explain this phenomenon. First, the need for electricity (for heating purposes) is felt more in winter than in summer. Secondly, winter storms and flooding cause destruction, prompting communities to voice their plights. Thirdly, the need for good shelter for the poor escalates in winter because of bad weather. Lastly, the quality of coastal water deteriorates in winter because of contamination by urban pollutants, prompting more agitation for better quality water.

Table 3: Seasonal variations in protests per month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>28.67</td>
<td>7.33*</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>no data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from Karamoko and Jain (2011, p.8)

*Lower figure attributed to FIFA World Cup, hosted by South Africa

**Distribution**

Table 4 shows the provincial distribution of protests. On a year-to-year basis, Gauteng recorded the highest number of protests, on average, followed by the Western Cape, 17%; the
Eastern Cape and North West, 11% each; KZN, 9%; Mpumalanga, 8%; Free State and Limpopo, 5% each; and Northern Cape, 2%. The aggregated provincial distribution between February 2007 and May 2011 is shown in the last cell of the table (Karamoko & Jain, 2011:23-24).

Table 4: Provincial distribution of protests (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eastern Cape</th>
<th>Gauteng</th>
<th>Free State</th>
<th>KZN</th>
<th>Limpopo</th>
<th>Northern Cape</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>Mpumalanga</th>
<th>Western Cape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>29.17</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>11.46</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>17.71</td>
<td>no protests</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>35.75</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>13.56</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>22.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>29.11</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>16.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>39.85</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>13.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>13.64</td>
<td>13.64</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>22.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agg*</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>13.64</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>17.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from Karamoko and Jain (2011, pp.18-23)

*Reflects figures from January to May 2011

**Aggregated percentages

**Urban predominance**

Service delivery protests have an urban complexion. According to Ramjee and van Donk (2011:23), Municipal IQ’s Municipal Hotspot Monitor indicates that neither the poorest South African municipalities nor those with the worst service delivery performance have experienced the highest levels of protests. Rather surprisingly, protest action has tended to be
highest in municipalities with better service delivery performance in metropolitan areas, ostensibly because such urban areas tend to attract migrants from rural areas with perceived good employment opportunities. Having settled in informal settlements on the fringes of cities, migrants realize a high level of unemployment and fierce competition for scarce resources. Their frustration results from comparing themselves to suburban residents.

That the protests are closely associated with population density and are largely an urban phenomenon is inarguable. According to Karamoko and Jain (2011:25), between February 2007 and May 2011, two of Gauteng’s six district municipalities, the City of Johannesburg and City of Tshwane, collectively recorded 72% of the province’s protests, 52% and 20%, respectively. Similarly, in the Western Cape, two municipalities, the City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality, which includes informal settlements in Khayelitsha, Nyanga, and Philippi, accounted for 74% of protests, and Eden Municipality, with Plettenberg Bay and Mossel Bay townships, accounted for 19%, a total of 93% of all protests. With Gauteng and the Western Cape recording 49% of South Africa’s protests (Karamoko & Jain, 2011:26), it is difficult to refute the contention that informal settlements on the fringes of affluent urban areas are flashpoints of South Africa’s service delivery protests.

Citing Municipal IQ, Karamoko and Jain (2011:24) conclude that protests result “from the relative deprivation members of a community feel when compared to their more affluent neighbors” and that communities “languishing at the periphery of municipalities” in metropolitan areas are more likely to protest (Karamoko & Jain, 2011:25).

Conclusion

Perhaps it is appropriate to conclude by citing Carrim (2010), former Deputy Minister for Local Government, on the protests:

Most of the protests are about service delivery issues. But they … are also about a range of other municipal issues, including maladministration, nepotism, fraud, corruption and the failure of councilors and administrators to listen to residents. But it is the rage of sections of the protestors and the extent of violence and destruction they wreak that is striking. It reflects a far more fundamental alienation of people from our democracy. It suggests an acute sense of marginalization and exclusion. … the nature and scope of the protests we are witnessing are not part of a healthy, growing democracy.
‘Service delivery protests’, however inaccurate the phrase might be, have earned an unenviable place in the discourse of South African government performance. Analysis of documented case studies and literature suggest multiple reasons for community protests. Although service delivery issues such as access to water, sanitation, and electricity commonly feature among protesters’ complaints, they are usually not the only, or even overriding, concerns. Housing, the most cited reason for protests is not the domain of local government. A triad of vicious, structural socio-economic factors, namely poverty, inequality and unemployment, has been consistently present. Their superimposition on systemic/institutional, local- and project-specific factors impacting on service delivery creates an explosive situation. Although the protests cannot be blamed squarely on lack of/poor service delivery by local government, they still qualify as ‘service delivery protests’ because, as Dlamini (2011:44) observes:

… ‘service delivery protests’ often involve community protests that go beyond the specifics of service delivery to include grievances about local government. So service delivery is not simply technical and managerial, but deeply political as it structures a power relationship between the state and its citizens.

Booysen (2009:129) notes that, although ‘service delivery protests’ are ‘grassroots’ actions, they are increasingly triggered by national-level responsibilities, including housing, land and jobs. That ‘service delivery protests’ are not solely motivated by service delivery considerations does not provide any comfort for local government, because it deals directly with citizens and necessarily has to absorb frustrations aimed at provincial and/or national government. The tide of protests will begin to fall only when concerted and relentless efforts are made to make the lives of ordinary South Africans meaningful and dignified, by comprehensively addressing the three vicious structural socio-economic evils (poverty, inequality, and unemployment) alongside the main institutional obstacles to seamless service delivery: corruption, nepotism, and self-enrichment; and lack of administrative, technical, and financial skills at relevant tiers of government. This is a task of gargantuan proportions.

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Unblocking Service Delivery Backlogs through Effective Citizen Participation: A Case of Municipalities in Gauteng, South Africa

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of an assessment of the effectiveness and functionality of citizen participation mechanisms that have been initiated at local government level to ensure effective delivery of services to communities. The local government sphere in South Africa uses various forms of citizen participation mechanisms, such as Ward Committees; Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Forums; Local Economic Development (LED) Forums; as well as Community Development Workers (CDWs), in order to ensure that the needs of communities are addressed and met. Service delivery, or rather a lack thereof, has recently been making news headlines, especially during a period when the citizens are expected to participate in the local government elections. Critical backlogs in service delivery were created during South Africa’s democratic transition in the early 1990s. This resulted in many communities, especially black communities, being deprived of access to basic services, such as housing; water; sanitation; and health services. Recent protest marches over service delivery in the Gauteng province and other parts of the country have raised many questions on the effectiveness of the local government in realizing its Constitutional mandate. The debate on poor service delivery tends to focus mostly on the effectiveness of local governments and often neglects the role of citizen participation in assisting and enhancing local government capabilities. This paper identifies challenges and successes of these citizen participation mechanisms, draws conclusions and proposes recommendations for unblocking service delivery backlogs.

Key words: Service Delivery Backlogs, Citizen Participation, and Local Government

Introduction
The people shall govern, or shall they? This evocative corruption of the Freedom Charter clause by Xolela Mangcu speaks volumes about the need for genuine and meaningful citizen participation in the governance processes, more especially at local government level. Meaningful participation resonates with Abe Lincoln’s legendary Gettysburg Address, when he stirringly declared that ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth’. Empirical evidence suggests that the majority of South Africans feel alienated, hence the recent violent protests in a number of communities around the country. The protests have been defined, correctly so, as service delivery protests. Therefore, it will not be entirely incorrect to define the protests as ‘protests of the voiceless’. In other words, the protests might have been fuelled by the absence of effective avenues for the citizens to express their views.

The recent service delivery protests in the Gauteng province and other provinces have raised many questions on the effectiveness of the local government in realizing its Constitutional mandate. For example, Mncendane (2009) states that the rate at which service delivery protests are taking place across Gauteng is an indication that local governance has failed and that an improvement is needed. However, the debate on service delivery protests tends to focus mostly on the effectiveness of local governments and often neglects the role of citizen participation in assisting and enhancing local government capabilities. Research suggests that there are significant service delivery backlogs across all the municipalities in the country. This paper advocates effective citizen participation as a means that can be used to unblock service delivery backlogs, using municipalities in the Gauteng province as a case study.

Methodological issues

The primary method adopted for this article is the case study. The paper presents the results of a case study of service delivery protests in the Gauteng province. It highlights the extent to which the province has been plagued by service delivery protest and reflects on reasons provided by the citizens for engaging in protests, which are violent in some cases. The secondary methods took the form of literature and media review, content analysis, and analysis of the Municipal IQ Hotspots Report, 2010. Furthermore, the paper is premised on the African National Congress (ANC) 2009 Elections Manifesto, as it states that:

We are committed to a service delivery culture that will put every elected official and public servant to work for our people, and ensure accountability to our people. We
will continue to develop social partnerships and work with every citizen. We will manage our economy in a manner that ensures that South Africa continues to grow, that all our people benefit from that growth and that we create decent work for the unemployed, for workers, for young persons, for women and for the rural poor. We will remain in touch with our people and listen to their needs. We respect the rule of Law, human rights and we will defend the Constitution and uphold our multi-party democracy (ANC, 2009).

Drawing from the above statement of the ANC 2009 Elections Manifesto, the primary research question that this study was set out to address is: what role does citizen participation play in unblocking service delivery backlogs? The aim of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the citizen participation mechanisms in the Gauteng province, in the light of continuous service delivery protests. The limitation of this study is that it is strongly focused on the Gauteng province. The justification of confining this study to Gauteng is that empirical evidence suggests that the province has experienced the highest number of service delivery protests in the country between the years 2007 and 2011, as will be illustrated in section 3 of this paper.

An Overview of Service Delivery Protests in Gauteng

“In the end there will be violence. We will fight and we blame the municipality for that” (Stephen Phelani, a protester quoted by News24, 15 March 2011). Phelani’s statement represents the sentiments of the citizens who engage in service delivery protests across South Africa. The Municipal IQ 2010 Hotspots results indicate that 98 metro and local South African municipalities have been the site of protests since 2004. Figure 1 serves to demonstrate the average monthly service delivery protests trends in South Africa between 2007 and 2011.
Figure 1 illustrates the increased frequency with which community protests have occurred, and the subsequent decrease in protests across the country. Cooperative Governance Deputy Director-General, Yusuf Patel, informed parliamentarians that analysis showed that the bulk of service delivery protests were taking place in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Western Cape. Patel said the reasons for the protests vary from a growing demand for infrastructure and housing to rising electricity costs (Presense, 2010). In addition, drawing on an analysis of 14 of the 2007 protests, Booysen (2009: 128-129) suggests that, while the ‘service delivery protests’ continued to be ‘grassroots’ actions, the triggers were increasingly national-level responsibilities, including housing, land, and jobs. Figure 2 further illustrates the pattern of service delivery protests on a monthly basis, from 2007 to 2011.
As Figure 2 demonstrates, monthly protest figures show an upward trend in the frequency of community protests, followed by a downward trend beginning in mid-2010. This upward trend ended in June 2010 as the frequency of protests fell dramatically. This change in trend coincided with the arrival of the FIFA World Cup in June 2010 (Karamoko and Jain, 2011: 6). The SABC (2011) reports that Gauteng and the Western Cape are particularly vulnerable to protests, given their rapidly urbanizing populations. Since 2004, some 48% of protests on the Hotspots Monitor have been recorded in metro areas.

A disaggregation of Figure 1 and Figure 2 suggests that Gauteng remains the worst-hit province when it comes to service delivery protests. Gauteng accounted for 29% of the protests across the country in 2007, increasing to 34,7% in 2008, declining to 29, 11% in 2009, only to increase significantly to 39,8% in 2010, while an increase of 31,4% was registered for the period January to April 2011. The Municipal IQ 2010 attributes Gauteng’s prominence to a function of the number of metro areas in the province, all of which are prone to service delivery protests, especially in informal settlements. The lack of service delivery creates a situation where citizens revolt against the government, especially when these services have been budgeted for by the National Government.
While Figures 1 and 2 indicate a decline of protests in South Africa in 2011, the Gauteng province has seen increasing trends. In Gauteng, sporadic protests have been experienced across the province. Protest hotspots include Schubart Park, Mamelodi, Attridgeville, and Bronkhorstspruit (Pretoria); Rabie Ridge, Phomolong, Reiger Park, Daveyton, Thokoza, and Tembisa (Ekurhuleni); Protea Glen in Soweto; Thembalihle, Ennerdale and Orange Farm (south of Johannesburg); and Zandspruit (west of Johannesburg). Figure 3 illustrates a recent violent protest that erupted in Zandspruit.

Figure 3. Service delivery protests in Zandspruit, Gauteng

In an interview with the SABC in March 2010, the then Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister, Sicelo Shiceka, said in Pretoria: “we find that government has been lethargic at most and (at) worst doing nothing. What we have discovered was that in all the protests people have spoken to government in one way or the other... whether through a memorandum, a march, or anything.” An analysis of Figure 3 and Shiceka’s response suggest that the citizens use a number of mechanisms to communicate or speak to the government. A point of contention is that there are blockages and backlogs in service delivery, which lead to
service delivery protests. The question that this paper seeks to answer is: what are these citizen participation mechanisms and how effective are they? But before discussing mechanisms of citizen participation, it is important to revisit the concept of ‘citizen participation’ in the local government context. The starting point would be to note that the terms ‘citizen participation’ and ‘public participation’ are used interchangeably in this paper. This practice is common in the literature. Therefore, it becomes necessary to revisit the concept of ‘public participation’ and its relation to the local government, before discussing citizen participation mechanisms.

**Public Participation in Local Government**

Public participation is a critical element of the integrated and sustainable development and governance in a democratic South Africa. The Public Service Commission (2008: 9) stresses that public participation is an involvement of the citizens in initiatives that affect their lives. Protagonists of public participation provide several key reasons for its necessity. Firstly, it is reasoned that it provides an equal opportunity to influence the decision-making process, secondly, based on popular sovereignty, it ensures that the government is sensitive to the needs of the people, thirdly, it counter-acts the sense of powerlessness in the poor (Monyemangene 1997: 29). Arnstein (1969: 216) states that citizen participation is citizens’ power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens presently excluded from the political and economic processes to be deliberately included in the future.

Section 152 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996, mandates local government to provide a democratic and accountable local government and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government. Therefore it is the responsibility of municipalities to ensure effective participation of the citizens and communities in matters of local government. In responding to the constitutional mandate, measures were introduced to entrench community participation and to transform the local government function with an emphasis on development rather than regulations, as was the norm in the previous dispensation. In order to affect its constitutional mandate of public participation, the South African local government sphere has adopted a plethora of citizen participation mechanisms.
Citizen participation mechanisms

It is increasingly recognized that development is a multi-dimensional process incorporating quality of life objectives, which can only be successfully delivered through direct participative governance and cross-sectoral partnerships (Meldon et al., 2000: 3). In South Africa, the local government sphere uses numerous forms of citizen participation mechanisms, which include Ward Committees, Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Forums, Local Economic Development (LED) Forums, and Community Development Workers (CDWs), to address the needs of the citizenry. As a starting point, the local government legislations made a provision for local authorities to establish a system of participatory democracy at the local level in the form of Ward Committees (Houston et al., 2001: 206). These Ward Committees were introduced in municipalities as community structures to play a critical role in linking and informing the municipalities about the needs, aspirations, potentials, and problems of the communities.

Ward committees

Ward committees are a creation of legislation, that is, Chapter 4 of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998, which gives effect to Section 152 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996. Furthermore, Section17(2) of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000, stipulates that a municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the Municipality. It further calls for municipalities to develop a culture of municipal governance that works hand in hand with elected representatives with a system of participatory governance.

Ward committees are community elected, area based committees within a particular municipality whose boundaries coincide with ward boundaries. A ward committee is meant to be an institutionalized channel of communication and interaction between communities and the municipality (Bolini and Ndlela, 1998). The role of ward committees is to facilitate participatory democracy, disseminate information, help rebuild partnership for better service delivery, and assist with problems experienced by the people at ward level. However, the spontaneous eruptions of service delivery protests in South Africa since 2004, and more especially in poor communities, are an indication that the citizens are not effectively participating in the ward committees.
As recently as 30 September 2011 and 14 September 2011, residents of Tembisa in Ekurhuleni and Zandspruit (west of Johannesburg), respectively, took to the streets in protest against lack of service delivery (see Figure 3 above which depicts violent protests in Zandspruit). Similar outbreaks were experienced in March 2010 in various parts of Gauteng, such as the Orange Farm in the Vaal, where the ANC Chief Whip, Mathole Motshekga, addressed community leaders. Motshekga is quoted by the South African Press Association (SAPA) on 03 March 2010 as stating that “…their demands are reasonable as you can see that projects are unfinished here and there is sewerage in the streets. The ball is in our court as the government to address the issue”. In essence, Motshekga was acknowledging that the ward committees are not utilizing effective citizen participation to unblock service delivery backlogs.

Local Economic Development and Integrated Development Plan Forums

While the Constitution (1996) places a great responsibility on municipalities to facilitate LED, the schedule in the Constitution that lists the functions of municipalities does not include LED. This has contributed to an interpretation that sees LED as an un-funded mandate for municipalities. Rather, there is a clear implication given the juxtaposition of the Constitution and its schedule that municipalities have a key role in creating a conducive environment for investment through provision of infrastructure and quality services, rather than developing programs and attempting to create jobs directly (DPLG, 2006: 9). This calls for integration of delivery at municipal level. The DPLG (2006: 20) notes that infrastructure development, service delivery, municipal financial viability, and local economic development are not mutually exclusive concepts. They are interdependent and government (municipalities in particular) should develop strategies and management practices that take on a holistic and integrated approach.

In an attempt to ensure that local authorities do, in fact, focus on LED as a priority area, it is now compulsory for all local authorities to draw up (among other things) an annual and five-year Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which must contain an LED strategy (Section 26 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000). Furthermore, Section 16(1) posits that municipalities should facilitate the participation of the local community in all processes related to their integrated development plans (IDPs) and performance management systems, the preparation of municipal budgets and strategic decisions about the provision of municipal services. These are then the principal processes in which ward committees are expected to
participate. Moreover, the Act states that municipalities have an obligation to build the capacity of local communities to participate in these processes, as well as the capacity of councilors and staff to foster community participation. Section 17(2) notes that with regard to all ‘mechanisms, processes and procedures’ for community participation, municipalities must take into account the special needs of people who cannot read or write, people with disabilities, women, and other disadvantaged groups.

Community participation in the local government is crucial in a multi-dimensional and integrated development plans environment (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999: 5). This falls in line with the objective of ensuring that communities own the process of development, and people are enabled to make a meaningful contribution to the development of their own lives. Development does not occur successfully if beneficiaries are not part and parcel of the process of planning and implementation of the process (Parnell et al., 2002: 27). Community participation can be a learning process only if the people really participate. Participation does not mean that people should be brought into a project when physical labor is required. By that stage people should already have been involved for a long time. There is no stage for people to begin to participate than right at the start of the project. People should not only do, but their right and ability to think, seek, discuss and make decisions should also be acknowledged (Swanepoel, 1992: 3).

Community Development Workers

Community development workers - a concept introduced by the Mbeki government in 2003 - are multi-skilled public servants deployed in communities to help people access government services and poverty alleviation programs. They work as community facilitators, focusing on finding solutions to identified needs and blockages by interacting with national, provincial, and local government structures. According to the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI, 2005), Community Development Workers (CDWs) are officially mandated to ‘develop’ and ‘transform’ communities by, among other activities,

- informing them about, and assisting them to access, the services provided by the government;
- determining the needs of communities and communicating these to the government,
- promoting networks between community workers and projects to improve service delivery; and
• compiling reports and documents about progress and local issues.

In Gauteng, the work of CDWs is facilitated and coordinated by the Gauteng Department of Local Government and Housing. There are 442 CDWs which have been deployed to all the wards in the province.

The work of CDWs is centered on advocacy, in which they initiate and support government campaigns and facilitate the formation of intergovernmental service delivery forums; provide support to developmental projects, partnerships with various stakeholders; and provide necessary information to communities. In spite of all the work of CDWs in contributing towards creating a developmental state in South Africa, the following questions remain: How are the CDWs contributing towards bringing social cohesion in communities? What role are the CDWs playing in minimizing service delivery protests in their areas of jurisdictions, as well as in the province at large?

A Critique of the Citizen Participation Mechanisms

During elections, would-be councilors make various promises of service delivery to people at the grassroots level, yet they seldom keep such promises once they have been elected into positions of power. Faced by various forms of protests, as evidenced in 2005, officials and councilors alike often tried to justify the lack of service delivery in terms of a lack of human resource capacity to deliver such services. Yet this is precisely the capacity that they claim when they contest the elections for a political party (Williams, 2006). Gauteng, as the predominant site of community protests in South Africa, helps explain, at least partially, the phenomenon of community unrest. Municipal IQ has suggested that Gauteng’s significant contribution to the number of community protests nationwide demonstrates that the protests are largely an urban phenomenon, resulting from the ‘relative’ deprivation members of a community feel when compared to their more affluent neighbors.

Despite the legal provisions, it would seem that most community participation exercises in post-apartheid South Africa are largely spectator politics, where ordinary people have mostly become endorsees of pre-designed planning programs. They are often the objects of administrative manipulation and a miracle of reconciliation in the international arena of consensus politics, while state functionaries of both the pre- and post-apartheid eras ensconce themselves as bureaucratic experts, summoned to ‘ensure a better life for all’ (Williams, 2006: 2). It is from this perspective that Sachs (1993: 118) writes that participation can easily
be transformed into manipulative designs which in the end do not meet the people’s needs. The World Bank (1994: 4) explains that this form of participation is conducted in a disguised manner in order to substitute genuine participation. Meaningful involvement of the citizens as public actors by the government in decision-making and implementation of government programs can largely contribute to unblocking service delivery blockages, and reduce the rates of service delivery protests. Therefore the current citizen participation mechanisms need to be reviewed, revamped, and rejuvenated.

Until very recently, the main focus of most municipal LED initiatives was community economic development projects, the majority of which proved unsustainable once donor or public-sector funding disappeared, and so had no real long-term impact on poverty reduction (SALGA, 2010: 3). The failure of LED to achieve its objectives in many of South Africa’s poorest areas is a key issue behind much of the social unrest that we have seen over the past few years. As a result, government has realized that it needs a pro-active and structured approach towards LED (SALGA, 2010: 5). To date, such a structured approach has not been produced. This should be seen as an opportunity for the municipalities to constructively involve the citizens in LED initiatives. The DPLG (2006: 23) correctly states that a credible approach to LED must invest in the capacity of municipalities to manage in a way that inspires confidence in both constituents and the private sector. All local authorities accept the need for inclusion and participation in the development of LED strategies, but how they actually view who should be included, and how, differs considerably. In general terms, smaller local authorities tend to place a much stronger (sometimes exclusive) focus on ‘participation’ by marginalized communities, rather than the private sector and organized business. In contrast, most of the larger metros are working hard to build LED networks with private business (SALGA, 2010: 15).

Ward committees have been the focus of considerable attention by government as well as civil society, with substantial investment already made in an attempt to ensure that these structures have the necessary capacity and resources required for them to fulfill their envisaged roles as a ‘voice’ of communities. At the same time, questions have been asked about how effective these institutions actually are; whether they are useful conduits for community involvement in local governance; whether, as ‘created spaces’ for public participation, they are inherently capable of playing the critical role expected of them; and whether they create opportunities for real power-sharing between municipalities and citizens (Smith and de Villiers, 2009: 2).
A major concern has to do with the way representation on ward committees is constituted. In particular, the allegation often arises that ward councilors have a direct hand in picking ward committee members in line with their political affiliations. This has given rise to the charge that ward committees are often merely extensions of party structures and do not encompass the full range of interests in communities (Smith and de Villiers, 2009: 16). Himlin’s (2005) study of ward committees in the City of Johannesburg, for example, noted a sense of frustration on the part of ward committee members that many of their ideas and proposals for improvements in their wards were not being responded to by the council.

Community Development Workers’ impact on the communities they are supposed to serve is also not fully appreciated. A study undertaken on behalf of the Department of Local Government and Housing in Gauteng by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) in 2010 found that community development workers had very little impact in Gauteng. Only 12% of Gauteng’s residents were aware of CDWs in their areas and only 43% of these respondents knew what a CDW does. This means only 5% of the total sample knew what a CDW does. In addition, less than 3% of those surveyed ever received assistance from a CDW. Taking into consideration that there was a CDW in almost every municipal ward in Gauteng during the period under review, this impact is extremely low.

Again, CDWs are accountable to provincial government while dealing with local government and national government issues. Although CDWs have assisted a very small percentage of residents to gain access to basic services, the bulk of their time is used to assist with obtaining grants, important documents like IDs, accessing skills training opportunities and receiving assistance with community development projects. CDWs can merely report problems to municipalities, but do not have the backing or capacity to drive those complaints to a conclusion. Simply put, the CDWs, just like the ward committees and the IDP Forums, cannot justifiably be regarded as effective mechanisms of citizen participation.

Conclusion

The issue of participation, or the lack of it, has found its way on to national and international agendas. In many parts of the world, interest in research and development into participatory development approaches is increasing. It is now accepted that citizen participation in local development is the key to the equality, inclusiveness and sustainability of development (Meldon et al., 2000:3). The present paper has focused on the citizen participation mechanisms used in the South African local government sphere, with specific
reference to Gauteng province. A critical analysis of the citizen participation mechanisms that include Ward Committees, IDP Forums, LED Forums and CDWs that are utilized in the municipalities in Gauteng was conducted to mirror citizen mechanisms in the entire South African local government sphere. While there is a well-developed citizen participation framework in South Africa, the country continues to experience sporadic service delivery protests. Gauteng province has experienced the highest level of service delivery protests.

This paper argues that the spate of community protests, or rather service delivery protests, can be attributed to ineffective citizen participation mechanisms. The paper strongly calls for an overhaul of the three citizen participation mechanisms discussed above, as well as the review of other public participation platforms, especially in Gauteng. To borrow from the Public Service Commission (2008), this paper concludes that citizens are not just consumers of services rendered by government, but are also critical role-players, with a stake in the election of governments and how such governments should run the affairs of the country. Given this, it is important that government ensures meaningful mechanisms for citizen engagement, especially in the development and implementation of government policies and programs. At the same time, however, it is important to appreciate that the nature and extent of public participation is context sensitive and different realities may thus require different modalities in engaging citizens.

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‘Open Toilet Politics’ at Local Government Level in South Africa: A Quantitative Study of Khayelitsha

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Abstract

Service delivery in South Africa has been in the spotlight since the dawn of democracy, but more so in the past five years or more. The public space for expression of discontent and service delivery demands has since increased. Practical realities in relation to quality of public services, governance-related dynamics and socio-political challenges in relation to service delivery have also drawn attention. At the centre of this debate, the City of Cape Town municipality, under which the Khayelitsha informal settlement falls, has been identified by service delivery watchdogs as one of the local municipalities that has failed to provide acceptable toilet facilities suitable to local and international sanitation standards. Partisan politics have been singled out as possible hypothetical stimuli in shaping this debate. From a political perspective, the variable of political affiliation has come to characterize governance culture, modeling modern ethnic and racial divide, socio-economic status of social classes and voter identity. The Khayelitsha informal settlement, incorporating both the Zwelitsha and Zone 14 informal settlements (as part of the City of Cape Town), is under the political and administrative leadership of the Democratic Alliance (DA). Is partisan politics to blame or is it purely a matter of structural-systems failure to deliver quality services at local government?

Key terms: Open Toilets, Local Government, Service Delivery, Governance, Policy, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Informal Settlement, Township, Developmental Government

Introduction

The narrative of the plight of urban settlements in South Africa today is captured by Harber (2011) in his analysis of township life in Diepsloot to the north-east of Johannesburg. Life in the urban shanty dwellings remains a major battle and struggle for proper urban
settlement in post-apartheid South Africa. Despite the plethora of legislation regulating service delivery and local government affairs, including the world-renowned Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (as amended) of 1996, much development-oriented work still needs to be done. Local government institutions established in post-apartheid South Africa need to respond to the new mandate of nation-building and proper service delivery with good clean governance. One critical area of service delivery for local government in modern post-apartheid South Africa is proper sanitation (Roux & Nyamukachi 2005:695). Sanitation has not only become a service delivery matter (van Vuuren 2008:8), but has also assumed a political nature.

This article argues that sanitation matters, despite being regarded as service delivery and governance issues at local government sphere, are also public administration matters. Present ideological realities such as neoliberal tendencies of the open-market system, corporatized public service regimes, public-private partnerships and other forms of managing service delivery have come to characterize the South African modern state. These perspectives and related developments have also pre-occupied the attention of scholars, writers, and thinkers alike in the discipline of Public Administration and Management. This article presents those perspectives and presents ‘the facts’ about the public administration and management approach, as seen by the writers. Given the nature of the study undertaken, the writers have sought to adopt a quantitative approach to the topic investigated. A community survey using a purposive random sampling method was used to interview residents of Zwelitsha and Zone 14, which make up the bigger township of Khayelitsha in the Western Cape. This methodology allowed for better control and access to the target research population. Data was captured, analyzed, and verified by the University of South Africa’s research support entity called the Academic Research Support Unit. Assistance in drawing the questionnaire was also given by this unit.

This article reflects on the interpretation of the results of the aforementioned research survey in Zwelitsha and Zone 14. A brief literature analysis is given, presenting a public administration and management perspective and adding a theoretical grounding for the argument. Noteworthy is the geographical analysis of the physical place studied. The first area of focus is directed at the theoretical framework, followed by an in-depth analysis of the research survey findings.
Theoretical Framework

The criticism and later demise of the ‘old thinking’ in public administration in South Africa has come to characterize the modern thinking in the new public administration modality. Seen by many scholars in this field, public administration has come to be associated with bureaucracy, where the government’s wheels of service delivery and principles such as effectiveness and efficiency lack presence. New public administration has come to be synonymous with modern thinking, embracing principles such as efficiency, effectiveness, investment in people, and borrowing from private sector best practices that are applicable in the public sector (Schedler & Preller 2010:30-31).

The role of the state becomes important in promoting good practices related to service delivery and the promotion of the general welfare of the population. As Schedler and Preller (2010:42) put it, the state and its administration are institutions without which society (in the case of this article the disadvantaged residents of Khayelitsha’s Zwelitsha and Zone 14 informal residences) cannot exist nor function. The state is seen as a facilitator of development. Such development encompasses the desire, need, and drive to provide basic municipal services adequately. As Visser (2005:269), in Asmah-Andoh (2009:103) put it, development can be defined as a quest to improve the material wellbeing of members of a society aimed at enhancing the choice and equitable access to the distribution of societal resources. Thus a contrast is made between development and developmental local government founded on the principle of deepening local democracy and socio-economic development of a particular society.

Public participation (as part of participatory theory) as process is also important in the consideration of the developmental role that local government plays in facilitating democratic rule and governance. Local municipalities are, by nature of the democratic rule, accountable to their local communities (Draai & Taylor 2009:114-115). The value of public participation at local government level is not limited to governance value, but also to facilitate and promote accessible service delivery at local government level. If democracy is the golden prize to achieve, then the state and society must strive towards establishing democratic systems and institutions (as part of democratic theory) for the local government sphere of government (Draai & Taylor 2009:114-116).
In addition to the theories, according to van der Waldt (2010:18-19), a number of theories are utilized to explain the dynamics involved in local government subjects of democratic rule, public participation, role-players, and organizational makeover. These theories are not discussed in detail in this article, but merely serve to illustrate the plethora of local government theories available. They are summarized below:

Table 1: Theories of local government

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<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Selected theories</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Municipality</td>
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<td>Adaptive structural theory</td>
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<td>Contingency theory</td>
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<td>Flow of information and feedback</td>
<td>Social exchange theory</td>
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<td>Dependency theory</td>
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<td>Gate-keeping theory</td>
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<td>Agenda-setting theory</td>
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<td>Role-players in municipal governance</td>
<td>Knowledge gap theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-political context</td>
<td>Systems theory</td>
</tr>
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Source: Adapted from van der Waldt (2010:18-19)

Having discussed the theoretical analysis of this article, attention will now be devoted to the geographical analysis of the case study.

The Case of Zwelitsha and Zone 14 (Khayelitsha) Informal Settlements

Zone 14 is an informal settlement constituting a section of the Khayelitsha township, formerly known as the Macassar location. Zwelitsha is a new informal settlement established in 2008-9, after the relocation of 7 600 shack-dwellers from Khayelitsha’s former Enkanini
squatter camp. These shack-dwellers were moved to make way for an extension to the Khayelitsha township (Damba 2011:3-4). Each household was provided with an enclosed toilet and were to get title deeds to the land they occupied. The project started in 2005, when it became necessary for the shack-dwellers to be relocated urgently, to make way for the extension of the Khayelitsha railway line. The residents agreed to relocate if a ‘green field’ project was prepared for them. The City’s Housing Directorate identified an appropriate site on the corner of Mew Way and Baden Powell Drive, between Macassar and Khayelitsha. The geographical map below describes the geo-political setting, as it is known at the time of writing this article.

Figure 1: Khayelitsha map

Source: Adapted from Otter (2007).
Given the brief outline of the geo-political setting of Khayelitsha, it is important to discuss the key thematic intellectual aspects of this study. The next section focuses on the important elements to consider in shaping and understanding the sanitation debate.

**Contextualizing the Debate**

The notion of a developmental local government in South Africa has characterized post-apartheid governance and service delivery. According to Nkuna (2011:623), developmental local government in South Africa is conceptualized on the basis of shaping a developmental state. In emphasis, the need to consult people in the running of government affairs signals the move towards a developmental thinking. According to section 151 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (as amended) of 1996, provisions are made for the establishment of municipalities with executive and legislative authority. Section 153 provides for the establishment of municipal structures and the provision of administrative functions such as planning, to give effect to the service delivery of basic services. One such area is the provision of proper sanitation services within a designated locality. As Penner (2011: np) notes, toilets are powerful symbols of inclusion. A conversation about them provokes thoughts of territorial and political struggles. The United States experienced this reality firsthand from the 1950s to the 1970s along racial, class, sex, cultural, and religious lines. Politically, in recent times, the so-called ‘toilet wars’ came to characterize political relations between the residents of Khayelitsha (with reference to Zwelitsha and Zone 14), the Democratic Alliance (DA) as the ruling party in the Western Cape, and the African National Congress (ANC), the opposition party. The ANC’s Youth League destroyed 51 open toilets on the grounds of human dignity and decent living standards. The initial indignity was that toilets were unenclosed, requiring people to use them openly or under the cover of blankets. This was later followed by building toilets with inferior materials (Penner 2011: np).

A developmental local government without the right capacity to deliver on its mandate of equitable basic municipal service provision is ill-founded (Vyas-Doorsgapersad 2011:44; Gumede 2009:12-13). In addition, municipalities are required to play an economic developmental role (Hinsch 2009:41; Maseremule 2008:437). In providing proper sanitation and infrastructure, local municipalities must ensure that basic concerns, such as availability of sanitation services, are provided. Access to such sanitation service is provided and users are given options to choose from a plethora of sanitation services (Otieno 2008:11; Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2009:18-22). Key questions such as what
type of sanitation people are using, where does waste from toilets go, how many people have problems with the sewerage system, how satisfied people are with public toilets, are some of the concerns that most local municipalities must address.

Municipalities must ensure that the capacity to deliver municipal services is complemented by the competence of individuals employed to deliver municipal basic services and goods (de Villiers & Michel 2006:9; National Treasury 2008:34). Lack of proactive planning, programming and project management characterizes capacity problems for municipalities to deliver basic services such as sanitation and clean water. Christians (2008:38) notes the above and adds the dimension of poor financial resources and its concomitant planning, lack of technical skills, reactionary nature of local government *modus operandi* and other forms of organizational and systems constraints. This situation leads to poor stimulation of local economic development.

The right to proper sanitation and water usage is recognized by both Cahn (2008:15-18) and Tipping (2011: np), who stress that the recognition of real human rights concerns in the area of water (Hinsch 2009:42; Haigh, Fox & Davies-Coleman 2010:475-476; Blignaut & van Heerden 2009:415) and sanitation management has advanced the right to protection of water and sanitation provision and usage (Tipping 2011: np). A number of international treaties are explicit in the recognition of water and sanitation rights. These treaties include, but are not limited to, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979 [Article 14(2)(h)]; the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 [article 24(2)(c)]; and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990 [article 14(2)(c)].

Having outlined the literature content on the subject matter under discussion, the focus of the article is now directed at the interpretation of the findings.

**Interpretation of research findings**

The research questionnaires used in this survey were interpreted, captured and analyzed by the University of South Africa’s division of Academic Research Support Unit (ARSU). The writers cum researchers of this project simply provided commentary on the findings. These findings are reflected in the following discussion.

Figure 2: Sex grouping of Khayelitsha respondents
The pie-chart (Figure 2) in relation to the survey conducted in Khayelitsha points to the dominant presence of female respondents (58%) over male respondents (42%). The dominance of female respondents can be attributed to the dominant role that most African men play in young families. The traditional role of African men being financial contributors in the upkeep of family structures seems to be the general trend emerging from this study. Female respondents, with their children by their side, were highly visible in Zwelitsha, compared to Zone 14. It was observed that these children were seeking the attention and affection of their mothers at all times, especially in the presence of strangers such the researchers, who doubled their role as field workers (Observation notes). This also demonstrates the availability of female respondents to be interviewed by the researchers. This evidence could also suggest a dominance of females (mostly mothers who are not necessarily married, but in co-habitation relationships) per population density size.
This question sought to establish the percentage of employed and unemployed people in Zwelitsha and Zone 14. The survey established that 24.49% of the respondents were employed. Conversely, 75.51% of the respondents declared themselves unemployed. It is the researchers’ opinion that this evidence indicates the sporadic levels of poverty sparked by unemployment, especially in informal settlements throughout the country. Because of non-payment of government-provided public services and goods, informal shack-dwellers often find refuge in informal settlements throughout the country. The Zwelitsha and Zone 14 informal settlement areas are no exception to this reality. Question 1.5 of the questionnaire focused on residential permanency, as reflected in Figure 4.
This question focused on the residential permanency status of the informal settlement dwellers in the Zwelitsha and Zone 14 informal settlements. According to the responses received, 95.95% of the respondents deemed themselves as permanent residents. Only 4.054% of the respondents regarded themselves as sojourners, whose preferred area of permanent residence was expressed as elsewhere.

Sub-question 1.5.2 required respondents to state whether they pay municipal service rates or not. Figure 5 provides a summary hereto.
This question prompted respondents to respond to one of the many questions that have dominated service delivery discourse in South Africa today. The results of the study showed that few respondents in this instance pay for public services and goods. About 16% of the respondents said they paid for public services and goods. Conversely, 84% of the respondents were non-paying public service and goods receivers. This question has an enormous implication on the financial sustainability of the Khayelitsha Municipal District.

Question 1.5.3 focused the respondents' attention on types of services they are likely to pay for. Figure 6 provides such a summary.

Figure 6: Types of services Khayelitsha inhabitants are likely to pay for
In this regard, only one person responded to paying for protection service. This was a surprising factor, given the fact that only one respondent said that he/she pays for protection service(s). This could be openly perceived as either ignorance on the part of the respondent or an unknown motive. Table 1 provides statistical feedback on this question. According to the table this result reflects 0.5% of the response rate.

Table 1: Types of services Khelitsha inhabitants are likely to pay for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Payment of services

With regards to payment of services, only two respondents said that they paid for water and sanitation. Again, this was a surprising feedback, since most participants and those who used the services said that they did not pay for the mentioned services. The frequency table below (Table 2) provides the statistical results of this outcome/analysis. With regards to
electricity and gas services and products, most respondents said that they pay for these services. In this instance the graph showing the results from sub-question 1.5.3.5, which deals with the overall pool of services likely to be offered and paid for by the respondents, sums up the total response to average percentage in payment for municipal services in the Zwelitsha and Zone 14 informal settlements. Table 2 provides a statistical summary of this outcome.

Table 2: Payment of services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire also reflected on the aggregate services offered by the municipality. These services included protection services, hygienic services, such as water and sanitation, energy services, such as electricity, gas, and other services offered. Figure 8 provides a summary of feedback in this regard.

Figure 8: Services offered by Khayelitsha municipality
This question focused on the municipal services paid for by the respondents. The respondents/ratepayers identified a number of municipal services that they are likely to pay for. These services included protection services, hygienic services, energy services, and other services. Examples were given under each category. From the interpretation of the results, about 9.8% of the respondents spent R100 per month. Similarly, the same percentage spent R200 per month in paying for services such as gas, paraffin, and/or electricity, where available. About 8.8% of the respondents spent R150 per month and about R400 per month, respectively. Approximately 7.8% of the respondents, said they spent about R180 per month, followed by 5.8% of the respondents, spending about R170 per month on the energy bill. About 2.8% of the respondents were classified in the R40 per month category, and a further spending bracket of R120 per month and R255 per month, respectively, also spent on their energy bill. Spending on energy bills was the main source of expenditure for most households. No payment for water was recorded.

Section B of the survey questionnaire dealt with sanitation issues. Questions focused on matters such as quality sanitation issues, types of sanitation services, categories of sanitation services, availability of sanitation services, and human rights issues associated with sanitation matters. Question 2.1 dealt with issues on the availability of sanitation services.
The focus was predominantly on the nature of sanitation services offered, the feelings of the respondents towards the sanitation services and issues around sanitation standards and sanitation rights. Figure 9 summarizes this feedback.

Figure 9: Access to sanitation service

This question asked respondents whether or not they receive sanitation services in their immediate establishment (Zwelitsha and Zone 14). Most respondents indicated that they do receive sanitation services within their immediate surroundings. It is crucial to note that some sections of both settlements were populated by single toilet facilities for each shack-dweller, while other shack-dwellers received, say, four to six toilet facilities for approximately twelve to twenty shack-dwellers in a designated area. In interpreting the results only 22.67% of respondents interviewed indicated that there was no access to sanitation service closer to where they live. As many as 77.33% indicated access to proper sanitation services. It is noteworthy that none of the respondents made reference to the use of the bucket system in the immediate area (Khayelitsha research field notes 2011).
Figure 10: Type of sanitation system

Table 3 provides statistical analysis of the graph above.

Table 3: Use of open toilets or other forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were asked whether they currently use the open toilet system or not. Figure 11 summarizes the responses received and Table 4 provides statistical results of the feedback.
Figure 11: Usage of open toilet

Table 4: Usage of open toilet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2.2.2</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>System</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 suggests that only 16 respondents, constituting approximately 8.8% of the sample, were still using open toilet facilities at the time of conducting this survey. This was the initial cause of the public’s outcry and a motivation to conduct this research.
Table 5 provides a statistical summary of responses from a number of respondents using conventional closed-up toilet facilities. About 52 respondents said that they used closed-up facilities. This constituted 28.6% of the total sample interviewed. This strongly suggests an improvement on the comparable basis between the two abovementioned groups of respondents.

Table 5: Usage of conventional closed-up toilet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Toilets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire also focused on whether or not respondents were satisfied with current sanitation services. This was a yes or no response question. Figure 12 summarizes the feedback in this instance.

Figure 12: Sanitation service choice
More than half (54.05%) of the respondents interviewed expressed satisfaction at the quality of material used to construct the toilets, the use of these toilets, and the ‘comfort of use’ offered. Approximately 45.95% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the use, quality, and build of these toilet facilities. This indication shows that much needs to be done regarding sanitation services to improve the lives of shack-dwellers in Khayelitsha, especially in the Zwelitsha and Zone 14 informal settlements.

Question 2.6 of the questionnaire focused on sanitation rights. Figure 13 summarizes the response received.

Figure 13: Knowledge of sanitation rights
An interesting outcome of this survey was the balance struck between the respondents who knew their sanitation rights and those who did not know what their sanitation rights were. Almost 50% of the respondents responded by declaring their awareness to sanitation rights, whilst about the same percentage declared no knowledge of these rights. The implication of this finding is that much needs to be done regarding civic education with reference to sanitation awareness. The social justice principle in administrative law circles is critical in advancing this cause. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (as amended) of 1996, with reference to Chapter 2 titled Bill of Rights, makes provision for the right to basic services. Sections 10, 21, 24, 26 and 27 provide for human rights in the areas of human dignity, freedom of movement and residence, the right to a secure, healthy, and sustainable environment, the right to proper adequate housing and the right to social security and basic access to services such as clean water and sanitation. Question 2.7 focused the respondents’ attention on the direct awareness of sanitation rights mentioned above. Figure 14 provides a summary of responses received.

Figure 14: Identifying sanitation rights
This question focused on the respondents’ knowledge and awareness of their sanitation rights. Various responses were recorded by the researchers in this regard. This responses ranged from; ‘yes I know, but don’t know how the process works and where to go and complain’, ‘the right to clean water and closed toilets’, ‘the right to privacy and services such as electricity and water’, ‘to report faulty leaks and toilet blockages’, and that ‘it is everyone’s right to own a toilet’. About 63% of the respondents suggest various rights associated with the use and maintenance of toilets. These rights are categorized in Figure 14.

Question 2.9 was about sanitation-related complaints. Figure 15 provides a summary of the feedback received.

Figure 15: Sanitation-related complaints
This question focused on whether or not the respondents complained at least once about sanitation-related problems, and if so which complaints were registered with the authorities. An estimated 43.45% of the respondents were of the view that they had registered a complaint with the local authorities at least once. About 56.55% of the respondents said that they had not registered a complaint with the authorities due to various reasons. This could be attributed to a lack of knowledge about sanitation matters, not knowing who or how to register the complaint, or due to complacency.

The respondents were asked about the sanitation standards. Their feedback is summarized in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Concerns about the sanitation standards in Khayelitsha
This question reflected on whether the respondents were worried about the sanitation standards in their area. The respondents, concern about sanitation standards was an important question to ask, since sanitation was seen, and is still seen, as a health-related matter. Use of poor sanitation building materials, unsafe water use, unhygienic sanitation practices, and poorly maintained sanitation infrastructure may be considered as critical factors in determining ideal sanitation standards. About 56.76% of the respondents held the view that they were concerned and worried about sanitation standards that were either declining or not properly promoted. Contrary to this figure, about 43.24% felt that there were no concerns or negative feelings to express towards the existing sanitation standards.

Respondents were asked about their knowledge of their sanitation rights. Figure 17 summarizes their responses.

Figure 17: Knowledge of sanitation rights
This question required respondents to reveal whether or not they knew anything about sanitation standards. About 62.76% of the respondents held the view that they had no knowledge of the subject matter. Only 37.24% thought that they were aware or knew something about sanitation standards. This question was linked to question 2.11. It was further elaborated by question 2.13, regarding sanitation standards as a political issue or not.

Respondents were asked whether or not they regarded sanitation issues as political matters. Their responses are shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Are sanitation matters political matters?
Approximately 71.92% of the respondents held the view that sanitation matters, especially sanitation standards, were, and still are, political in nature. Only 28.08% of the respondents held a different view. This view can best be described as apolitical, yet not necessarily affiliated or associated with any alternative process in society.

**Conclusion**

The provision of proper sanitation is an emotional, racial, and highly politicized issue. Dissatisfaction around this should be understood within this context. Proper sanitation is fundamental to personal dignity and the protection of human rights, as contained in various pieces of legislation. The promotion and protection of these rights cannot be overemphasized, as evidenced in the case of the Zwelitsha and Zone 14 informal settlements. Developmental local government, as the vehicle to drive this process, needs to be fully capacitated. The element of an efficient and effective public administration is key to sanitation provision. Proper implementation of the Local Economic Development Plan is of paramount importance to ensure effective and efficient sanitation service provision. Local administrators and political office-bearers need to keep a professional balance between politics and civic matters, encourage effective public participation in these matters, and promote civic education.
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Impact of the Constitutions on Decentralization of Local Government in Thailand

General Supaluck Suvarnajata, College of Local Administration, Kon Kaen University, Thailand

Abstract

This document explains the origins, historical background, and evolution of local government in Thailand. It also maps out the extensive role and impact of Thai constitutions on decentralization. The ultimate aim is greater understanding of the local government provisions that are written in the Thai Constitutions of 1997 and 2007. The substance of Thai local administration occurred through the initiative of the Worldwide Declaration of Local Self-Government at its 27th World Congress in September, 1985, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The results of this research indicate that the impact of the two constitutions on decentralization of local government began with the transfer of responsibilities and activities from central government to local administrations through the 1999 Decentralization Act and 2000 Decentralization Plan. The components of local government include Municipalities, Provincial Administrative Organizations, Sub-District Administrative Organizations, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the City of Pattaya. Central administration is needed to transfer all 245 responsibilities of 57 departments of 15 ministries and one independent organization to local government. Decentralization also indicates the process of direct election of chief executives. A local government can make laws for budgeting by itself. The functions and missions concerning services, maintenance of art, traditions and customs, local wisdom and culture, as well as educational training and participation of the local community, are required by the constitution.

Key words: Thai Constitution, Decentralization, Local Government, Provincial Administration Organizations, Metropolitan Administration

Evolution of Thai Local Government

The history of early Thai local government can be divided into two main eras: 1) the pre-1932 Revolution Era; and 2) the post-1932 Revolution Era to the Present. The Pre-1932
Revolution Era can be further divided into three phases: the Sukhothai Era (1238-1350), the Ayuthya Period (1350-1767), and the early-mid Ratanakosin Dynasty Era (1767-1932).

The Pre-1932 Revolution Era

Thailand in ancient times was governed by several principalities. Sukhothai, which originated local government during the mid-thirteenth century, was a powerful principality that ruled and dominated other principalities and became the capital city of the ancient Thai state. The king ruled as a patriarch (paternalism) with family ties (Nantawat Boramanand, 2009: 25). The Sukhothai Period was succeeded by the Ayutthya Period, during which society was feudal (the Sakdina system). The king, an absolute monarchy, held the throne by divine right and ruled the country in the form of a bureaucratic hierarchy (Wirat Wiratnipawan, 2002:209). The country maintained local administration, as in the Sukhothai Period, but began to experience the influence of foreign observances, culture, customs, and traditions that came through foreign trade.

The third period of local government was the early-mid Ratanakosin Dynasty Era, a time of dramatic change in the reign of King Rama V. The king replaced the previous type of administration by a ministerial arrangement, as European countries had done at the time. In 1897 King Rama V issued the first provision, a royal ordinance regarding sanitation in Bangkok. This ordinance was the first legal process concerning sanitation in the country. The Bangkok Sanitation Act of 1897 provided for waste and garbage disposal, as well as constructing toilets for the public, and controlling buildings, construction and sewage transfer (Nantawat Boramanand, 2009: 28). A few years later, the king ordered additional sanitization acts, including the Tha Chalom Sanitation Act of 1905 and the 1908 Rural Province Sanitation Act. Sanitation districts lasted until 1998 and were brought to an end by the Act of Changing Sanitation to Municipality 1998 (Nantawat Boramanand, 2009: 44).

The first Thai local government in the form of municipality was initiated in the 1926 Act of Maintenance of the Southern Seaside at Cha-Am and Hua-Hin Beach, ordered by King Rama VII. A few years before the 1932 Revolution, the King had had the idea that the municipality form would be best for the public, as they could begin controlling the activities of local government rather than being under the control of parliament (Wuthisan Tanchai, 2007: 219). In 1930 the king ordered the Municipal Committee to prepare the Municipality Act, but unfortunately the 1932 revolution erupted.
The post-1932 Revolution Era up to the Present

The 1932 government, which was also known as the Public Government, first revised the structure of the administration of the country through the 1933 Act of Administration of the Kingdom of Siam. This act was replaced by the 1952 Act of Administration of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Act consisted of three main sections: Central Administration, Provincial Administration, and Local Administration or Local Government (Wuthisan Tanchai, 2007: 219). The chief purpose of this act was to decentralize authority and transfer power from the capital to the rural areas in the form of municipalities. The central administration at the time was composed of the cabinet, ministries, and departments. Provincial administration contained mainly provinces and districts. Local government, in other words, was a municipality.

The 1932 Public Government stated the clear idea of decentralization of power and authority from the center to the localities. Since centralization could not gain as much advantage as dividing and decentralizing rights to the countryside, the government then proclaimed the 1933 Act of Regulation of Municipalities (revised and replaced by the acts of 1938, 1943, and 1953, respectively). The act set up three levels of municipality: city municipality, town municipality, and sub-district municipality. In 1955 a new form of local administration came about, called the Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO). Its aim was to accelerate the progress of local government in all directions, especially in remote areas and off-limit zones of municipal territories. More impressively, a new kind of local administration, at the lowest level of supervision, was established in 1956. It was called the Sub-District (Tambon) Administrative Organization (SAO). Therefore, municipalities, PAOs and SAOs are all formal kinds of local government which have been deployed in the system of local government. The special forms of local government are the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the City of Pattaya, which were established in 1975 and 1978, respectively. The number of local administrative organizations currently is 7 835 (Department of Local Administration, June 20, 2011): 2 010 Municipalities (27 City Municipalities,145 Town Municipalities, and 1838 Sub-District Municipalities); 76 Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAOs); 5 765 Sub-District (Tambon)
Administrative Organizations (SAOs); and two special organizations—the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the City of Pattaya.

Municipalities

The municipality is based on the council-mayor form of local government. Municipalities are legal identities and they govern most of the urban areas of the provinces. Municipalities, however, can administer both inside and outside the limits of their territories. The relationship between a municipality and the central administration is that the latter can supervise a municipality’s activities and inspect the performance of the municipality’s personnel. Sanitation was once related to municipalities. In 1952 an act was proclaimed concerning sanitation that was meant to be prepared for decentralization. This act was used until it was abolished in 1999. The reason was the change in status from sanitation districts into municipalities. In addition, the structure of local government in terms of sanitation did not comply with the 1997 Thai Constitution. The old sanitation law had to be terminated because its role contradicted the constitution (Nantawat Boramanand, 2009: 44). Later, in 2003, the Municipality Act 2003 (Number 12) was issued, changing the method of selecting a mayor (the chief executive of a municipality) from indirect to direct elections (Wuthisan Tanchai, 2007: 243). This means that the mayor is no longer elected by council members as previously, but directly by the voters who are the inhabitants of the territory. This exemplifies participation by the people.

Provincial Administrative Organizations (PAOs)

The format of PAOs was initiated in the form of the provincial council in 1934. The provincial council acts as an advisory board for the provincial governor, especially on budgeting and annual allocation for municipalities within the province. The provision of PAOs was established by the 1955 Act of Provincial Administration, which provided for local government at the provincial level. The function of a PAO is quite similar to that of a municipality. The organization consists of an elected chief executive and a provincial council that operate as a legislative branch and an executive board, respectively. Before 1997, a provincial governor was by law the chief executive of a PAO. The amendment of the Provincial Administrative Organization Act in 2003 (Number 3) allows a chief executive to be elected directly by the inhabitants (Wuthisan Tanchai, 2007: 243). There are 76 provincial
administrative organizations and 76 councils in the country (excluding Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the City of Pattaya). The PAO represents all rural and remote areas of a province.

Sub-District (Tambon) Administrative Organizations (SAOs)

Sub-District (Tambon) Administrative Organizations (SAOs) constitute local government at the sub-district level. Like a PAO, an SAO is a legal identity. The functions and authorities of SAOs are not entirely different from those of PAOs and municipalities, that is, they include providing services and taking care of the public health of the inhabitants within their territories. In fact, their functions are somewhat intertwining. The establishment of SAOs was announced through the 1956 Sub-District Administration Act. A new form of the smallest and lowest level of local government had begun. Likewise, a sub-district council then emerged. Its intention was that in any less-developed villages and sub-districts, whose territories were not ready to be prepared for a municipality, the sub-district administration would be best for the situation. The more prepared the SAO is for an upgrade, the sooner it will be elevated to the level of municipality. In 1972 the SAO Act was nullified by the revolutionary government, which left only sub-districts councils; but in 1994 there was a resurrection of the sub-district administrative organization act. Since then the role and function of SAOs have evolved in accordance with the Constitutions of 1997 and 2007. There are three sizes of SAOs: small, medium, and large. In March, 1995 the number of SAOs was 617, but a little over a year later, by April, 1996, the number had increased to 2760 (Wuthisan Tanchai, 2007:236). In 2003 the Sub-District Council and Sub-District Administrative Organization Act 2003 (Number 5) was issued, changing the method of selecting a chief executive of SAO from indirect to direct elections (Wuthisan Tanchai, 2007: 245). At present the total number of SAOs around the country is 5765 (Department of Local Government, June 20, 2011).

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA)

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) is the capital of Thailand. Its name has been changed several times. In the past it was called Bangkok. Until 1971 Bangkok was merged with Thonburi Province and called Bangkok-Thonburi Metropolitan. It was a half-provincial and half-local administration. In 1972 Bangkok-Thonburi Provincial
Administrative Organization fused with Bangkok-THONBURI Metropolitan and was renamed Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The governor at the time was appointed. The direct election of a local committee and authorities, but not the governor, was provided by the 1974 Constitution. The 1975 Administration of BMA Act transformed BMA into a real and special local government. BMA changed its status of half-provincial and half-local government into one form of local administration (Pokin Polakul, 1994: 23). The BMA governor and his deputies are elected by the residents of BMA areas. The 1976 Constitution had abolished direct election in BMA for political reasons, but it was reinstated in the 1985 BMA Provision of Administration. Since then the BMA governor and council members are directly elected throughout BMA areas. While Bangkok had 36 districts in 1994, the number increased to 50 between 1997 and 1998 (Wirat Wiratnipawan, 2002:222).

The City of Pattaya

Pattaya is known as a city of tourism in Thailand. Some 50 years ago, the area where Pattaya is located was the Nakleao Sanitation Area, Banglamung District, Chonburi Province. As rapid growth of tourism spread, Nakleao Sanitation Area could not accommodate the increasing number of tourists, so the sanitation area was abolished and replaced by the City of Pattaya through the 1978 Pattaya Administration Act. At the time Pattaya was administered by a special form of local government known as the council-manager form. There were numerous problems and obstacles among political administrators and the Pattaya municipal clerk. Therefore the 1999 Pattaya Administration Act replaced the previous one. The regulation described in this act is that the City of Pattaya, the mayor, and council members are all legal identities that come from direct election. As a result of the act, the Chonburi Provincial governor can only supervise the mayor’s activity, but cannot control or direct him. Up to the present, the Chonburi Provincial governor can recommend that the Minister of Interior dissolve the Pattaya City Council in case of serious wrong-doing.

The Constitution and Suggestions of the United Nations

Generally, the constitution does not necessarily provide for the rule of local government because this is not the main substance of the constitution (Phra Pok Klao Institute, 2004: 6). Nevertheless, local government is not concerned directly with the exercise of sovereignty of the state. Indeed, local administration is the basic foundation of democracy and the rule of election of Thai local government organizations is in accordance
with the will of the people and is set by direct election. The process of direct election on the local level is similar to that at the national level.

The objective of providing the essence of local administration into the theme as one part of the constitution has confirmed and guaranteed that the conduct of local administration will have continuity of self-government. This emphasizes local government’s significant status in the constitution.

The United Nations has advised its country members to prescribe the role and function of local administration in their constitutions in order to strengthen the importance of their local administrations. The reason is that if the functions and roles of local government are written into the constitution, the principle and substance of local administration will strengthen its functions rather than transform them into other laws or acts (Phra Pok Klao Institute, 2004:7). The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), an organization of the United Nations, has suggested that the principles, concepts, and scope of local government be placed in the constitution (Worldwide Declaration of Local Self-Government, at its 27th World Congress in September, 1985, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), as follows:

**Principles of Local Self-Government**

**Article 1: Constitutional foundation for local self-government:**

The principle of local self-government shall be recognized in the constitution or in the basic legislation concerning the governmental structures of the country.

**Article 2: Concept of local self-government:**

- Local self-government denotes the right and the duty of local authorities to regulate and manage public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.
- This right shall be exercised by individuals and representative bodies freely elected on a periodical basis by equal, universal suffrage, and their chief executives shall be so elected or shall be appointed with the participation of the elected body.

**Article 3: The scope of local self-government:**
• Public responsibilities shall be exercised by those basic units of local government which are closest to the citizen. They may also be exercised by territorial units at an intermediate or regional level, in accordance with the practice in each country.

• Local authorities shall have a general right to act on their own initiative with regard to any matter which is not exclusively assigned to any other authority, nor specifically excluded from the competence of local government.

• The basic responsibilities of local authorities, as well as the procedures for changing these responsibilities, shall be prescribed by the constitution or by statute.

• Powers given to local authorities shall normally be full and exclusive. In-so-far as a central or regional authority is empowered by the constitution or by statute to intervene in matters for which responsibility is shared with local authorities, the latter shall retain the right to take initiatives and make decisions.

• Where powers are delegated to them by a central or regional authority, local authorities shall be given discretion to adapt the implementation of legislation to local conditions.

• Local authorities shall have a reasonable and effective share in decision-making by other levels of government which has local implications. (Worldwide Declaration of Local Self-Government adopted and proclaimed at its 27th World Congress in September, 1985, Rio de Janeiro.)

The suggestion of the 1985 Worldwide Declaration of Local Self-Government that the recognition of local self-government be regulated in the constitution has been followed by many countries, including Germany, France, The Netherlands, Turkey, Japan, Philippines, and Thailand (in its Constitutions of 1997 and 2007).

Thai Constitutions

A Thai constitution represents the supreme law and norms of the country. No other code or common laws can oppose the country’s constitution. The first Thai constitution was the 1932 Temporary Act of Charter of Administration of the Kingdom of Siam (Thailand). Most of the Thai constitutions in the past were abolished due to a variety of political changes that overturned the old type of administration and replaced it by a new one, often through coups d’état, reformation and government substitutions (Pornchai Theppanya, 2007: 13-37).
Up until now Thailand has had a total of 18 constitutions. However, only seven contained provisions about the regulation and structure of local administration. Those constitutions are: the 5th (1949), 8th (1968), 10th (1974), 13th (1978), 15th (1991), 16th (1997), and 18th (2007), which is the current one. Of these, only two constitutions: the 16th (1997) and 18th (2007) describe the substance of the structure, principles, scope, functions, and activities of local administration. For instance, the 5th (1949) Constitution has a section on the Rights and Freedom of the Thai People, the 8th (1968) recognized local administration in the Section of Policy of the State, and the 10th (1974) mentioned the Policy of the State in three articles of local government. The 13th (1978) and 15th (1991) Constitutions only mentioned local administration in the Policy of the State.

Constitutions have recognized that the provision of local government can be divided into three sections (Phra Pok Klao Institute, 2004: 20-35). First, the Section on Rights and Freedom of the Thai People: only two constitutions contain this section – the 5th (Article 36), and the 16th (Articles 43, 52, 58-59). Second, the Policy of the State: six constitutions have mentioned this: the 5th (Article 64), 8th (Article 70), 10th (Articles 72-73), 13th (Article 63), 15th (Article 71), and 16th (Articles 78, 79). Third, the Section on Local Government; four constitutions mention local government: the 10th (Articles 214-217), 13th (Articles 180-183), 15th (Articles 196-199), and 16th (Articles 282-290).

The extraordinary 16th Constitution appears to be the one that cites the substance of local administration most thoroughly. Not only are its 15 articles full of the will of the local people, it also provides for autonomous administrative policy planning, governing, personnel management, finance, and budgeting, and the freedom to establish local administration organizations. In addition, it introduced the idea that members of the council and local administrators be directly elected, which no previous constitution had even suggested (Phra Pok Klao Institute, 2004: 35).

The 18th Constitution of 2007 is the current one. It is claimed to be a direct descendant of the 16th Constitution. It specifies the essence of local administration in six sections, three sections more than the others and with more local substance. The Section on the Rights and Liberties of the Thai People includes Articles 56, 57, 60 and 66. Articles 78 (3), 80 (4), 84 (6), 85 (5), and 87 (1) are included in the Section on Policy of the State. The Section on Organization Compliance in Accordance with the Constitution includes Articles 235, 236, and 239. The Section on Ethics of Persons Holding Political Status contains only Article
279, the Section on Local Government contains Articles 281-290, and the Provisional Section contains Article 303 (5), regarding plans and steps of decentralization. In this constitution there are 24 articles concerned with the substance and related fields of local administration.

The greatest dissimilarity between the 16th and 18th Constitutions is that Article 283 of the 18th Constitution introduces more of the essence of authority to provide and prepare for public services in the communities. This article delineates the rights to formulate policy, administer, manage personnel and finances, create a budget, and, most importantly, raise revenue from the community within that organization. This means that all local administrative organizations can specifically regulate the revenue and sources of income directly and independently, which the 16th Constitution did not mention.

**Decentralization**

Decentralization is a way of administering the country through transferring power and authority of the central government and provincial administrations to the lowest level of supervision, that is, local government. Decentralization means the transfer of some authority and control from the central government to local administration in order to manage services and sanitation for the local people (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, 2005: 1). Decentralization includes: 1) decentralization of areas or territories, and 2) decentralization of activities or services (Nantawat Boramanand, 2009: 23).

Decentralization of areas or territories means that instead of appointing officials from the central government to local organizations, the local administrations and authorities will be free of control from the central government. The central government will only oversee, but not control, local organizations, which will manage activities and supervise budgeting on their own.

Decentralization of activities or services describes the method of diffusing power and authority over public services from the central government to the organizations in rural areas. This is not a decentralizing of power to local government, but the process of handing over the capability to become prepared to provide services to the local people.

**Impact of the Thai Constitutions on Decentralization of Local Government**

The section on Policy of the State of the 16th Constitution (Articles 78, 88 (1)) declares that the state must decentralize power and authority to local administrations, so that
they would govern and make decisions on public and sanitation matters by themselves. This provision was also for the revision of the foundation structure of local government, as well as to develop the provinces that are ready to expand into large organizations. It was the duty of the government to enact laws and policies in compliance with the principle of decentralization to local administration. Moreover, the 18th Constitution has a similar provision in Article 78.

In order to decentralize power and authority from the central to local government, the 16th Constitution relied primarily on the 1999 Decentralization Act and the 2000 Decentralization Plan. After this Constitution was enacted, however, many laws, acts, decrees, ordinances, etc., had to be revised to comply with it. Moreover, the transfer of missions, assignments, and tasks at 245 missions of 57 departments of 15 ministries and one independent organization of the central government had to be conveyed to the local administrations within the years specified in the plan (Wuthisan Tanchai, 2007: 252). Likewise, the functions, roles, and forms of local administration (Municipality, PAO, SAO, BMA and City of Pattaya) have changed. For instance, all chief executives of local administrative organizations have to be directly elected (Article 285) (Nantawat Boramanand, 2009: 138-146). Unfortunately, the 16th Constitution was nullified by the military coup d’état of September 19, 2006.

After the promulgation of the 18th Constitution on August 24, 2007, the processes of decentralization have depended on the 2008 Decentralization Plan (Number 2) (Nantawat Boramanand, 2009:415-443). Even though many laws, decrees, and acts had adapted to comply with the 16th Constitution, some groundwork of the 18th Constitution remains to be amended. At least six standards of conduct of the current constitution need to be discussed. They are:

- Article 281 of 18th Constitution (Article 282 of the 16th Constitution) provides that the state must grant autonomy to the will of the people residing in the community and support for local administration to elevate their organization for public services and participate in decision-making in that area.

- The structural framework of local administration is composed of chief executives and councils (Article 284 of both the 18th and 16th Constitutions). The most significant theme of this article is that chief executives and members of the community are to be elected directly.
• The power and authority of local administrative organizations (Articles 283 (3)) means that responsibilities concerning public services are granted to them. The notable matter of this article is the authority to enact local laws in collecting taxes and other revenue of the territory, which the 16th Constitution did not mention. The other authority (Articles 289, 290) clarifies the right to manage the community in terms of sustaining its customs and traditions, cultural forms, and education, and preserving the quality of the environment and natural resources.

• Personnel of the local government cannot be removed, punished or transferred elsewhere without the consent of the council members (Article 288 of both the 18th and 16th Constitutions). A merit system committee of officials of local organizations protects the merit and ethics of personnel management.

• Local people have the right to participate in local administration procedures, such as removing members of the local council, administrative organization or chief executive (Article 285). The people can sign up to propose the ordinance of local provisions (Article 286 of the 18th Constitution and Article 287 of the 16th Constitution) and have the right to participate in local administrative organization activities (Article 287).

• The supervision of local government by central agencies is authorized by Article 282 of the 18th Constitution. Such supervision, however, can be carried out only as necessary. Standard criteria should be proposed as guidance for local government to follow or take choices. In addition, the local people can supervise the conduct of improper actions by executives of local governments through a recall or discharge from office (Article 286 of the 16th Constitution).

Decentralization, as mentioned in the constitutions, generates some positive modifications from the outcome of provision of local government. The impact of the two Thai constitutions can be divided into three viewpoints, as follows (Somboon Suksamran, 2001, 16-17):

1. The impact of the two constitutions on central, provincial, and local administrations can be explained as follows:

• Functions and missions on services, quality of life of the local people and development of the territory have been transferred from the central government through provincial administration to local government. The local government,
therefore, has to improve its organization to comply with the rapid growth of current development.

- The central government must change its role from controlling local administration into an academic-type section willing to provide guidance, give advice on law enforcement and techniques of the modern state, and set up new standards regarding rules of operation. Nevertheless, the central government can maintain its role as supervisor on missions and activities of local administration. It may try to move the nation’s strategy and coordinate with provincial and local governments.

- Provincial administration can reduce its role from an operational unit into advisory role on academic and legal process to local government.

2. The direct impact of the two constitutions on decentralization of local government is that:

- Local government has self-rule and autonomy to administer the organization on policy planning, governing, personnel management, finance and budgeting, and most of all their own power and authority. This would include increasing the allocation of revenue and hiring more personnel appropriate for the territory and the inhabitants.

- Officials and employees of local government will have to develop their potential and abilities and become more efficient and capable. They must be ready to receive power and authority from the process of decentralization and respond to the policy of their chief executives. They need to be responsible in providing services to the residents. The chief executives, on the other hand, must carry out their tasks and extra missions and supervise their subordinates to operate in response to the needs of their clientele.

- The local people should be informed and be made aware of their accountability to the public in general. The people can participate in checking and controlling the activities of the local administrative organization leaders.

- The administrative structure of voting has changed from indirect to direct election. This would make a strong executive so that the operation of the organization would carry on efficiently.

3. The problems on decentralization occur as the relations among the provision of laws, decrees, ordinances and acts still lack coordination as a system. Another problem is that political personnel are required to have the willingness and obligation to work for the local people.
A large number of changes appeared after the power and authority of central government was transferred to local administration, largely a result of decentralization stipulated in the 16th and 18th Constitutions. These reforms include development and reformation of local supervision around the country. This change can be delineated as follows:

1. The political will of the government regarding decentralization is clear and obvious. The provision of local government (Articles 282-290 of the 16th Constitution and Articles 281-290 of the 18th Constitution) emphasizes independence, supervision, public services, direct election, budgeting, and preservation of culture and customs. The transfer of missions and activities from the central government to local administration means that the government has the intention of decentralizing some of their power and authority. The tasks given to local government, such as revenue collection of their own and the right to legislate local administrative laws, demonstrate the will of the government on decentralizing real power to localities.

2. The role of local government is explicit. In the past, the acts or the laws provided to local administration were obscure and ambiguous, causing inadequate performance. Since the declaration of the 1999 Decentralization Act was passed, the functions and responsibilities of these organizations are transparent and understandable.

3. Local administrative organizations perform their jobs at a standard better than in the past. Officials of the organizations achieve their role with more implicit intention. The terms, ‘One-Stop Service’ or ‘Smiling Organization’ mean that officials and employees are willing to help their clients receive what they need at one point, and with a smile.

4. The people residing in the community are ready to participate in local politics and activities. In fact, they are ready for democracy in terms of direct and indirect election. This includes the eagerness of mass media like newspapers to cover national and local news. One can see and read what he wants to know about local activities quite easily on specific pages of the local news. This has never happened before in the history of Thai local administration.

5. The revenue of local administration has increased satisfactorily since the provision of local government appeared in the 16th Constitution. From the chart below, one
can see the percentage of revenue that the local government received in 2000 and 2001, while the 1999 Decentralization Act and the 2000 Decentralization Plan were in effect. The percentage of local revenue in 2000 was 13.1 while in 2001 it was 20.68. This was quite a large rise in revenue, which amounts to a considerable increase. The percentage of revenue that local government received from the central government in 2011 is 26.14.

Proportion of Revenue of Local Administrative Organization and Central Government, 1996-2011 (Baht: million)

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<tr>
<td>Govt. Revenue</td>
<td>850,458.8</td>
<td>843,542.3</td>
<td>733,136.9</td>
<td>708,826.0</td>
<td>749,948.0</td>
<td>772,574.0</td>
<td>803,651.0</td>
<td>829,495.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Govt. Revenue</td>
<td>60,663.9</td>
<td>93,349.0</td>
<td>103,604.2</td>
<td>105,036.3</td>
<td>99,802.8</td>
<td>159,752.6</td>
<td>175,850.3</td>
<td>184,066.0</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year:</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
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### Structural Framework of Personnel of Officials/Employees/ Hired Employees of Local Administrative Organization as of August 17, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Officials/Persons in Charge</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Hired Employees</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAOs</td>
<td>11 081</td>
<td>2 305</td>
<td>8 429</td>
<td>21 815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAOs</td>
<td>65 051</td>
<td>5 919</td>
<td>85 262</td>
<td>156 232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Local Government, August, 2011

6. The number of local administrative organization personnel has increased rapidly. During 1994-1997, which were the years of resurrection of SAOs and PAOs, followed by the promulgation of the 16th Constitution, the number of local government personnel was only 70 009 (Somkit Lertpaitoon, 2006, 370-371). The total number of personnel in 2011 has increased almost five times to 343 622 (Department of Local Administration as of August 17, 2011), as indicated in the chart below.
In conclusion, the impact of the Thai constitutions, particularly the 16th and 18th, on decentralization of local government has brought about an important change in the history of Thai local government. Local government in Thailand was established almost 800 years ago. The evolution has proceeded to date with two forms of local government: a formal type of local government (municipalities, provincial administrative organizations, and sub-district administrative organizations) and a special form of local government (the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the City of Pattaya).

In 1985 the United Nations advised its country members to establish the roles and functions of local administration in their constitutions in order to strengthen the importance of their local administration. The functions and roles of local government should be written into the constitutions to strengthen them, rather than including them in other laws or acts. There have been 18 Thai Constitutions altogether, of which seven have mentioned and listed the essence of local government.

The impact of the constitutions on decentralization of local government begins with the transfer of missions and activities from central government to local administration through the 1999 Decentralization Act and 2000 Decentralization Plan. The results of this impact are that the provisions of local government of the 16th and 18th Constitutions emphasize the right to govern independently, but under the supervision of the central government. The direct election of chief executives of local administrative organizations is another major theme of this impact, as well as public services, maintenance of art, educational training tradition and customs, local wisdom and participation of the local community. Finally, local governments can make laws on budgeting by themselves.

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Thai Constitution 1968
Thai Constitution 1974
Thai Constitution 1978
Thai Constitution 1991
Thai Constitution 1997
Thai Constitution 2007


*Worldwide Declaration of Local Self-Government, adopted and proclaimed at its 27th World Congress in September, 1985, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*

Debates on Approaches to Local Economic Development: Implications for the role of Local Government in Development

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Abstract

In Africa, Local Economic development (LED), as a strategy for development, has gained momentum over the past fifteen years. While in advanced or industrialized countries LED has achieved significant successes, it is largely in its infancy in most of the African continent, with the exceptions of South Africa. The design and implementation of LED by local government is complicated by a number of factors such as differences in the understanding and interpretation of the concept, differences in the ideological paradigms which inform the chosen path of LED and variations in terms of the design of the strategy. All these facets have important implications for local government who, in many countries, are expected to deliver the strategy and achieve not only economic growth but also social and equity goals. The main objectives of this paper are: (i) to critically review the literature on LED, with a view to assessing the different conceptualization(s) of LED; (ii) to review the different approaches to LED and the theoretical paradigms which underpin them; (iii) to draw the implications of these differences in terms of the role of local government in LED. The paper argues that, whilst LED is a relevant and useful strategy for local development, its success critically depends on a much broader understanding of the concept itself, the role of the state vis-à-vis the private sector, the nature of, and the institutional framework for, LED, the dynamic and complex nature of local economies and the interaction of the various spheres of government. The paper relies on secondary sources of information on LED from developing as well as some developed countries.

Key words: Local Economic Development, Local Government, Local Community

Introduction

LED is an important strategy which local governments are increasingly using in order to stimulate the growth of local economies. The World Bank (2004), defines Local Economic
Development (LED) as "local people working together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life improvements for all in the community. The 'community' here can be defined as a sub-district, city, town, metropolitan area, or sub national region." Based on this definition, the World Bank identifies the common characteristics of LED as inclusion of government, private sector, not-for-profit sectors, and the local community, working together to “improve the local economy, building on local strengths and opportunities, while working to minimize local weaknesses and threats”.

This understanding of LED is reinforced by Nel (2000) and Rogerson (2005), among others. However, the understanding is evolving in response to the dynamic and complex environments within which LED takes place.

LED has generally been effective in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Ireland. Since the collapse of the former Soviet Bloc of countries, a number of East European countries have adopted the LED model in order to deal with problems of stagnant economic growth, unemployment, and poverty. In South Africa, LED was introduced after 1994 as one of the government’s strategies to address the socio-economic challenges of inequality, poverty, and marginalization, particularly with regard to the black population, who had suffered discrimination in the era of apartheid.

Although a potentially powerful development tool, LED is limited by a number of factors. Firstly, although the strategy is now adopted in many African countries, there is no clear or common understanding of the concept. Secondly, there is disagreement concerning whether there should be a uniform or standard approach to LED. Thirdly, there are different approaches on how to achieve LED. Finally, there are questions on what should be the strategic focus of LED. These appear to be informed by the different ideological foundation(s) which underpin the particular LED approach. Although it originally emerged as a response to the failure to achieve development at the macro-economic level, and economic-growth oriented strategies, some critics contend that LED is still predominantly an economic growth tool rather, than a strategy to promote social and human development.

The key question is how do these apparently different ‘voices’ impact on local government and its capacity to deliver on LED?

The paper attempts to review the debate on LED, based on these parameters. It reasons that in the African context, where the neo-liberal, purely market-driven model has
failed to solve the problem of poverty and inequality, a more ‘developmental’ approach to LED is necessary.

This paper points out that since the 1980s, when structural adjustment programs were implemented, and when African countries moved away from the state-interventionist policies of the 1960s and 1970s, there seems to be a trend that LED seems to be more about business/enterprise growth rather than about development. Bristow and Wells (2005) observe that most of the policy prescriptions which contemporary LED follows appear to be based on an internal logic which is dominated by market liberalization.

If the development of local government is about how to ensure that LED stimulates growth of the local economy, while at the same time achieving local developmental goals, then a more critical review of orthodox LED approaches is necessary. This paper argues that the model of ‘pro-poor’ LED must be the guiding and underpinning model of LED, in the context of developing economies in Africa. That focus will inevitably require the state to be more actively involved, but without replacing or stifling the role of the private sector. The key debate is just what should the role of a developmental state be? Because there is a danger that, if this is not defined clearly, the role of the private sector can be eroded. Both need each other to ensure the success of a sustainable, pro-poor LED.

**The concept of LED**

The literature abounds with definitions of LED. On the surface, some of the definitions appear similar. However, some differences exist in terms of the conceptualization of the forces which should drive LED.

Helmsing (2001:64) defines LED as “a process in which partnerships between local governments, community-based groups and the private sector are established to manage existing resources in order to create jobs and stimulate the economy of a well-defined territory.”

Zaaijer & Sara (1993:129) see it as “a process in which local governments and/or community based groups manage their existing resources and enter into partnership arrangements with the private sector, or with each other, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in an economic area”
The World Bank (2004) defines LED as “Local economic development is about local people working together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life improvements for all in the community.”

In essence, LED is viewed as a process in which local government mobilizes the private sector and communities in order to harness local resources in order to achieve economic and social goals. However, there are some who are not so convinced about convergence. For example, Reese (1997), and Danson et al. (2000) in Helmsing (2001), argue that defining LED is not easy, primarily because of the fluid and dynamic nature of the concept. Understanding of the concept varies across countries and time.

Other conceptualizations put more emphasis on the objective of achieving equity through LED. For example, in South Africa, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) considers LED as an important strategy for “creating robust and inclusive local economies that exploit local opportunities, address local needs and contribute to national development objectives such as economic growth and poverty eradication” (DPLG, 2005, pp.10). The issue of inclusivity is a key element which the government emphasizes in its LED interventions. This is important in the context of an economy in which unemployment and poverty are major challenges.

Concerned about the predominance of economic rather than social goals, the concept of ‘pro-poor’ LED has emerged in order to emphasize that the economic growth which is promoted by LED is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end, that is, ending poverty and its related maladies. One of the major champions of pro-poor LED in South Africa is a non-profit organization called Khanya-Acid. The organization distinguishes between growth-oriented LED and pro-poor LED. It argues that “it is well-established that approaches which just promote growth do not necessarily reduce inequality and address poverty. In the context of developing countries with high levels of poverty it is important that approaches to growth are implemented which reduce inequality. This means that measures also need to address the informal sector, where much of the African population operate.”

What tends to be unclear in most of the definitions is just what is meant by “local”? Because a municipality typically assumes the role of facilitating LED, local is often interpreted as being confined to a municipal area or jurisdiction. However, there are some who challenge that definition of the local. Beer et.al. (2003:5) prefer to deal with Local and
Regional Economic Development (LRED), because of the inevitably interrelationship between the local and the regional.

Local economic development is concerned with the creation of an environment which will engage stakeholders in implementing strategies and programs. This perspective had to be aligned with the country's macro-economic strategy, which 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 (DBSA, 2000). The increasing status of locality in the global economy, and the rising emphasis on local and community decision-making in democratic states have, paved the way for the development of LED.

**Debates on approaches to LED: Evolution of the LED discourse**

The GTZ (2008) notes that in the early stages of LED, activities largely focused on the marketing of locations for external investors. Incentives such as tax breaks and/or reduced costs of public services (e.g. water, electricity and infrastructure) were provided. LED was also largely driven and subsidized by the state. In the second phase, there was a shift towards more endogenous economic potential, with a focus on enhancing the competitiveness of existing firms and promoting the creation and expansion of new businesses. Then, in the 1990s, there was a shift towards a more 'holistic approach'. Emphasis was on business support and sectoral development approaches, creation of a more conducive environment to economic development, more business networking and collaboration. Today, there are a number of variants of LED, all of which emphasize different aspects or preferences.

**Market-based or orthodox LED**

The market-based, market-driven or ‘orthodox’ LED advocates the supremacy of markets in resource allocation, because markets promote competition which leads to efficiency. In Africa, in the 1960s and 1970s, state-driven development was the dominant model. However, the inefficiency of state-owned enterprises, the poor macro-economic performance of many countries, among other factors, showed that it was not sustainable for the state to assume a more interventionist role in the economy. In the 1980s, most African countries were compelled to embark on Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which were market-driven programs financed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (popularly known as the Bretton Woods institutions). SAPs called for trade liberalization, financial sector reform, public sector reform, which included local government, and labor
market reforms. Although evidence shows that SAPs were not successful because of their poor design and poor timing, the issue is that they represented the impact of globalization in shaping African economies. Public sector reforms, which called for “small government”, fiscal efficiency, and a more business-oriented approach to public sector management also had implications for local government. They were required to streamline the role of the ‘local state’ and aim to achieve efficiency in their operations. The role of local government was to provide basic services (water, electricity, and sanitation services) and also improve local infrastructure. In terms of local economic development, local government was to be a facilitator and not to be directly involved in business activities. Its task was to create an environment for the private sector to invest in the local economy. Market-driven LED emphasizes that LED should focus on increasing economic growth of an area by promoting business growth. As the local economy grows, jobs will be created and incomes improved. This seems consistent with the ‘trickle down’ perception of orthodox economics. The approach is referred to as neo-liberal, because of the perception that market approaches have been ‘imposed’ by globalization forces such as SAPs, and the changing global trading and financial environment, whose rules increasingly require states to open up their economies.

Market approaches emphasize that governments should aim at making their local economies be more ‘competitive’ with respect to other locations. Hence, the emphasis on intense ‘place marketing’ or ‘locality attraction’. The emphasis on competition has been criticized by some authors. For example, Bristow and Wells (2005) argue that, inevitably, most localities are doomed to failure because competition will not always achieve a win-win situation. Some will be winners and others will be losers. They therefore emphasize an “inter-locality” approach which can be enhanced through spatial development planning.

Beer et al. (2003) explain the rise of LED as a reflection of widespread acceptance of neo-liberal ideas and rhetorical devices which stress that national governments no longer have the resources or the ability to counter the impacts of globalization. Increasingly, the region is being seen as the appropriate level for strategies to improve business competitiveness and create employment. They also state that neo-liberal ideology holds that large-scale government bureaucracies are too inflexible and too slow moving to deal with the demands of a rapidly changing global environment. Local agencies respond faster. It is local agents that are better positioned to mobilize resources, build social, capital and attract business to an area.
Pro-poor or developmental LED

Villacorta, in CIIR (2002), offers an interesting perspective on LED in the context of Latin America. In that region, LED is deeply rooted within a developmental framework. She stresses the multi-dimensionality of local development in terms of economic growth, ecological sustainability, solidarity, gender, and age justice. She reinforces the vision of local development as “a space and a field for democratic transformation and a seedbed for sustainable development”. She adds that “the local space must be transformed into a living source of innovative economic, political, social and cultural proposals, with the potential to increase and multiply”. This conceptualization of LED is holistic and inspiring and should be the guiding framework for LED.

The underlying principles of this approach are very clearly articulated by Khanya AICdd, a leading champion of development in South Africa. The following are the key principles which characterize a sustainable and pro-poor LED approach:

• Understand the livelihoods in a community, as well as of individuals;
• Recognize the importance of human capabilities as central to the debate on poverty; understand the different types of capital (or assets) that people have and their vulnerabilities;
• Understand how policies, institutions, and processes support/hinder access to these capitals, and increase or diminish people's vulnerabilities;
• Understand the parallel worlds of formal and informal, urban and rural, Westernized and African and that municipal economic development must work with both;
• Identify and build on the preferred outcomes of people (and not decide them for them);
• Understand people's livelihood strategies and how they can be enhanced;

LED officials also need to conceptualize the broader range of interventions which impact on poverty as being part of LED.

By understanding communities and individuals, their aspirations, and their capabilities, and by consulting and working with them, it is possible to design LED.
Sustainable LED

Sustainability is critical in LED, because if the local environment is damaged by pollution and other harmful activities by business or communities, then the future capacity of the local economic base will be eroded. Environmental considerations must therefore be integrated in the design of LED. It should also be noted that sustainability goes beyond environmental considerations. Participation of people, of communities, of businesses, are key elements of sustainability. That is why local government has to invest in building strong and effective partnerships with community organizations, business associations or networks, international organizations and the public sector at large. Finally, financial sustainability must also underline LED. If LED is to be developmental, community projects or interventions should be able to sustain themselves beyond, for instance, in the case of South Africa, any grant support from the LED fund.

New Generation LED

Increasingly, in response to the different concerns about LED interventions becoming overly more economic growth-focused rather than developmental, some authors advocate a more integrated approach, which ensures that issues of growth, development, equity, and environment are embedded in LED. For example, Helmsing (2001) writes about what he refers to as the new generation LED. Distinctive features of the new generation of LED:

- It is multi-actor. Success critically depends on collaboration between public, private and community sectors.
- It is multi-sector. There is active participation of the public, private and community sectors
- It is multi-level. In the context of globalization, LED has to harness the opportunities which are offered by the global “economy” and use them for the advantage of the local economy. Local government needs to harness knowledge and expertise from successful local governments from other regions.

Cognizant of the need to promote economic, social and equity goals, the new model is anchored around three critical components of local development. Firstly, it has a strong community-based economic development element which focuses on poor urban and rural households, with a view to identifying and supporting self-help and sustainable sources of
income, creating jobs, creating safety nets and improving community services. It focuses primarily on the economy of the community.

The second component of the new generation LED model is business and enterprise development. This aspect seeks to develop the local economic base of an area. The World Bank (2004) presents the key elements of this strategy as:

Improving the local business climate

A major impediment to business consists of the bureaucracy involved with obtaining business licenses and permits and other documentation. In order to improve the business environment, it is necessary to improve processes and procedures for business registration and taxation.

Making investments in hard strategic infrastructure

Hard strategic infrastructure consists of the built environment for businesses, including transport infrastructure (roads, rail, air, and sea) and utilities (industrial and potable water, waste disposal, gas and electricity, and telecommunication systems).

Facilitating access to sites and premises for business

Local government should provide and make available land and business sites, workspaces, and business units. Information should be packaged in a way that it is accessible to prospective businesses.

Supporting development and provision of soft infrastructure

Business also requires support in the form of regulatory reforms which enhance business growth, skills training, and business-focused education, research, and development, Beverley and Sherraden (1997) have argued that investments in basic needs and human capital will yield positive social returns in the form of increased participation, connectedness, and social stability, whilst economic returns yield increased productivity, economic growth, and reduced income and asset inequality. Support also includes the provision of ‘one-stop shop’ advisory services, business networking, guidance to accessing capital, and finance sources.

Promoting business growth and retention
The provision of advice, technical support, and resources enables existing local business to grow, with the goal of retaining and strengthening existing local business. Inter-firm cooperation is also promoted, in order to encourage knowledge and information sharing. A range of business support services is part of this milieu.

New enterprise development and promotion

Start-up businesses need much support, in the form of advice, technical support, resources, access to finance, and information on registration and licensing. LED should have a component which addresses such needs.

The third aspect of the new model is locality marketing. This concerns the management of the entire territory. This emphasizes spatial development plans and their implementation. Its primary objective is to attract business to a local area. Its key elements include:

- Physical planning and development (development of spatial plans), zoning, and regulations. Introduction of one-stop services for permits and licenses.
- Urban planning and design (upgrade of commercial centers, improvement of commercial sites and premises), typically referred to as ‘town-scaping’. Development of shopping malls to attract business.

Infrastructure and socio-economic overhead capital

- Social overhead capital (public, non-profit, private institutions in education, training, research and technology)

Attracting business to a local area should be encouraged if they add value to a local area. Consistent with pro-poor growth, businesses which have a potential to create jobs should be encouraged.

Supporting development of business clusters

Focuses on facilitating linkages and interdependence amongst firms (including suppliers and buyers), supporting services (including training institutions and banks) in a network of production (and sale) of products and services. Local governments can collaborate locally and regionally to become facilitators of industry networking and catalysts/brokers to bring the actors together.
Regeneration of commercial and community zones

Addressing specific area-based problems such as regenerating a run-down town center, or a declining commercial zone or neighborhood. Fostering promising growth opportunities where market potential is already demonstrated by emerging private investment (e.g. along area transport corridors).

More Radical Critiques of LED Models

Most of the approaches to LED presented above are largely rooted in what critiques of traditional LED models refer to as the “prescriptive and standardized” approaches to LED. These approaches in their view, are not likely to succeed because, in their prescriptiveness, they miss out the uniqueness of each locality, and therefore prescribe strategies and interventions which do not address the complexities and dynamics of the development of a locality. Rowe (2009) explains that the discipline of local economic development is a complex mix of concepts, practices, and rhetoric. He points out that traditional development theory has failed when it has been applied to local economic development because of its focus on abstract macro issues and not on the specific. This shortcoming is significant, because regions and contexts for local development are different, such that there cannot be blueprints for their development. Boland, in Rowe (2009), states that:

the tendency to copy generic solutions has resulted in cities adopting the same economic development tool-kit….at a time of the theoretical emphasis on the role of innovation in local economic development. What actually emerges as local economic development policy lacks any real innovative, imaginative or original thinking because the policy priorities contained in the strategy documents are effectively identical.

He emphasizes that the practice of LED is “an ensemble of social relations, networks and nodes of dynamic and often inventive social interaction, patterned by legal, government and professional systems, and by customs and habits build up over the years” Rowe (2009).

Deleuze, in Rowe (2009), echoes these sentiments: “we learn nothing from those who say: ‘do as I do’.”
Foucault (2005) adds: “I believe that economic development does not have a general theory because traditional positivistic approaches cannot adequately theorize the complexity of the chaos of markets, global forces and multiple actors.”

The essence of the argument of the critics of traditional LED approaches is rooted in the idea that the practice of local economic development must be rooted in an in-depth understanding of the complexity and uniqueness of each local situation. The design of policies and strategies must be based on this kind of understanding, otherwise they will not be effective in achieving the goals of LED.

**Implications for local government**

From the discussion, it is clear that there are different perceptions about what LED is. In order for local government to be effective in implementing LED, it is important to have consensus on the definition of the concept. That common understanding must integrate the economic, social, and equity goals. In essence, there has to be an understanding that economic development and social development and action are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are complementary and therefore local government should promote both simultaneously and in a coordinated manner. LED therefore has to be a growth path or trajectory, which operates to achieve *simultaneously* the goals of enhanced competitiveness, on the one hand, and of poverty reduction, on the other. LED should not just focus on or prioritize economic growth programs without also integrating poverty reduction objectives. In that regard, strategies to attract and promote business growth should target the SMME sector, which has the potential for creating jobs.

The debate on whether LED should be market-based or driven largely by the state through local government is a pertinent one. While recognizing the important role and contribution which the private sector can play in increasing local economic growth, there is also the danger that a wholesale private-sector driven LED may, in the end, focus on pro-growth strategies at the expense of developmental goals. To guard against that, a developmental state (at local government level) must be actively involved in guiding and coordinating LED strategies which will also promote social development. Local government is better placed to ensure that the community-based economic development dimension of LED is prioritized. It is a reality that some localities may not be competitive or attractive due to their economic status, state of infrastructure, resource endowments, and so on. Their revenue base may be too limited to undertake large investments in LED. A private-sector
driven LED agenda in such a context may not work, as business may not be responsive. Local
government will have to make major investments to improve infrastructure, improve the
business environment and create the partnerships required in LED before any tangible
economic and developmental outputs are realized.

The importance of a supportive policy environment cannot be overemphasized. A
developmental local government approach is critical. Bagchi (2000 pp. 398) defines
developmental local government as one that puts economic development as the top priority
and is able to design effective instruments to promote such an objective. The instruments
identified are, *inter alia*, forging new formal institutions, the weaving of formal and informal
networks of collaboration among citizens and officials, and the utilization of new
opportunities for trade and profitable production.

In countries like South Africa the policy framework is clear and comprehensive.
However, it appears that most other African countries have not achieved that goal, and so it
will be necessary for them to develop clear policy and regulatory frameworks to guide LED.
The service culture of local government also has to change. Despite the proliferation of
literature which emphasizes the importance of efficient services, from utilities to business
licensing and registration, commercial sites, for example, many municipalities are still
characterized by heavy bureaucracy, inefficiency, and corruption.

It increasingly appears that the market-model is gaining ground, particularly due to
globalization. These forces are increasing pressure on the state to pull back. Whilst
acknowledging the important part that business or the private sector can play in achieving
LED, the state should still be actively involved or take a lead role in order to ensure that
development takes place at the local level. If things are left entirely to the private sector, there
is no guarantee that LED will take place, because business only responds to some areas and
not others. That is why rural areas are lagging behind, because they lack the necessary
infrastructure and supportive environment which can induce the private sector to invest.
Building that infrastructure and a nurturing environment requires leadership by competent
and well-resourced local government machinery. In short, whilst African countries should
embrace markets and the contribution of the private sector, they should be careful not to
abandon their leadership role as champions of a people-centered, pro-poor, developmental,
and sustainable development agenda.
The argument presented by scholars like Foucault and Rowe, who are radically opposed to traditional approaches to LED, which, in their view, tend to be prescriptive and standardized, must be given serious thought because of their convincing argument. They opine that because local economies are complex spaces which are shaped by a ‘multiplicity’ of forces, it is critical for local government to ensure that the designs and implementation of LED have to be rooted in an in-depth understanding of those realities. This inevitably requires a lot of time and resources, but, given the positive spin-offs of taking this route, this is a methodological approach which local governments should seriously consider in their approach to LED.

Implementation remains a major challenge in local government, largely due to capacity constraints, and so it will be necessary for national and provincial governments, with support from private business development service providers, to strengthen the capacity of local government to deliver LED. Adequate budgets and human resources are key to effective LED units or departments in the municipalities.

One of the limitations of some LED implementation is the restricted participation of the private sector, and so the creation of partnerships between public and private sectors will enhance the effectiveness of LED. The establishment of Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs) should be able to facilitate that process and, in particular, to promote greater cooperation and synergy with different spheres of government. National governments should ensure that local government is adequately resourced, so that it takes leadership in designing and promoting LED.

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The Role of Head Teacher Behavior and External Monitoring (supervision) in Combating Quiet Corruption in Local Governments of Uganda: A Case Study of Iganga district

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Abstract

The year 2010 was a landmark year in the discourse on corruption. The year saw the World Bank introduce quiet corruption into the academic and policy discourse on corruption. Quiet precisely refers to all types of malpractices of frontline providers (teachers, doctors, inspectors, and other government officials at the frontline of service provision) that do not involve monetary exchange (World Bank, 2010). These behaviors include potentially observable deviations such as absenteeism, but also hard-to-observe deviations from expected conduct, such as a lower level of effort than expected, leakage of inputs or the deliberate bending of rules for personal advantage. The World Bank article on quiet corruption (see Africa Development Indicators Report, 2010) extensively deals with the nature, extent and consequences of quiet corruption, but does not delve into what sustains the new form of corruption. Using secondary data from Iganga district, whose absenteeism rate of head teachers stood at 19.7 percent and that of teachers at 43.6 percent, it was established that two principal factors were responsible for the high prevalence of quiet corruption: head teacher behavior that deviated from the public service code of conduct and ethics; and inadequacies in school supervision. Whenever the absence rate of head teachers reduced, the attendance rates of teachers improved, lending credence to the proposition that head teacher absenteeism induces teacher absenteeism through teachers emulating their bosses. Secondly, it was established that regular and unannounced schools visits are among the vital methods for improving the attendance levels and dealing with other dimensions of quiet corruption.

Key words: Head Teacher, External Monitoring, Quiet Corruption, Local Government, Education Sector
Introduction

This paper examines a new form of corruption (quiet corruption) that does not involve monetary exchange and takes place at the frontline of public service provision. Quiet corruption was introduced into the academic and policy discourse by the World Bank in March 2010. This section highlights the background to the paper, problem statement, and justification of the paper.

Historical Background

Concerns about combating corruption—abuse of public power for private gain—are as old as the history of government. As far back as 350 BCE, Aristotle— in *The Politics*— counseled that, “To protect the treasury from being defrauded, let money be issued openly in front of the whole city, and let copies of the accounts be deposited in various wards.” Prior to March 2010, studies on corruption largely focused on the so-called ‘big-time’ (‘noisy’) corruption. Big-time corruption occurs when public officials bend the rules to channel patronage to relatives, friends, and cronies, or accept bribes; as well as when private agents bribe public officials to give them exclusive advantages or rights (Gumede, 2011). In the Africa Development Indicators Report (2010), the World Bank broadened the scope of corruption by introducing ‘quiet corruption’. The coining of the concept has attracted both praise and criticism for the World Bank from scholars, development practitioners, and the general public. The Breton Woods institution has been praised for introducing the sensitive developmental topic into academic and policy discourse. On the other hand, it has been faulted for portraying quiet corruption as an exclusively African problem and only highlighting the symptoms of a much larger development problem.

Conceptual Background

The concept of quiet corruption is a March 2010 invention, much as its elements or dimensions (absenteeism, low level of effort, and theft of inputs) have a long history. Being a new concept, definitions of it are just beginning to emerge. This paper will therefore adopt the standard definition advanced by the World Bank. Quiet corruption refers to all types of malpractices of frontline providers (teachers, doctors, inspectors, and other government officials at the frontline of service provision) that do not involve monetary exchange (World Bank, 2010). These behaviors include potentially observable deviations such as absenteeism,
but also hard-to-observe deviations from expected conduct, such as a lower level of effort than expected, leakage of inputs (medicines, scholastic materials, and farm inputs) or the deliberate bending of rules for personal advantage. It thus implies a sharp deviation from public service and professional codes of conduct and ethics. The newly christened form of corruption involves public servants [at the frontline of service provision] failing to deliver services or inputs that have been paid for by government. The most prominent examples are absentee teachers in public schools and absentee doctors in primary clinics; theft of drugs from public clinics and selling them on the private market; and subsidized fertilizer being diluted before it reaches farmers (World Bank, 2010).

The above deviant behaviors of frontline service fit within the World Bank definition of corruption: abuse of public power for private gain. Absenteeism is a special type of corruption which involves claiming a salary one is not legally entitled to because of unauthorized absence. When workers profit from absenteeism, for example by collecting income from a second job, then absenteeism also falls within the World Bank definition of corruption as ‘abuse of public power for private gain’ (U4 Anti-corruption Resource Centre, 2008). Other elements of quiet corruption, like lower level of effort than expected, deliberate bending of rules for personal advantage and theft of inputs constitute abuse of public power for private gain. A synthesis of the 2010 World Bank article reveals the following notable distinguishing features of this new form of corruption from the familiar form of corruption (big-time and petty corruption):

The ‘silent’ nature of the vice. Big-time corruption-the familiar form of corruption- is ‘noisy’ or ‘loud’, because it attracts newspaper headlines and public disapproval. On the other hand, quiet corruption is less salient or noisy and consequently less likely to attract newspaper headlines or worldwide public disapproval (World Bank, 2010). Quiet corruption is yet to be captured by Transparency International (TI) and other global indices of corruption. It is one of the governance indicators upon which a low income country would not be denied foreign aid from multilateral and bilateral development agencies/partners.

The cashless nature of the vice (deviant behavior). Quiet corruption does not entail monetary exchange between the recipient of the public services and the public service providers. Other forms of corruption may involve a ‘special exchange’, which entails (a) the corruptor (or briber), (b) corrupted (bribee), (c) corruption fee (or bribe), and (d) corruption
gain (or bribery service). In other words, quiet corruption does not involve money changing hands; there is no ‘oiling of the wheels’ or ‘hands’ to propel things to move faster.

The level at which the vice takes place. The level at which the new form of corruption takes place is implied in the World Bank’s maiden definition of the concept. Big-time corruption (or noisy/loud corruption) mostly takes place at higher levels of government. Quiet corruption takes place downstream at the frontline of public service provision. The perpetrators of quiet corruption are the street-level bureaucrats who frequently interact with recipients of essential public services such as education, health, and agricultural extension. It is therefore predominant in local governments, since local governments are mandated to provide essential services like education, health, and agricultural extension.

The victims of the vice. The victims of the unethical conduct of public officials are the ordinary citizens (the poor), who are reliant on public services to meet their basic needs.

Visibility of the vice. Quiet corruption is less frequently observed deviations from expected conduct. To this effect, the World Bank regards it as the tip of the iceberg. The familiar forms of corruption—big time and petty—are just the tip of the iceberg. The less frequently observed deviation from expected conduct is quiet corruption.

Problem Statement

In the Africa Indicators Report (2010), the World Bank adequately documented the nature and consequences of quiet corruption. The World Bank article has made a significant and laudable contribution, by raising awareness of the profile of quiet corruption and documenting its non-negligible short and long-term consequences, inter alia, limitation of the productivity of potential households, firms and farms; and distrust of public institutions (World Bank, 2010:xi). In view of the disastrous consequences of quiet corruption, the Breton Woods institution opines that, although combating loud and visible forms of corruption is necessary, fighting quiet corruption is critical if governments want to reduce poverty and promote sustainable growth. Grand or big-time corruption diverts resources meant for service delivery or increases the cost of delivering public services, but quiet corruption contributes to poor service delivery, which negatively affects the realization of development objectives. The World Bank essay explicitly deals with ‘what’ quiet corruption is and ‘how’ it decelerates Africa’s development endeavors, but explicitly neglects the aspect of ‘why’ it is so pervasive and widespread on the African continent. Globally, the causes of teacher absenteeism, low
level of effort and theft of instructional materials are diverse and multifaceted. Ssenkabirwa (2011), quoting a study done by SNV (a Dutch Development Agency), says that Uganda’s teacher absenteeism rate—35 percent—is the highest in the world. He adds that many teachers do not teach while at school. A problem of the magnitude of quiet corruption in Africa can only be solved by identifying the forces that sustain it and accordingly weakening them. This paper will therefore make a contribution to the discourse on quiet corruption in local governments of Uganda by identifying the forces that sustain it and proposing country-specific and evidence-based strategies for combating it.

**Literature/Theoretical Review**

The present paper is embedded in the principal-agent model and the social learning theory. These theories attempt to predict and explain factors that promote or undermine conformity to laws, rules, regulations, or codes of conduct. These theories are deemed relevant, since the paper deals with non-conforming behaviors of street bureaucrats in the local government education sector.

**Principal-Agent Models**

A common thread in these models is that the government is led by a benevolent dictator, the principal, who aims to motivate the government officials (agents) to act with integrity in the use of public resources (Klitgaard, 1988). The agent is entrusted with power by his/her superior (the principal). The principal delegates a task to the agent, sets up the formal rules as to how this task is to be fulfilled and pays a salary to the agent. The agent is supposed to serve the client in accordance to these rules. The agent defects some ways from his/her rule bound behavior by engaging in different forms of corrupt behavior, thereby hurting the interests of the principal. Within the principal-agent framework is the crime and punishment model advanced by Gary Becker (1968). The model posits that self-interested officials engage in corrupt behavior so long as the expected gains from corruption exceed the expected costs (detection and punishment) associated with corrupt acts. Corruption in this case is a rational though unethical choice; it is a calculation of risk—a crime of calculation (Klitgaard, 2000). Under this model, individuals engage in corrupt acts if there are incentives for corruption. Corruption incentives can be analyzed using a stylized model of a rational individual optimizing his/her decision to get involved in corrupt acts by equating the benefit from corruption to the associated costs. The individual benefits from engaging in corruption may include theft of service delivery inputs and simple extortion of public service users like
patients. The individual associated costs of corruption may include job dismissal and other penalties such as a jail time, weighed by the probability of being caught. According to this model, the level of corruption that a public officer is motivated to engage in will be higher when: public sector wages are lower; the level of personal gain is higher (e.g. the higher the bribe offered); the probability of detection is lower; and the penalty (fine, years of imprisonment, etc) is lower. According to this model, corruption could be minimized by reducing the number of transactions over which public officials have discretion; reducing the scope of gain from each transaction; increasing the probability of detection; and increasing the penalty for corrupt activities (i.e. ensuring that the sanctions outweigh any expected gains). The model can be extended to include the opportunity for corruption. Klitgaard (1995) identifies three variables that affect the opportunity for corruption in the public sector: discretion, monopoly, and accountability. In his conceptualization, corruption equals monopoly plus discretion minus accountability. The greater the level of discretion a public official is given, the greater his or her window of opportunity to extract personal gain through theft, bribes, or other corrupt acts. The size of the window is institutionally determined by the degree of monopoly control over the resources, as well as the accountability and oversight to which the public official is subjected (Boex, 2007). With a lack of accountability, public officials face little or no risk of punishment for misdeeds. Without this kind of check on their behavior, they are more likely to engage in corrupt behavior (Gonzales de Asis, 2006). To contain corruption under this framework, one has to have a rule-driven government that includes strong internal controls and leaves little room for discretion by public officials while increasing their accountability (Boex, 2007). This model has gained wide acceptance in policy circles and influenced the design of corruption containment policies and strategies in developed and transitional countries.

**Social Learning Theory**

Another theory that advances an alternative explanation of individual motivation to engage in corrupt behavior is offered by the social leaning theory developed within sociology to explain various sorts of deviant behavior. The basic proposition is that the same learning process in a context of social structure, interaction, and situation, produces both conforming and deviant behavior (Akers and Jensens, 2005). The theory is based on four interrelated concepts that operate to promote or undermine conformity: differential association, definitions, imitation and differential reinforcement (Tavits, 2005:6).
According to Aker (1998 cited in Tavits 2005), the basic mechanism of social learning theory works as follows; behavior is acquired and sustained through:

- adopting definitions favorable to illegal behavior via differential association with one’s peers;
- imitating behavior by peers; and
- the possible reinforcement provided by rewards for such behavior.

Definitions constitute normative attitudes towards certain behavior (Tavits, 2005). They mean one’s own orientations, rationalizations, justifications, excuses, and other attitudes that define the commission of an act as relatively more right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable, justified or unjustified, appropriate or inappropriate (Akers and Jensens, 2005). The more individuals define behavior as good (‘positive’ definition), or as justified (‘neutralizing’ definition) rather than bad (‘negative’ definition), the more likely they are to engage in it (Akers 1998). The individual’s definitions and attitudes toward behavior are associated with behavior in a wide variety of contexts. Social behavior may also be acquired and sustained through conditioning and imitation or modeling of others’ behavior. Imitation refers to the engagement in behavior after the direct or indirect observation of similar behavior by others. Whether or not the behavior modeled by others will be imitated is affected by the characteristics of the models, the behavior observed, and the observed consequences of the behavior (vicarious reinforcement) (Bandura, 1977 cited in Akers and Jensens, 2005). Imitation is more important in the initial acquisition and performance of novel behavior than in the maintenance or cessation of behavioral patterns once established, but it continues to have some effect in maintaining behavior (Akers and Jensens, 2005).

Definitions and imitations are mutually reinforcing in their effect on an individual’s behavior. By using others’ behavior as models, a person learns ‘evaluative’ definitions of behavior as good or bad, right or wrong (Tavits, 2005:7). If people (frontline providers in the case of quiet corruption) perceive that behavior (such as absenteeism, theft of inputs, or low level of effort) is widespread and that there is an approval of problem behavior, then they are likely to engage in such behavior. In relation to quiet corruption, one would argue that the motivation to engage in absenteeism and theft of inputs would be higher if an individual does not define such behavior as being morally wrong, but rather that it is a justified and
acceptable mode of behavior; and that one has been exposed to such behavior or at least believes that such a behavior is widespread and, thus, approved (Tavits, 2005).

Differential reinforcement refers to the balance of anticipated or actual rewards and punishments that follow or are consequences of behavior. Whether individuals will refrain from or commit a crime at any given time (and whether they will continue or desist from doing so in the future) depends on the balance of past, present, and anticipated future rewards and punishments for their actions. The greater the value, frequency, and probability of reward for deviant behavior (balanced against the punishing consequences and rewards/punishment for alternative behavior), the greater the likelihood that it will occur and be repeated (Akers and Jensens, 2005).

**Actual Review**

Quite corruption is prevalent in all sectors in Africa and manifests itself differently according to the different sectors. However, it is more pronounced in the education, health and production sectors. These are sectors whose progress and success are vital for poverty eradication and more generally achieving the MDGs. In the words of the World Bank, the vice is regrettably sinking considerable efforts to improve the well-being of Africa’s citizens, particularly the poor who are more reliant on publicly provided services and government systems to satisfy their basic needs (World Bank, 2010). Quiet corruption militates against the realization of Africa development objectives through three principal mechanisms: low level of effort due to absenteeism, low effort on the job and resource leakage (see Figure 1 below). The behavioral elements of quiet corruption translate into poor service delivery, which has attendant long-term direct and indirect consequences on the citizens. Long-term direct consequences of quiet corruption include limitation of productivity of households, firms, and farms; lower human capital, while the indirect consequences include a distrust of public institutions and the notion that corruption is inevitable and omnipresent (World Bank, 2010). The World Bank now regards the familiar form of big-time corruption as just the ‘tip of the iceberg’, with quiet corruption being below the surface. Quiet corruption occurs across a much wider set of transactions, directly affecting a large number of beneficiaries (World Bank, 2010).
At this moment, it is important to examine the behavioral elements of quiet corruption: absenteeism, low level of effort, and leakage/theft of inputs. There is no consensus on the definition of absenteeism. In human resource management literature, absenteeism has always been taken to mean unjustified and unexplained absence of workers. Casio (2003) defines absenteeism as any failure of an employee to report for and remain at work. However, we must put a caveat on this definition. In some cases, service providers may be present but fail to deliver services, for example, teachers may be at school but may fail to visit their class to teach or not being in a fit condition to teach effectively. In the context of
quiet corruption, the World Bank (2010) conceptualizes absenteeism to imply providers working less time at the public facility than contracted for, with little or no repercussion on their earnings; or public officers shirking their duties while on the job (low effort). Regardless of the merits of the above definitions, absenteeism can be classified into ‘employee choice absence’ and ‘involuntary or unavoidable absence’. Notwithstanding the classification of absenteeism, high levels of voluntary and involuntary absence by frontline service providers have negative consequences on service delivery to the poor. Leakage of inputs refers to frontline providers’ involvement in the theft of inputs such as drugs and medicines, in the case of health care workers, or books and other instructional materials in the case of teachers (World Bank, 2010).

**Impact of Quiet Corruption on the Education Sector**

Teacher absenteeism is damaging to the education of children. Pupil and student motivation to learn is damaged by persistent teacher absenteeism. Studies have shown a relationship between teacher absenteeism and pupil/student attendance levels. Bray (2003) conducted a study in 2003 in which he concluded that teacher absenteeism induces pupil absenteeism. Kremer (2004) found out that a 10 percent increase in teacher absenteeism resulted in a 1.8 percent decrease in pupil attendance (hence lower teacher absenteeism would lead to lower student absenteeism). This statistical relationship is premised on the assumption that teachers are role models and thus influence perceptions about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In addition, chronic teacher absenteeism sends an underlying message to pupils/students that school attendance is not important (Uehara, 1999). Teacher absenteeism has equally damaging consequences on student/pupil achievement. Miller *et al.* (2007) observed that 10 days of teacher absence reduced student achievement in fourth grade mathematics by 3.3 percent of a standard deviation. This implies that learning outcomes depend very much on whether or not teachers are actually present and the quality of instruction. Quiet corruption in education further manifests itself in leakage (theft) of instructional materials. The two forms of quiet corruption – teacher absenteeism and leakage of inputs–have a negative impact on learning. Schools combine instructional materials and teacher and pupil interaction to produce cognitive skills (World Bank, 2010). A teacher with few or no instructional materials will find it hard to impart the necessary skills to the learners. Teacher instruction time is a crucial input in the production of competencies and skills that are crucial in a wide range of market and non-market activities. Given the long-term consequences of adults with lower attitudes and poor skills, quiet corruption in education
undermines the serious efforts being invested in the eradication of poverty and improvement in the competitiveness of African economies (World Bank, 2009). Quiet corruption in the education sector directly and adversely affect a nation’s ability to compete and prosper in the international marketplace for a long time, because the country’s population will lack the skills needed to compete. Little wonder that labor productivity on the African continent is lower than that of most developing regions. In a nutshell, quiet corruption has grave consequences for future competencies of Africa’s youth (World Bank, 2010).

Methodology

The study was basically qualitative and used secondary data. Data was obtained from a study that was carried out by the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Uganda Chapter, in Iganga district of Uganda, using 30 head teachers and 561 teachers from 30 primary schools and the Ministry of Education and Sports Sector Review Report (2009). In the ANPPCAN study, absenteeism was assumed to have occurred when teachers who were scheduled for work did not attend. Since scheduled work is the critical defining point, vacations and excused holidays, authorized sick-off, absence due to authorized training/workshop or official duties elsewhere/outreach activities were not considered as forms of absence. Data was analyzed using a content analysis technique to extract themes.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the principal findings on the causes of quiet corruption in primary schools in Iganga district. The implications of the findings for theory and practice are highlighted.

The Unethical Behavior of Head Teachers

An interesting revelation of the study was that some primary school head teachers in Iganga district do not live above reproach. Several head teachers observe the public service code of conduct and ethics more in total breach than in practice. In a study carried out by ANPPCAN in Iganga district in 2010, it was established that the average absenteeism rate of head teachers, following three unannounced visits, was 19.7 percent.

Table 1: Absenteeism rates of head teachers per visit
The absenteeism rate of head teachers had a corresponding effect on the attendance rate of teachers, as Table 2 below indicates.

Table 2: Absenteeism rate of teachers (N 561)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Number of teachers absent</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
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Tables 1 and 2 suggest that high head teacher absenteeism influenced the attendance rates of teachers. Whenever the absence rates of head teachers decreased, the attendance rates of teachers improved. Hence, regular attendance by head teachers would positively influence the attendance levels of teachers. It can therefore be inferred that head teacher absenteeism induces teacher absenteeism. If the first and second visit results are considered, a 10 percent drop in head teacher absenteeism resulted in a 2 percent drop in teacher absenteeism. At the head teacher absenteeism rate of 30 percent, the teacher absenteeism rate was 48.5 percent. During the third visit, with a head teacher absenteeism rate of 9 percent, the teacher absenteeism rate dropped to 35.8 percent. High head teacher absenteeism leads to low teacher absenteeism through teachers taking advantage of head teacher absence to be absent.
from work. It can therefore be inferred that subordinates tend to emulate or imitate the behavior of their superiors. If supervisors engage in any form of unethical behavior, their subordinates will likely engage in similar behavior through emulation. This is premised on the assumption that head teachers are role models and thus influence perceptions of teachers about what is acceptable and unacceptable. The findings demonstrate how the leadership behavior influences the behavior of the subordinates in either a positive or negative way. With regard to quiet corruption, the unethical behavior may not necessarily involve observable deviations like absenteeism, but also had to observe deviations like lower level of effort than expected and theft of educational inputs. These findings have policy and practical implications: reducing the absenteeism rate of primary school teachers will require first enforcing attendance of head teachers.

**Lack of and/or Inadequate School Supervision (Inspection)**

The study has revealed glaring inadequacies in school inspection. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports Sector Review Report (2009), only 9,013 (64 percent) of the 14,179 primary schools in the whole country were inspected at least once in a term (a period of about three months). The inspections that were carried out by inspectors from local governments lacked the surprise element, hence minimizing the probability of being caught. As ANPPCAN (2010:20) puts it,

> Inspections are done with the knowledge of some people known to the inspectors. Such people then inform their teacher friends about the impending inspection and by the time inspectors reach the school, those who would otherwise be absent are already there

During the first visit by an ANPPCAN survey team, head teacher absenteeism rate was 30 percent. On the third and forth visits, the absenteeism rate had reduced to 20 and 9 percent, respectively. It is highly likely that the absence rate of head teachers would have drastically reduced, had a forth visit been conducted. The lower the absence rates for head teachers and teachers in the second and third survey rounds by ANPPCAN provide support for the idea that supervision or external monitoring could affect absence. The presence of the survey team with virtually no power over individual head teachers and teachers appear to have reduced the absence rates in primary schools in Iganga district. Given the encouraging results, it is likely that formal inspections/supervision by local governments, school management committees (equivalent of board of directors in the corporate world), and local
communities would have a substantial impact on head teacher and attendance levels. The improvement in the attendance rates of teachers and head teachers during the survey period is also a testimony to the fact that most of the causes of absenteeism are avoidable. Regular and surprise supervision would reduce absenteeism through increasing the probability of being caught. The frequency of school inspection in Iganga left a lot to be desired. Out of the 30 primary schools used in the ANPPCAN survey, four (13.3 percent) had been inspected in the last one year; seven (23.3 percent) had been inspected in the last six months; 11 (36.7 percent) had been inspected in the previous month, while eight (26.7 percent) had been inspected during the month of the survey. Regular inspections should go hand-in-hand with increasing the bite of the inspection. Behavioral scientists have documented ample and undisputable evidence to the effect that behavior is a function of its consequences. In this regard, behavior that receives negligible consequences tends to be repeated. Thus, behaviors which do not conform to the code of conduct should attract stern disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, termination of services. Regular inspection with a surprise element would go a long way towards curbing the low level of effort and the theft of inputs.

**Implications of Findings for Theory and Practice**

The findings lend credence to decades-old social learning and principal-agent theories. These theories are still relevant in understanding what sustains unethical behavior in organizations and also point to policy and practical measures that can be employed to contain quiet corruption. The findings have corroborated the propositions of the two behavioral theories. With regard to the principal-agent theory, low probability of detection of unethical behavior together is likely to escalate deviant behavior in organizations. The reverse is also true: when the probability of detection is high, the unethical behavior is likely to decline or disappear. We have seen how the presence of the survey team, which the teachers may have interpreted as disguised inspection, improved attendance absence rates of head teachers and teachers. However, the high probability of detection alone may not lead to extinction of unethical behavior; the consequences of engaging in non-conforming behavior should be a deterrent. In other words, the costs of engaging in the unethical behavior should outweigh the benefits. The finding also underscores the role of formal monitoring/supervision in curbing deviant behavior. With regard to quiet corruption, it is therefore undisputable that strengthening supervision by local governments, local authorities, and school management committees can reduce absenteeism. Similarly, unethical behavior will occur if there are opportunities for it to occur. Absenteeism of head teachers breeds fertile ground or
opportunities for teachers to be absent. To contain quiet corruption, state and non-state actors
should therefore intensify external vigilance. With regard to the social learning theory, the
proposition that behavior is learnt through imitation has been supported. Classroom teachers
tended to imitate the behavior(s) of their superiors. We can conclude that leaders in
organizations are among the strong determinants of organizational behavior. To contain quiet
corruption, the head teachers should be prevailed upon to model the required behavior. The
results further emphasize the role of leadership in curbing quiet corruption. Leaders at school
level should therefore abhor quiet corruption, relentlessly deal with errant officers, and
develop other creative ways to address the menace. To succeed in the battle against quiet
corruption, the behavior of leaders at school level should be above reproach: they should
model acceptable behavior; they should be the code of conduct and ethics for subordinates to
follow.

Based on the foregoing, we can infer that the behavior of leaders of street-level
institutions (e.g. public schools and clinics) and lack and/or of external monitoring
(supervision/inspection) are the principal explanatory factors for the high prevalence of quiet
corruption in the education sector in local governments in Uganda. Numerous studies have
cited low/inadequate pay as the single most important factor that sustains absenteeism, low
level of effort and theft of service delivery inputs. Low pay is said to lead to moonlighting or
public servants engaging in income-generating activities. It has widely been recognized that
whenever an organization pretends to pay its employees, the employees will pretend to work.
This study points out that leadership behavior and inadequate supervision significantly
contribute to quiet corruption. Pay reform (enhancing pay) is important for curbing quiet
corruption, but is not necessarily the role or final solution to the problem.

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Municipal Governance through Ward Councilors and Traditional Leaders at Rural Msinga Municipality

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Abstract

This article explores the leadership challenges faced by the Msinga local municipality, especially with regard to the co-existence of councilors and traditional leaders in their attempt to create an effective, efficient, and responsive municipality to people’s needs and development demands. The article emanates from selected interviews with ward councilors and traditional leaders at Msinga municipality. The findings in this article demonstrate that councilors are potential community leaders who should be accountable to their ward constituency. It had been noted in many research investigations that most councilors and traditional leaders lack expertise, social skills, and education, and that their offices are party politically based, rather than inclusive centers of local democracy and development. They are accused of being arrogant and unapproachable, and, in most cases, self-centered. Most councilors and traditional leaders are alleged to practice their leadership within a closed system, where issues are not open for debate while, on the other hand, they are victims of a top-down management and leadership system. In addition, most councilors are doubly committed with work (the majority being teachers or business people) at the same time. This double commitment leaves them with little or no time to carry out their mandated duties effectively and efficiently.

Key words: Municipal Governance, Local Democracy, Ward Councilors, Traditional Leaders, District Municipality

Introduction

A myriad of challenges and problems associated with poor service delivery, more particularly in the rural municipalities, are attributes of either poor or laissez-faire leadership.
style of governance. In the rural municipality, leadership and governance dilemmas since 2000 have been aggravated by corruption, lack of commitment, and moral decay, which ultimately ended with mass demonstrations over poor service delivery. Central to these upheavals and community service dissatisfaction are councilors who are unresponsive, incompetent, and corrupt as community based representatives. On the one hand, councilors are ward representatives within the local government system who through legislation are democratically elected by community members. On the other hand, traditional leaders inherit a kingdom or chiefdom as community leaders. Both councilors and traditional leaders in the context of this article are acknowledged as community leaders, who by law are required to exercise ethical leadership in promoting local governance and further advance developmental service delivery. The article criticizes councilors’ bias towards party politics. They tend to be political loyalists, as opposed to serving the whole community, since their position is to serve all people within their wards without prejudice or discrimination.

The article explores the leadership challenges faced by the Msinga local municipality with regard to the co-existence of councilors and traditional leaders in their attempt to create an effective, efficient, and responsive municipality to service people’s needs and development demands. The article emanates from selected interviews with ward councilors and traditional leaders at Msinga municipality. The findings of this article demonstrate that councilors are potential community leaders who should be accountable to their ward constituency. Many researchers have noted that most councilors and traditional leaders lack expertise, social skills, and education, and that their offices are party politically based rather than inclusive centers of local democracy and development. They are accused of being arrogant and unapproachable, and, in most cases, self-centered. Most councilors and traditional leaders are alleged to practice their leadership within a closed system type of environment; where issues are not open for debate while, simultaneously, they are victims of a top-down management and leadership system. Most councilors are doubly committed with work (the majority being teachers or business people) at the same time. This double commitment leaves them with little or no time to carry out their mandated duties effectively and efficiently.

Theoretical frameworks on local governance and traditional leadership: Local democracy and governance
In order for the government to be effective and responsive to the social, economic, political, and developmental needs of the people, effective and democratic governance is needed. It can be argued that there is no good government without good governance. Governance should be understood as the broad process through which diverse interests and concerns in society are mediated and managed in the operation of the state and its interaction with the organizations of civil society, and through which just and responsible leadership is exercised. It can be emphasized that the study of governance should be particularly concerned with the values and principles underlying the purpose and functioning of the state and its relationship with civil society, as well as with the introduction and operationalization of more efficient and effective structures of public administration and development management. Hence both scholarly and pragmatic debates have generated many definitions of governance.

According to Lumumba-Kasongo (1999), governance is defined as a set of rules, institutions, and values that are used to manage the state and society. It includes political institutions, such as political parties (those in power and in opposition), parliaments or national assemblies, and governments and their interactions with society. Ritchken (in Fitzgerald et al., 1995: 195) defines governance as the processes through which power and authority are exercised between and within institutions in the state and civil society around the allocation of resources. According to Wooldridge and Cranko (in Fitzgerald et al., 1995: 344), governance is used to maintain social stability and well-being through deepening democracy, structuring social relationships and conflicts, and ensuring responsive delivery. From these authors’ perspectives, governance is the mediation of various interests in society; more importantly, though, they stress that it should be about promoting a set of values in the context of diverse interests and concerns. Based on the above definitions, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Service delivery: It is the obligation of government, in partnership with organs of civil society, to mobilize resources for effective service delivery. The need for institutional capacity building and the availability of financial resources to ensure efficient and effective management is central to this.
- Cooperative governance: Cooperation between the different tiers of government provides a forum for various stakeholders to confront problems collectively, and at the same time it enables citizens to practice participatory democracy.
- Social stability: This is essential if the public sector is to be able to meet the needs of society. Most importantly, it requires program managers who are committed to social transformation, performance-oriented budgeting, and financial planning, with viable institutions to carry this mandate forward.

- Basic needs of society: Sustainable development and meeting the basic needs of society is critical to maintaining social stability for effective service delivery. Sustainable development therefore becomes one of the cornerstones of good governance (Mahlangu, 2000: 29-34).

In view of the above, we can ask ourselves the question: what constitutes good governance? According to Kotze (1998: 15), the effectiveness of the government and the participation of the country’s inhabitants constitute good governance. Johnson (1991: 396) identified the following elements of good governance:

- Displaying efficiency and rationality in allocating resources; curbing corruption, which is strangling development and inhibiting investment; enhancing legitimate freedom, of association, of speech, of press; enforcing the rule of law; guaranteeing civil and human rights; ensuring transparency; being accountable to the citizens of the country (in Thakhathi, 2000: 78).

In summary, people participation is important in achieving the above elements of good governance. Democratic governance is about the active and meaningful involvement of citizens in the manner in which they are governed. In this research, democratic governance is defined as a fundamental process that facilitates the redistribution of societal roles and responsibilities, needed authority, and associated capacity (Brinkerhoff, 2000: 209). It is a form of governance that has gained the support of many democracies in the world to bring government closer to the people. It means that an election is not the only event that citizens can be involved in, concerning their government. They also have to be involved in their governance between elections.

Many central governments are devolving political, fiscal, and administrative power to local governments, as this sphere is the closest to the people. This is due to the popular belief that citizen participation in governance enhances democracy. It then becomes important that local government embraces the principle of governance. Local government has the responsibility of ensuring the provision of basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation, and shelter, in addition to many more. It is responsible for ensuring social and economic
development of the communities they serve. This responsibility places it at the heart of basic commodities that people cannot live without.

At the local level, the challenge faced by representative democracy is the institutionalization of local governance structures and processes to ensure informed democratic decision-making by ordinary citizens. In South Africa, the decentralization process has been introduced to enhance the efficiency of local government in service delivery. Goss (2001: 11) defines local governance as the way these complex structures or institutions relate with one another at the local level. Swilling (1997: 6) envisaged local governance as a ‘spectrum’ that runs from the central state to the decentralized level of the state, and from the state to non-state formations in civil society. Swilling (1997: 6) attributes the partnership to the fact that the public managers may still be reluctant to familiarize themselves with the new governance system. He attributes the positiveness to the common interest that all the partners may have.

Quintessentially, the notion of local governance is attached to the decentralization or devolution of power. The following aspects are associated with local governance:

- It is a process of involving local people in the making of political and administrative decisions which affect their livelihoods, in a transparent and accountable manner.
- It is a way of determining how political and administrative decisions are made.
- It is a process which encourages participation, recognizes the diversity of communities, promotes openness, and eliminates corruption in managing public resources (ARDC Newsletter, 1999: 2).

Considering the above, it is possible to define local governance as a process that engages a country’s citizens in decision-making processes and structures to ensure genuine participation in a participatory democracy and enhanced service delivery. The fundamental aim of local governance should be the promotion of socio-economic relations and the democratization of political power. It is in this context that governance is perceived by Wooldridge and Cranko (1995: 323) as “a process of managing society and facilitating or ensuring the delivery of goods and services through the management of social and power relations”.

**Traditional leaders and leadership**
Traditional leaders are important at the local level in many African states. They are, however, often accused of being autocratic, although it has often been argued that the custom has been one in which chiefs function by obtaining consensus through discussion. In South Africa, Zulu (Isigungu), Xhosa (inqila), Tswana and Pedi (Lekgotla), Venda (Khoro), and Sesotho (pitso) are examples of this. With the democratic dispensation, traditional leaders are encouraged to practice democracy, transparency, and accountability, by giving greater access and rights to participation to all communities under their jurisdiction, without discrimination. Although they are the custodians of traditions and cultures they often cause conflicts between themselves and the state due to their style of leadership, which is often autocratic, especially in decision-making.

Traditional leadership is, however, vital in that it is needed in African states to protect traditions, customs, and cultures from the negative influences of Western culture. Since traditional values influence social factors it is imperative to revisit and address traditional leadership. In this instance, state policy is influenced by social factors that could benefit or impede development of societies. This is very true of South Africa and Lesotho. In Kenya, chiefs are bureaucratic appointees, whilst in Botswana there has been a clear demarcation of roles, which has led to some frustration for the chiefs, who believe the state has undermined them, even though the kgotla is still an arena in which they continue to operate. Reddy and Mkaza (2008: 3) suggest that all institutions, including traditional leadership, should undergo change continuously or face the risk of fading into oblivion. More importantly, respect should prevail between the institutions, and traditional leadership is encouraged to be assertive and not always follow unquestionably the government program, because the state or a particular policy says so.

Institutions in the context of values, beliefs, and tradition (culture), have posed challenges in terms of the representations of diverse interests in ward committees, especially in relation the to youth. The exclusion of the youth is related to traditional bureaucracy, in which leadership is ascribed and is to be exercised only by people with advanced age (Piper and Cuanza, 2006:22-23; Partnership in Action, 2003:1). According to Nyalunga (2006), another challenge posed by the traditional leadership in the context of ward committees as a vehicle for participation, and as an interest group, is the conflicting roles in relation to conventional politics. In other words, while the exercise of roles in the traditional perspective is through appointment, in conventional perspective it is through election. On many occasions, the traditional structures, rather than being neutral, have been partisan. Lack of
capacity and terms of reference for ward committees are some of the other challenges faced by traditional structure.

**Understanding of ward councilors and traditional leaders**

Ward councilors: In South Africa, ward councilors can be traced to the new local government dispensation. By definition, the ward councilor is an elected representative of the people (including community or constituency) to the respective municipality. Since the advent of the new local government dispensation, municipalities are governed by the council, which is the policy and operational apex to all matters relating to the municipality. Within the council, ward councilors are placed at the ward level as the ‘feet and mouth’ of both the council and communities, respectively. Ward councilors are therefore located in their respective wards and, as stipulated in the Municipal Structural Act (1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (2000), are the ‘members of the council’. Van der Walt (2007: 74) defines councilors as elected members of a council. They are elected for a specific ward and nominated by the respective political party according to the proportionate percentage of votes cast in favor of the party. Through the Systems Act (1998:55), a councilor is designated to represent his/her ward in the council and also act as a chairperson of the ward committee. A ward committee is made up of a ward councilor and up to 10 members from a certain ward. The membership for the ward committee should be through elections run by municipalities. Functions or roles within the ward committee should be exercised on a voluntary basis.
The ward councilor must geographically reside in the same ward as the rest of the ward members, and represent the ward committee, of which he or she is the chairperson. Equal representation in terms of interests should be stressed in ward committee. In terms of status, ward committees are extensions of a municipal council. In this context, they are democratic and accountable to the communities (Municipal Structure Act, 1998-Chapter 4; Davis, 2006a:16-17).

The primary objective of ward committees is specifically to enhance participatory democracy in local government (Municipal Structures Act, 1998: Section 72(3)). Ward councilors are central to these structures, which are created as part of the municipal council’s mandate towards developing a culture of municipal governance. This implies shifting away from strict representative government to participatory governance, and towards one that must create conditions to encourage residents, communities and other stakeholders in the municipality to participate in local affairs, more particularly in providing sustainable services to communities (Municipal Systems Act, 2000: Chapter 3).
Traditional leaders

In the case of this paper, traditional leaders are differentiated from political leaders by the fact that they are not elected but born into leadership. In essence, traditional leaders are indigenous leaders who, by their virtue of tradition, are born into this position of leadership. Traditional leadership is hereditary and therefore those enthroned inherited either kingship (in the case the Zulu nation, King Zwelithini) or chieftainship, passed from one generation to another through blood relations. Literally, a traditional leader could be defined as anybody who is appointed to a position of power on the basis of custom or tradition (Keulder, 1998). Sindane (1995: 1) offers a broader conceptualization of traditional leaders or rulers as those individuals occupying communal political leadership sanctified by cultural mores and values, and enjoying the legitimacy of particular communities to direct their affairs. He further posits that their legitimacy is based on tradition, which includes the whole range of inherited culture and way of life; people’s history, moral and social values and the traditional institutions which survive to serve those values.

Traditional leaders therefore fall within a category of leaders such as ‘kings’, ‘chiefs’, ‘paramount chiefs’, and headmen. In this regard, Keulder (1998: 24) designates traditional leadership as referring to those who, by virtue of their ancestry, occupy a clearly defined leadership position in an area; and/or who have been appointed to such a position in according with custom and tradition.

Historical background to the Rural Msinga Municipality

The paper researched the Msinga local municipality of Umzinyathi district municipality in KwaZulu-Natal province as the basis for interrogating issues and challenges relating to the co-existence of councilors and traditional leaders. Msinga is situated in the northern part of the province, and is one of four local municipalities of Umzinyathi. Msinga is considered the poorest and most underdeveloped area in the district, in terms of infrastructure and social facilities (Msinga IDP Review, 2005/2006). The Misinga municipality is a largely rural area, 69% of which (1 725 sq km) is Traditional Authority Land held in trust by the Ingonyama Trust. The remaining 31% is commercial farm land, all of which is located to the north of Pomeroy. Approximately 99% of the population lives in traditional areas, as opposed to the formal towns of Tugela Ferry, Keats Drift and Pomeroy. The Misinga municipality is in the south-western part of the District Municipality, sharing boundaries with Nquthu and Nkandla local municipalities to the east, Umvoti local
municipality to the south, uThukela district municipality to the west and the Endumeni local municipality to the north (Msinga Municipality IDP 2011/2012). In addition to underdevelopment, Msinga is predominantly mountainous, with rolling hills covered by loose stones and rocks, which make it difficult to farm. According to Maurice Web Race Relations (2006: 9 and the Institute of Natural Resources, (2007), only 40% of the land has the potential for farming and subsistence farming remains the major economic source in the area.

Added to this is the limited capacity of the land for productive agricultural development due to poor soil quality, adverse climactic conditions, and poor agricultural practices, such as overgrazing (Msinga Integrated Development Plan, 2003:5). Despite the large irrigation potential, covering up to 40% of agricultural practice, the area is subject to water shortages, high soil erosion, and low carrying capacity (Institute of Natural Resources, 2007). The study conducted by the Institute of Natural Resources in 2007 reveals that Misinga is characterized by an annual rainfall that is between 600 and 700mm. This level of rainfall indicates droughts of high magnitude, according to international standards (Institute of Natural Resources, 2007). The erratic nature of rainfall in most of Misinga makes it risky to invest in crop production such as maize, vegetables, and sorghum, which are the main sources of food and livelihoods in the area. Misinga suffers intermittent, periodic droughts, with the last officially recorded drought occurring in 2004 (Drought Information Bulletin No 1/2004).
The White Paper on Local Government (1998) contains provisions/guidelines on how ward committees would go about their roles and functions. According to the Report for Organization Development Africa: Draft 2 (2003:10), some ward committees have not been aware of their functions/roles or ‘terms of reference and operating procedures’, as the report calls them. This is where municipalities have failed to reproduce the terms of reference for ward committees in a clear and comprehensive way that takes into account levels of education and competencies of the ward committee members, including the ward councilors. At policy level, ward committees are given an advisory role, in which it is almost impossible to have a direct engagement with municipal councils, unless it is through the ward councilors. Grounded on legislation, such as the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the Municipal Structural Act (1998), ward councilors, acting on behalf of the municipal council and represented wards/communities, can implement policies, including the preparation of the budget.

Despite being mentioned and recognized via policies such as the Constitution (1996), The White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the Municipal Structural Act (1998), traditional leaders are still in limbo regarding their role, other than the representation one. During the colonial and apartheid periods, indigenous leaders were coerced and co-opted to legitimize the oppressive regimes and hence lost their traditional respect. Ntsebeza (2007: 620) opines that the democratization of the rural local government drew criticism from traditional authorities and traditional leaders who resented the new democratic structures. There was fear that the democratic government would strip traditional leaders of their power and privileges.

**Traditional Leadership (Amakhosi) and Political Leadership (Ward Councilors)**

Despite the legislation of traditional leadership by the South African government, indigenous leadership remains caught in a vortex and struggle to co-exist with democratic systems of leadership. Central to some of the tensions are the power struggle (relations) and control over the ownership of land and its usage, decision-making and interpretation of policies, especially when it comes to serving the ever-growing needs of the local citizens. Based on this synopsis, the paper examines the extent to which the symbiotic relationship between the democratic structures and traditional leadership could co-exist as mechanisms to fast-track local development and service delivery in the Msinga municipality.
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<td>Political leaders are partisan, as they belong to and represent their respective political parties</td>
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The present paper argues that both ward councilors and traditional leaders are community leaders entrusted to advance towards the creation of a healthy ward or community socially, economically, culturally, and politically. Central to this mandate is the sound and responsible leadership based on the Ubuntu philosophy, which aims to restore the indigenous leadership as a capable, effective, efficient and responsive institution to the needs and demands of the people. In the case where traditional leaders are embroiled in corrupt deals and mistrust, the question is whether or not the practice of African values such as humility, and respect for diverse citizens’ opinions, could assist in the renewal of the traditional institutions, and how?

**Persistence of Evil Triplets of Poverty, Unemployment, and Inequality**

Msinga is a poverty-stricken municipality within the uMzinyathi District Municipality. Being a rural municipality, Misinga is confronted by the persistence of the ‘evil triplets’ of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. With no or limited socio-economic opportunities, these challenges are reinforced by the vicious cycle of underdevelopment and marginalization. Abject poverty in the municipality manifests itself through malnutrition, illiteracy and denial to most basic services such as water, electricity, and road infrastructure. The Misinga municipality is isolated from the nearby towns and, due to its topographical location, the area is not accessible. One of the ward councilors commented that:

At Misinga, the lack of basic services such as water, including electricity and road infrastructure, are the most hindering obstacles at our municipality. Without these most basic services and resources, it is difficult to talk about development and a better life.

This situation is desperate, as it is reported that less than 10% of the Misinga population have access to potable water (IDP, 1911/2012). Due to lack of access to electricity, most households make use of wood for cooking. Regular power failures at Misinga are common, and adversely affect those who are able to access electricity.
Party Political Loyalty

One of the loopholes or weaknesses in regard to local politics is that, although the ward committees were supposed to be detached from political affiliations, and encompass the diversity of interests of the community, what has happened in most of the ward committees is the opposite. This tendency is overwhelmingly orchestrated by dominant political parties (Piper and Chanza, 2006:21-22), which Piper and Deacon (2006:7-8) call the “dominant party syndrome”. The other loophole or weakness related to local politics is the mistrust between the municipal councils and the ward committees. The former treat the latter with suspicion in such a way that roles and decisions have not been delegated due to the fear of political positions being hijacked (Idasa and Afesis-corpian, 2004:29). What is interesting in the case of Msinga is that the municipality is one the few municipalities of KwaZulu-Natal which is under the governance of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

Opportunity and Prospects

The Msinga municipality has very limited infrastructure and it is thus difficult for it to offer opportunities for industrial or commercial development. The municipality is rural and has very limited employment opportunities. This situation poses a serious challenge for the municipality. Findings from the present research show that some residents leave the area to go and work on farms around Dundee, while others leave for Gauteng to find work on the mines, or in factories. According to many informers, the area lacks financial and political support, which makes it difficult to develop the area. This leads to a lack of job creation. It is argued that Msinga was left out in the cold as far as development is concerned (Msinga Municipality IDP 2011/2012). Opportunities are non-existent due to lack of water, roads, and electricity. This causes add enormous hardship for the community. One councilor, who is from the dominant political party (IFP), surprisingly informed the authors that he did not get support from his party, the people, nor the provincial office (ANC). He added that lack of financial and political support in the area has led to unskilled labor. Those with a few skills have no finance to start small businesses, which could create employment.

One interviewee said that it was difficult for the municipality to deliver services because there are constant fights between the dominant IFP and the ANC, in addition to local land disputes, for example between the Mchunu and Mthembu clans in 2009, which left 10 people dead. The community of Mabaso commented that their loyalty to the IFP has led to
underdevelopment of the municipality. They believe that the provincial government, run by the ANC, was punishing them for supporting the opposition.

The Synergistic Partnership between the Ward Councilors and Traditional Leaders

Both political leadership and traditional leadership are strategically positioned to work in partnership, to expedite local development and service delivery. Traditional leaders are charged with the responsibility to ensure that development and improvement takes place, in order to enhance the lives of the people. Conversely, political leaders are by law obliged to discharge their developmental responsibilities, including delivering sustainable services to the communities.

The common denominator in this context is for both leaderships to ensure that their communities live a fulfilling and decent life, especially through collective collaboration towards exploiting their natural and human resources for community development and empowerment. Collaborative leadership can be instrumental not only in tapping into human and material resources, but could be a think-tank for inviting investors into the area, provided there is improvement in road infrastructure and basic necessities such as water and electricity. This entails commitment from both leaderships to skill community members and to encourage young people to take education more seriously, for their own personal development and for endogenous community development.

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<td>Even though traditional leaders are non-partisan, they should use their communal power to serve the interests of the people</td>
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Source: Authors’ analysis
From the Table above, it can be deduced that both traditional and political leadership at Msinga have specific developmental and democratic roles, especially in mitigating the impact of poverty, unemployment, inequality, and service delivery backlogs. Venter (2005: 88) maintains that traditional authorities remain a significant social, cultural, and political force, and are capable of exercising their power, particularly in rural areas. Traditional leadership is, according to Pycroft (2002: 120), designated a representative role on local government district councils, mainly to advise on the needs and aspirations of the people for whom they are responsible.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper has deliberated on the challenges such as role confusion, political struggles, and more traditional leadership partisan stances, which contribute towards making the relationship between councilors and traditional leaders uneasy. It further acknowledged that these two types of leadership interface at community level, with opportunities to facilitate development and expedite service delivery in a development-desperate municipality such as Msinga. The interviews revealed that Msinga is governed by the IFP. Service delivery is low and poor, unlike in other municipalities, which also experience conflicts as a result of municipalities being contested by various political parties.

Worldwide, in societies where traditional leadership is constitutionally incorporated in the democratic system of governance, the issues pertaining to co-governance remain challenging. Where traditional leadership was not tampered with by colonialism, indigenous leaders play a pivotal role, more particularly in building their tribes and therefore their nations. Due to their commitment to fight imperialism and colonialism, most of these indigenous-traditional leaders emerged triumphant as charismatic national leaders in defense of their nations. These include the caliber of Moshoeshoe in Lesotho, Makana of the Xhosas, Makhado of the Vendas, and Shaka of the Zulus. However, in situations marked by displacement, distortion, abuse, and exploitation due to colonial invasion, such leadership was used to militate against their people. To date, the institution of traditional leadership is perplexed by the existence and persistence of impediments such as role clarification, land ownership, custodianship of culture and traditional values, and keeping up with demands for land and service delivery within their jurisdiction.

In this paper the existence of both political leadership (represented by ward councilors) and traditional leadership (solely represented by Amakhosi) at Msinga appear to
be complex and often difficult to conceptualize. This has demonstrated the challenges faced by the Msinga Municipality and the barriers to development such as abject poverty and underdevelopment, which manifest through poor service delivery, poor infrastructure, the scourge of HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and limited educational opportunities. In addition, the municipal is faced with political infighting and disputes over land demarcation. In order to address the challenges the authors recommend:

- Political leadership and traditional leadership recommit themselves to serving the needs of the people.
- A forum should be created to explore innovative ideas and strategies aimed at dealing with development issues holistically.
- Cultural and traditional values such as Ubuntu should be viewed as resources to restore communal spirit.
- A Culture of teamwork should be developed, regardless of political differences.

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Participatory Communication Patterns about Community Sustainable Forest Management: A Case Study of Tambon Tha-i-boon, Lomsak District, Phetchabun Province

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were (i) to study the participatory communication patterns about community sustainable forest management, (ii) to supplement the potentiality of the participatory communication patterns about community sustainable forest management and (iii) to study the outcomes of the potentiality of the participatory communication patterns about community sustainable forest management. The subjects of this study were 286 family leaders or family members who live in Moo 10 and 12 of Tambon Tha-i-boon, Lomsak District in Phetchabun Province, and 12 hardcore conservationists of community forests. Questionnaires and interviews were administered and data were analyzed by using means, standard deviations and T-tests. The findings were as follows: The two-way communications of participatory communication patterns about community sustainable forest management were classified into two characteristics: firstly, the bottom-up-communication, that is, the communication through the reviewing process of the villagers towards the Tha-i-boon community forest, to present to the hardcore conservationists of community forest and to Tambon Administration. Secondly, the linear communication; that is, the communication through social activities. It was found that the villagers were highly satisfied with the potentiality of the four participatory strategic communications: media provision, the workshop of news distribution, specific media production, and the management of a youth camp for the community forest. The best media in supporting the participation was the specific medium in dyke building, to slow down the flow of the water. This resulted in not only giving villagers a better understanding of community forest management, and realizing the importance of the forest, but also to encourage more cooperation in forest conservation.
Keywords: participatory communication pattern, community forest management, sustainable development

Rationale of the study and the significance of the study

Local administration in Tambon (sub-district) has a role and duty to carry out and develop the area according to the Act, article 67, including nine tasks: (i) to manage and maintain both land roads and water ways; (ii) to keep the land roads and water ways, clean and maintain footpaths, and public places, as well as the disposal of waste; (iii) to prevent and stop communicable diseases; (iv) to prevent and relieve public disasters, (v) to promote education, religion, and culture; (vi) to promote the development of females, children and juveniles, the elderly, and the disabled; (vii) to protect and conserve the natural resources and environment; (viii) to preserve the arts, mores and customs, local wisdoms and local culture; and (ix) to carry out other duties assigned in such decentralization for the public to have self-administration and so be important in a democracy, namely, people participation, which is the basic philosophy of democracy that is the power of the people.

In the past, the design of the government communication process was to build understanding with the people or to disseminate important public policy, to alleviate problems. This was a two-step flow of communication. The first step of communication was initiated by the authorities, who transferred the information lower ranks. The second step in the communication process was from these people to the grassroots. These two communication paths showed the top-down approach, which is vertical communication. This resulted in a lack of willingness of the people to participate in communication in exchanging their ideas related to the problems, which they used to do sitting in circles and talking about whatever problems arose. Therefore, the major problems were the distortion of the received information and misinterpretation, which showed that the people misunderstood the information sent by the officials in the local administration, village headmen and other community organizations.

The resolution of the prevention of the distortion of the information is to find the model in appropriate development, by emphasizing people participation, along with the model development, including people participation for the more appropriate direction and effectiveness in leading the communication knowledge for the true people participation by the local people.
Tambon Tha-i-boon forest covers 5,000 rais, under the Tambon Administration. Initially, the forest was very depredated. The Petroleum Authority of Thailand launched into support during 1995, as part of Her Majesty the Queen’s initiatives, to serve the community by revitalizing the forest and paying back the profits to the public. Later on the forest became prosperous again. The Petroleum Authority of Thailand launched the ranger project there and returned the responsibility to the locals in 2005. Though the Petroleum Authority of Thailand has pulled out from the area, the forest is still in good condition. This reflects the strength of the community, as well as the potential of the local administration in handling the forest problems.

The research team was interested in studying the people participatory communication model in community forest management, previously in Tambon Tha-i-boon area, in order to build understanding of the process and utilize the model for appropriate communication policy-making in community forest management.

**Objectives of the study**

- to study the participatory communication patterns on community sustainable forest management in Tambon Tha-i-boon, Lomsak District, Phetchabun Province;
- to supplement the potentiality of the participatory communication patterns on community sustainable forest management;
- to study the outcomes of the potentiality of the participatory communication patterns on community sustainable forest management.

**Scope of the study**

The studied area is community around the forest in Tambon Tha-i-boon, Lomsak District, Phetchabun Province comprised of 2 villages: Moo 10 and Moo 12.

Research framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Personnel</td>
<td>1. Media provision: Brochure</td>
<td>1. Number of participating people</td>
<td>1. Behavior change in communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis of the study

Public participation creates the communication patterns for appropriate community forest management.

Expected outcomes:

• to understand the problems of participatory communication patterns on community sustainable forest management: a case study of Tambon Tha-i-boon, Lomsak District, Phetchabun Province.
• to develop the strategy of the participatory communication, in order to solve the problems according to the specific characteristics of the community.
• to develop and conclude the original lesson within the dimension of the participatory communication on community sustainable forest management in Tambon Tha-i-boon, Lomsak District, Phetchabun Province.

Research theories

Robbin & Coulter (1959) state that communication involves transfer and understanding. This means that the communication is successful when it is truly understood by the recipient. Kanchana Kaewthep (2000) explained the characteristics of community communication as follows:

1. It is two-way-communication, that is, the message sender and message receiver react to each other all the time. It is not so rigid that they cannot reverse their roles.
2. News distribution direction: there are ways of distributing the news: top-down, bottom-up, or horizontal, so news will flow from the planners to the villagers, and from the mass media to news receivers in remote areas. At the same time villagers can send news to government officials or exchange news among themselves.
3. Community communication goals: goals are set by designating the people involved and the goals, according to the news distribution direction, such as transmitting news and convincing people to be part of the community.
4. To meet with the people’s demand, replacing the conventional development which mainly responds to the government’s demand.
5. Roles of the communication are:
• showing off the role, that is, the whole group can represent themselves;
• the social role, that is, taking part in making the community uniform;
• information-providing role, that is, they can exchange information and knowledge and transfer it to others;
• operational controlling role, that is, communication is the channel leading to the operation for the reformation or the problem solving of the individuals or of the community.

Kanchana Kaewthep (2000) added that participatory communication is one of the important models of community communication. It aims:

• to stimulate the community to see their own value;
• to build the confidence of the participatory villagers;
• to prove that the villagers can access the new technology if available,
• to build up the communication skills of the community and to be the channel for the community sending news by themselves;
• to allow the community to express their thoughts, problems, and problem analysis, as well as to solve community problems;
• to bring about the outcome of lifting the conscience and responsibility of the community in solving problems;
• to increase the amount of media making by the community.

Nopharat Muneerat (1998) stated that the four characteristics of communication are:

Communication models classified by directional communication, which can be divided into two:

• one-way-communication;
• two-way-communication.

Communication models classified by characteristic communication can be divided into two:

• formal communication;
• informal communication.

Communication models classified by symbolic communication can be divided into two:

• verbal communication
• non-verbal communication

Communication models classified by news flowing communication can be divided into three:

• top-down communication
• bottom-up communication
• horizontal or linear communication

Research Methodology

This study is participatory research. It selected the community living in the Tha-i-boon forest area, who have forest management problems in Moo 10, 12. The samples were 286 villagers, who brainstormed their ideas about the deforestation problem. The research team met with 12 community leaders, such as teachers, youth leaders, headmen, village headmen, and forest rangers to brainstorm how to solve the deforestation problem and to find some participatory communication models in handling community forest management, as well as to determine sustainable community forest management. After setting up the cooperative procedures, the research team opened the voluntary unit to try out the participatory communication strategy, comprising media provision, a media distribution operational workshop, specific media making, and a community forest youth camp. The research team monitored the project by using PDCA and compared the mean scores, knowledge, understanding, and awareness of community forest management by the villagers, both before and after the investigation, by using T-test.

The Evolution of Tambon Tha-i-boon Community Forest Management

The legend of Tambon Tha-i-boon has been told from generation to generation since the time of King Taksin the Great. He assigned Phaya Mahakrasatsuk to take over Vientaine. The main warrior, named Luang Kla, traveled afar and found the water-shed with wealthy land, which was so rich he set up the new settlement called Lom Kao. A new town was built, which welcomed merchants from eastern cities. People at that time traveled by animals, especially elephants, which can carry more goods. The merchants rested in this area and at the dawn, they set out again. They reached the river bank and the elephants refused to cross the river. Instead they raised their trunks and cried out loudly but the mahouts tried to force them to cross the river. While they were in the middle of the river, both the mahouts and elephants were drowned. One of the female elephants was called Boon. Later, they named
the village Barn Tha-ee-boon. Since I (pronounced EE in Thai is impolite), they changed the name to Moo Barn (village) Tha-i-boon and it later became a Tambon.

The Tha-i-boon community forest is located in Tambon Tha-i-boon, Lomsak District, Phetchabun Province, with 5000 rais of land. It is also situated in a national reserve area along the Pa Sak River. The left side of the area covers Moo 1, Moo 4, Moo 10, and Moo 12, which is the north of Lom Sak. It is 15 kilometers from Lom Sak and 62 kilometers from Phetchabun City and 417 kilometers from Bangkok.

If one wants to travel to the community forest Tha-i-boon, one can take Lom Sak route 203 (Lom Sak-Darn Sai). At the fourth kilo milestone, take the local route Por Chor 3034 for 10 kilometers to Tambon Tha-i-boon and the community forest. Traditionally, the forest in this area was very bare; however, in 1995 the Petroleum Authority of Thailand launched the reforestation project initiated by Her Majesty the Queen. The forest was revitalized and came to life again. Moreover, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand provided ranger training for the villagers. Since 2004, the steering committee, comprising 30 volunteers, has taken good care of the forest. Though the Petroleum Authority of Thailand has left the area, the people who live there still take good care of the forest, which shows the potential of the community.

**Application of Communication Models**

The communication models in Tha-i-boon are divided into two characteristics, namely, the bottom-up model and the linear communication. The bottom-up model: it is the message sent from the subordinates to the superior concerning matters to be discussed. The communication model, through meetings among the villagers, is set up to solve various problems on deforestation causing the deterioration of the eco-system, such as the loss of wildlife and some natural disasters. The communication model was proposed to the Petroleum Authority of Thailand and they financially supported the reforestation project initiated by Her Majesty the Queen. The Petroleum Authority of Thailand also set up the forest rangers and allowed the villagers to propose how to prevent problems. The community leaders can identify problems, then set up the plan to request the budget from the local administration Tambon Tha-i-boon and other supporting units.

Linear communication is communication at the same level, by utilizing personal relationship in administering the communication through planting trees, or making fire
prevention lines. It is also the communication model allowing the message receivers to have the opportunity of participating in activity and communication by word of mouth. It can help spread the information, which in the past was difficulty due to the lack of potentiality in utilizing public relations media.

Therefore, the research team voluntarily became consultants supporting the communication potential with the participatory communication strategies, including brochure distribution, workshops on a new distribution tower, a youth camp for the community and making specific media. This has been done by brainstorming with villagers to review the community problems related to community forest management in the past. The urgent need is to build water dykes. Thus the villagers shared their ideas, planned activity, publicized this activity, and participated in building water dykes. After the implementation of the strategy, a questionnaire was administered and it was found that the villagers were very satisfied with the strategy, and the participatory communication. The best participatory communication strategy was the use of specific media in building water dykes.

After completing the process of supporting the communication potential with the four participatory communication strategies, self-made evaluation forms were employed to gather data from the participants, by the research team. This data collection was to compare the difference in knowledge, understanding, and the realization of the villagers of the importance of the community forest management. Prior to, and after the use of the participatory communication strategy by the T-test, it was found that the villagers understood the forest management better, they knew the importance of the forest, and they became more cooperative in conserving the community forest.

Discussion

The results showed that consultation to share ideas is an important mechanism in communication, in order to drive forces in forest management occurrences related to community needs. The consultation used in the research focused on every level of exchange from informal to formal (meeting) (Nair & White, 1993, cited in Parichart Stapitanon et. Al., 2006). The participatory communication design not only convinces people to accept the desired objectives, but it is also the process that involves the public to participate in any discussion. It found that the communication model by consulting should be inserted in every community forest management system. It is launched by informal talks while sitting in a circular format. Manwimon Hutinthorawong (2006) stated that direct talks with people at
home is the opens the way for much easier exchanges in sharing ideas. This is two-way communication at the linear level. Kanchana Kaewthep (2000) states that linear communication is the mutual communication which shows equality and respect for each other; that is, the message senders and receivers take turn in exchanges. The present research agrees with Duangporn Khamnoonwat (2007), in that news distribution tower development is one of the most effective communication channels within the community. Community leaders are the coordinators who create the participation, and the participatory communication, within the community, by arranging the activity for continual forest conservation, in order to stimulate the villagers’ interest in forest conservation. Theeraphan Lothongkhum (2002) found that using the activity or special event stimulates the interest, creating the opportunity to see more. The present research accords with Amornrat Thiplert (2006), in that the community leaders’ work is involved with the try-out communication, to allow the villagers to learn from the actual action. The research results revealed that the success of the community forest management depends upon the human development in learning, planning, finding their own activities, and using the communication for understanding, and good relationships for cooperation. Participation in community forest management will enable the villagers to access the sustainable forest resource. The majority of the villagers felt satisfied with the forest ranger team. The community leaders proved themselves by arranging the participatory activities.

**Recommendations**

The authorities should support activities such as slowing down the rate of the flow of water by dyke building and tree planting that involves serious public participation.

The building of a strong community should be encouraged by employing appropriate methods accelerating leadership potential and steering committee selection for community forest management in Tha-i-boon.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Further research should study real community communication problems by prioritizing the importance of the problems and seeking appropriate solutions first, then solving the problems later. However, the problem-solving should accord with the community culture, as well as the appropriateness of the situation and the nature of the problem.
The continual study and development of the target community should be maintained to allow the area and target group, who have been initially developed, to proceed with their work effectively.

The participatory process in resource management and the awareness of forest resource conservation should be studied and encouraged.

**Bibliography**


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