TOWARDS RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE: MAPPING A FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY IN URBANIZED MUNICIPALITIES - INSIGHTS FROM THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I declare that the research project: **Towards Responsive Governance: Mapping a Framework for Enhanced Service Delivery in Urbanized Municipalities - Insights from the Northern Cape Province** is my own work. Each source of information used has been acknowledged by means of a complete reference. This thesis has not been submitted before for any other research project, degree, or examination at any university.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AG	Auditor-General
CBD	Central Business District
CGF	Contextual Governance Framework
CGF	Contextual Governance Framework
CIT	Contextual Interaction Theory
COGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DKM	Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality
DDM	District Development Model
ELM	Emthanjeni Local Municipality
FBDM	Frances Baard District
GSM	Ga-Segonyana Local Municipality
IDP	Integrated Development Plans
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act of 2013
MSA	Municipal Structures Act
(MuSA)	Municipal Systems Act
NKM	Nama Khoi Local Municipality
ND	Namakwa District
NTAS	National Turn-around Strategy
NPA	New Public Administration
NPG	New Public Governance

NPM	New Public Management
NPS	New Public Service
PMPs	Personnel Management Programmes
PKD	Pixley KaSeme District
PA	Public Administration
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act of 2019
PP	Public Protector
PSC	Public Service Commission
SPM	Sol Plaatje Local Municipality
SMGF	Sustainable Municipal Governance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
ZFM	ZF Mgcawu District Municipality

ABSTRACT

The thesis is based on discussing the influence of governance on service delivery in five urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province. The study was inspired by the fact that there were numerous service delivery and governance challenges such as aged infrastructure; inadequate provision of water, sanitation and electricity; and maladministration in these urbanised municipalities. As such, the main objective of this thesis was to identify the influencing factors and their effects on governance and service delivery in the urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province to ensure that a more responsive and sustainable municipal governance framework could be developed.

The study utilised a phenomenology research design in the form of a case study, and semi-structured interviews were used to gather and analyse the data from senior municipal managers. These findings formed the foundation of the Sustainable Municipal Governance Framework (SMGF) resulted in the development of a non-deterministic, flexible, robust, and powerful practical diagnostic tool that is contextual to all the five municipalities in the study as well as the TIPS Framework.

The study observed that the majority of the municipalities in the case study lacked employee capacity to perform their work effectively, and there was poor communication between municipal employees and politicians about what services the municipality should expect from their administrators. Another finding from the study was that most municipalities had significant governance and service delivery challenges; hence the factors forming the foundation of the SMGF implied a move towards a more holistic and systems-based approach to improving organisational resilience.

Furthermore, the study strongly recommends that urbanised municipalities should be adaptive and transformative in order to meet the needs of communities, and that they should invest in a holistic and systems-based approach to strengthen the role of councillors and communities in participating in the Integrated Development Plan and ensuring alignment between the priorities, activities, and impact on visible service delivery.

Key words: governance, service delivery, holistic, systems approach.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction and rationale for the study regarding the issues affecting the governance and the delivery of services in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province, such as Sol Plaatje, Ga-Segonyana, Emthanjeni, Nama Khoi, and Dawid Kruiper. In addition, the chapter showcases the effects of governance on service delivery in those urbanised municipalities, thereby identifying the weaknesses of the current municipal governance framework and how it impedes efficient and effective service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

The chapter also states the limitations and delimitations of the study, the problem statement, the research questions and objectives. Furthermore, the chapter states the significance of the study and how it contributes to the body of knowledge for policymakers toward responsive decision-making. The chapter concludes with an overview of the remaining chapters of the research study.

Practical research was conducted regarding governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities. The literature review notes that there are few research studies that deal with government at the local level, and none exist for the urban municipalities in the Northern Cape Province; particularly in relation to canvassing a sustainable governance approach. Thus, it is important to research how governance, or the lack thereof, impacts service delivery to the citizens in these municipalities.

The delivery of basic services is crucial in a municipality as they are the sphere of government which is closest to the people, and thus this study evaluates the extent to which a municipality manages the factors concerning both leadership and governance (Maserumule, 2020). This author argues that to drastically improve service delivery to the citizens, the attention of local government must be on the vital factors of both leadership and governance (Maserumule, 2020).

Other authors argue that providing services to the community in an equitable and professional manner is the primary goal of local government (Phago, 2013). Thus, the citizens must be consulted for input on the type of services they need, and the leadership in municipalities is obliged to respond to these needs.

Both leadership and governance are vital factors in public administration, and thus both have become important topics in research dealing with public administration. Today the issues of leadership and governance in relation to service delivery are such that everybody seems to be involved and has something to say about them. These critical issues are the subject of much debate and argument, with many people wading in, and some of them are not even in the field of government or public administration. According to Mangena (2016:54),

> *… community protests have become a mechanism to raise concerns on ineffective leadership and poor governance that affect the delivery of services by government.*

Based on the reasoning discussed in the section dealing with the motivation for this research in this chapter, the assumption is that both governance (or a lack of it) and leadership hamper the delivery of basic services in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

It is thus a given that without effective leadership and good governance in all levels of government, it would be nigh impossible to efficiently provide services for the public (Botha, 2019). Machicha (2017) posits that the long-term objectives of South African public service will need strong leaders to improve the current state of service delivery. Furthermore, those leaders in public service taken on the responsibility to deliver services that are affordable and equitable. If they fail, it constitutes a waste of resources (most of them scarce) and it means the community needs will not be met (Machicha, 2017).

The first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 saw the dawn of a new era for the majority of South African citizens after more than 350 years of colonial and Apartheid rule during which the majority black population had been excluded from participating in any aspect of governance or service delivery (Matebesi, 2018). With the abolition of the Apartheid laws, citizens looked forward to a better life and a vast improvement in their standard of living. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (2016), hereafter referred to as ‘the Constitution’, has brought about fundamental constitutional and political changes in the eyes of many South Africans. Section 195(1) of the Constitution stipulates that the provision of services should be governed by democratic values and principles (Mangena, 2016).

These values and principles must be accompanied by exacting standards of professionalism and ethics at all times. In addition, services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably, efficiently, effectively, and without bias, and all South African citizens’ needs must be acknowledged and delivered. Citizens are urged to take part in the policy-making procedures as all lives are important. Section 152 of the Constitution specifically details the need and desire for community participation. Both the Municipal Structures Act (MSA) of 1998 and the Municipal Systems Act (MuSA) of 2000 state that the councils of municipalities must promote a culture of community participation in all the dealings of the municipalities, and thus participatory mechanisms must be devised and implemented.

The study focuses on potential solutions that could be taken on board to enhance service delivery to the local citizens. Service delivery in South Africa is poor, due to inadequate leadership and poor standards of governance. Hence the purpose of this study was to further explain the extent to which leadership, governance, and other related factors affect the basic service delivery in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

The prevailing circumstances of basic service delivery in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities is assessed, and this includes a thorough analysis of their governance standards. Thereafter, the structures adopted by the municipalities to engage the citizens are explored, followed by a discussion of the governance challenges facing these municipalities. Finally, recommendations are provided on governance to ensure that public service delivery can be improved.

The findings and recommendations of the study are discussed with the municipal managers, as well as other stakeholders of the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities, as they could contribute towards improving services in the municipality.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In South Africa, democracy brought about new challenges playing out discursively. On the other hand, there are urban municipal governance challenges, although they are hailed in some academic quarters as potential levers for helping African municipalities to become more economical with a better quality of life for residents (Smith, 2018). The context of this study, the Northern Cape Province, comprises five District Municipalities and 27 Local Municipalities; and all of them are inadequate in terms of service delivery due to a lack of proper governance.

Hence the necessity of the current study, which aims at examining the causes and recommending how best those affected municipalities can formulate a responsive municipal governance framework (Kruger, 2015). The research focuses on demonstrating how the geographical and institutional weaknesses of the five urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape municipalities (Dawid Kruiper, Sol Plaatje; Ga-Segonyana, Emthanjeni and Nama Khoi) have resulted in governance and service delivery challenges.

The Northern Cape province encompasses over 30.5% of the total land surface of South Africa, bordering both Namibia and Botswana, making this this a strategic province for cross-border trade and traffic (Van Aswegen, 2020). However, this provincial area suffers poor rainfall and thus low agricultural productivity, and that makes people fight for the little available arable land. They revolt against each other and their municipalities, lobbying for better financial support from the government, thereby creating municipal governance challenges concerning how best to govern the people and provide optimal services (Harrison and Todes, 2015).

In addition, the Northern Cape is mostly rural, with only a few small urban settlements. The total population is 1 175 780, at a density of 3.2 persons per km², whereas the average density in South Africa is 45 persons per km² (Demarcation Board, 2019).

As such, the Northern Cape struggles with a unique settlement pattern that is characterised by isolated urban and quasi-urban areas scattered over a province that is approximately 1000 km in length from the west to the east (Kruger, 2015). Van Aswegen, Retief and Drewes (2020) describe the Northern Cape as a single urban region with Kimberley, the seat of Sol Plaatje municipality as its centre, supporting a network of urban core regions and providing the link to other national areas.

The Northern Cape does have other regional growth centres; key areas or towns in terms of function and diversity, which have a significant impact on the whole of the Northern Cape province (Van Aswegen *et al*., 2020). The National Government classifies municipalities according to their economic centrality as urban core, in terms of which Northern Cape main economic centres are classified as follows; Dawid Kruiper and Sol Plaatje, whilst Ga-Segonyana, Emthanjeni and Nama Khoi are classified as peripheral (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017). This suggests that the Northern Cape is unique in relation to its settlement patterns and that there is no consensus on how these patterns should be categorised. The pattern of central towns serving surrounding settlements leads the researcher to refer to these municipalities as urbanised municipalities, of which the two larger towns are classified as secondary cities. Moreo (2019), in the context of the Northern Cape demographics, states that these municipalities adopt an urban posture.

The slump in the global economy impacted the Northern Cape settlements in that agricultural exports were affected, causing significant job losses (Kruger, 2015). This also caused the collapse of many mining settlements and the closure of railway settlements, and thus a substantial proportion of citizenry rely on the state due to unemployment (Northern Cape Government, 2021). Currently, the Northern Cape is declining due to a shrinking economy and lack of resources, as well a lack of suitable infrastructure (Department of Economic Development and Tourism, 2017).

Due to its poor economic status, the population is declining, and there is less income for the local communities (Harrison and Todes, 2015; Northern Cape Government, 2019). In addition, Van Aswegen *et al*. (2020) mention that the Northern Cape is associated with outward migration and a loss of skills in the working population; hence there has been pressure from the people for the affected municipalities to devise solutions to curb the 'brain drain', poor service delivery, and the high level of population outflow from these areas. Therefore, all these problems in the Northern Cape have created a volatile environment that has resulted in potential governance challenges for the five municipalities under study.

This area's settlement pattern's negative and poor economic outlook impacts the province's service delivery provision capabilities (Kruger, 2015). A number of factors are forwarded for the poor state of the local government, which include political in-fighting and conflict between the politicians and management (Reddy, 2016); institutional, structural, and environmental weaknesses (Siddle and Koelble, 2016); and capacity constraints, funding mechanisms and political-administrative incoherence (Sithole and Mathonsi, 2016).

Consequently, instead of having a public administration geared for intervention to deal with these problems, the five municipalities in this case study experience similar challenges with other municipalities in South Africa. Some of their services and process are outsourced through government policies such as Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) and Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) (Tapscott, 2017).

This has resulted in endemic corruption, non-functioning councils, unstructured community engagement and participation processes, and poor financial management; all leading to poor governance and service delivery (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), 2014). This also results in ineffectual intergovernmental coordination that in turn affects responsive governance and service delivery policy implementation in the affected municipalities (Tapscott, 2017).

The poor service delivery and service management functions have led to a collapse of core municipal infrastructural services in some communities, slowing the delivery of services, and other challenges linked to a lack of trust, social distancing by public representatives, low revenue collections, inappropriately skilled personnel appointed, as well as inappropriate placement practices (Sithole and Mathonsi, 2016; COGTA, 2014).

The poor service delivery by local municipalities is severely hampering South African businesses and preventing their economic growth (Babu, 2015). The municipalities are unable to effect their mandate as there are insufficient qualified and skilled people employed. Since 1967, the output per worker per unit of capital in South Africa has fallen from R7,297 to R4,924 a year, and this is a decline of 32.5 (Sharp, 2021). From a peak in 2011, labour productivity has fallen by 41.2%, and this is the lowest level in 46 years (Adcorp Employment Index, 2020).

The Auditor-General alludes to vacancies in key positions, management of consultants, political appointments, lack of capacity, and lack of accountability as contributors to poor audit outcomes (Auditor-General, 2016). These manifest in poor or non-performance in relation to fixing transport and road, sewage, refuse removal, and basic infrastructure maintenance such as potholes and traffic lights (COGTA, 2014). As a result, the current South African municipalities are notably characterised by protests and riots, as locals are extremely unhappy with the socio-economic conditions and lack of basic service delivery (Jaichand, 2018; Morudu and Halsall, 2017; Reddy and Govender, 2015).

All the municipalities under study experience an increase in population and unemployment, except for the Nama Koi Local Municipality (NKM) which experiences a decrease in population (STASA, 2016). The Dawid Kuiper Local Municipality (DKM) has experienced a decrease in access to services, particularly access to sanitation and piped water (STATSA, 2016). The Emthanjeni Local Municipality (ELM) has experienced a slight increase in all services, except for access to piped water, which remains extremely low (STATSA, 2016).

The NKM has experienced an increase in access to services, except for access to housing which has experienced a slight decline (STATSA, 2016). The Sol Plaatje Local Municipality (SPM) has experienced a slight decline in access to some services, coupled with a slight decline in access to other services, whilst access to piped water remains low (STATSA, 2016). The Ga-Segonyana Local Municipality (GSM) has experienced a decrease in access to water and sanitation services, whilst housing provision remain constant (STATSA, 2016). Further, these municipalities are unable to deal with the effects of urbanisation and population growth in services (Echendu and Okafor, 2021). As a result, these municipalities are unable to deal with the challenges of governance and service delivery.

The significance of emphasising developments around urbanisation and population growth is that it signals a need to respond to it (Marais and Cloete, 2017). The significance of urbanisation in local governance has been emphasised in the literature. It is described as being unstoppable, happening irrespective of whether government responds to it or not (Kacyira, 2017; Mills, Weinstein, Gellie, Weyrich, Lowe and Breed, 2017). Kacyira (2017) describes it as one of the most momentous global trends of the 21st century because by 2050, two thirds of the world's population will reside in urban areas.

The link between urbanisation and socio-economic development has been confirmed (Mills *et al*., 2017). Rampant urbanisation and population growth pose major challenges to service delivery in cities around the world, and this leads to an increase in demand for public services (Mills *et al*, 2017). The effects for African cities are more profound against the backdrop of dwindling resources (Makunde, Chirisa, Mazorodze, Matamanda and Pfukwa, 2018:4). The South African population has accelerated since the 1980s. Around two thirds of South Africa's population live in urban areas (Bakker *et al*., 2016). If not carefully planned for, a population boom could have far-reaching implications on service delivery in South Africa at the municipal level, due to increasing urbanisation and the poor state of South African municipalities.

Recent research has shown that there is a migration away from the smaller and more rural municipalities, with people increasingly flocking to metropolitan areas, cities, and large towns (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016). Therefore, urbanisation and population dynamics are crucial, for they are integral parts of the urban context and play a significant role in the interplay of urban social, economic, ecological, and political factors (Vespa, Medina and Armstrong, 2018; Zuberi, Sibanda and Udjo, 2015). Therefore, there is as correlation between population density and economic opportunities, which theoretically should lead to improved access to the job market and other economic benefits (Harrison and Todes, 2015).

Thus, the poor state of local government persists despite several interventions by national government in the past. Project Consolidate, launched in 2009, led to a fractionally improved performance compared with the year prior to its inception (Tshisonga, 2016). The Siyenza-Manje programme, introduced between 2006 and 2011, could not fulfil its objectives as skills were not transferred (COGTA, 2014). In relation to the Five-Year Strategic Agenda for Local Government, adopted by Cabinet in January 2006, as well as the local government turn-around strategies launched in 2009, municipalities remain in distress, and this was the main contributor to the service delivery backlogs (COGTA, 2014; Powell, 2021).

The 'Operation Clean Audit Programme', launched in 2009, besides having unrealistic time frames, failed to yield desirable results *inter alia* because of government's 'one-size-fits-all' approach (Tshisonga, 2016). Further, these interventions have been portrayed as grand models, examples of best practice to be copied by all municipalities throughout, under the pretext of logic, most probably a capitalist, corporate logic that it will work for all municipalities (Tshisonga, 2016). The one-size-fits-all model, like all prescriptions on processes and institutions, has turned out to be quite problematic (Rangi, 2017). The 'Back-to-Basics' intervention, launched in 2014 and which is currently still ongoing, is not bringing about envisaged strengthening of capability and accountability in governance (Tshisonga, 2016; COGTA, 2014).

These interventions were labelled as having resulted in a modest improvement in the financial performance of municipalities, which perhaps is the most important indicator of the health of local government. Whilst some municipalities have elevated themselves through achievement and progress, others remain as under-performers due to their internal weaknesses, i.e. skills and financial management challenges, and thus these interventions have not bought relief in terms of governance and service delivery issues for the five municipalities in the Northern Cape Province (COGTA, 2014).

The researcher suggests that the introduction of these interventions amounts to mere extrapolation, assuming that existing trends in the local government sphere continue to remain applicable. The views of locally-based practitioners were totally ignored in the construction of these interventions. These interventions are usually announced as changes in policy direction that must be followed, indicating a major source of failure of these interventions. An alternative approach to fixing service delivery and governance challenges is urgently needed, since turning the situation around is certainly not a short-term venture.

Examining the issue of leadership is key, for leadership is responsible for providing direction in relation to enabling municipalities to deliver services. Without effective leadership and good governance, government will not be able to lead and overcome service delivery challenges. Scholars accentuate that local government is the most significant sphere of government because it is at the coalface of service delivery and the closest to the people (Naidoo, 2015; Maserumule, 2020; Thornhill and Dlamini, 2021). Therefore, it is the level of government where these issues should be fixed.

As such, the afore-mentioned policy interventions by government created a volatile environment that resulted in a poor municipal governance framework and service delivery challenges, and hence the need to establish what caused them, and how they affect the local communities. Thus, there is a need to introduce a responsive system of municipal governance and a service delivery framework to resolve these issues.

Service delivery needs to improve, and municipalities should ensure that they develop and maintain all-round individual and collective abilities to improve service delivery. However, a concerted effort should be made to uncover the root causes of poor service delivery. If one can uncover a problem, then a solution can be found. Alternatively, poor service delivery will remain a headache, not only for communities but also for government; more particularly those in the municipalities that are the subject of this study.

Instead of zooming into any specific skills and competence factors, the researcher aimed to uncover general factors impacting poor services and governance in the selected municipalities. The findings of the research were compared with the objectives set, and then recommendations followed.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem the study intends to address is the challenge of poor governance towards service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province; in particular the Sol Plaatje, Emthanjeni, Nama Khoi, Ga-Segonyana and Dawid Kruiper municipalities. These municipalities, to varying degrees, share the following challenges associated with service delivery and governance; poor or aging service delivery infrastructure, poor leadership development and poorly qualified senior management, and inadequate or poor development and spatial planning as entrenched in the Apartheid spatial arrangements (Demarcation Board, 2019).

Further problems these municipalities have are huge housing backlogs, insufficient provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, urbanisation and population growth, an increasing indigent population, and a shrinking revenue base (StatsSA, 2020/2016; Demarcation Board, 2018). Thus, despite significant economic potential, and opportunities vested in urbanisation and population growth, poor service infrastructure and services prevent these municipalities from leveraging such potential (Echendu and Okafor, 2021).

Furthermore, the literature suggests that the governance-service delivery mismatch can also be attributed to the inability of implementers to cope with the complexities and dynamics inherent in governance systems. Problems such as the appointment of unqualified officials, municipalities being under perpetual financial and administrative stress, and services infrastructure backlogs are manifestations of constraints relating to the capacity to act and to make decisions (Demarcation Board, 2018; Maserumule, 2020).

These problems in turn indicate shortcomings relating to how implementing institutions are conceptualised, generated, and concretised. Significantly, diagnostic reports on service delivery failures in municipalities highlight an inability to deal with day-to-day operations, let alone the ability to comprehend or understand how to deal with abrupt and violent disturbances in the governance environment (Gollin *et al*., 2015).

The challenges of governance and service delivery are highlighted against a background of South Africa's income per capita growth being at the bottom of the emerging market range in that it has a low growth and is set to have a negative growth for a decade; highly unusual for a country not in civil strife or some kind of cataclysm (Gollin *et al*., 2015). It means that the poor are getting poorer, which has dire consequences for access to services.

Furthermore, the government's ability to solicit resources for funding service delivery and services delivery infrastructure is seriously compromised. As far as the researcher is concerned, there is little academic knowledge available relating to any investigation conducted on the issues concerning this topic, at least not to the extent of this study. A study by Matjila *et al*. (2014) deals with the implementation of anti-corruption legislation by anti-corruption agencies in the Northern Cape, establishing the link between governance and poor service delivery. However, besides the study being from an overall provincial perspective, it did not involve canvassing governance issues *per se* and their effect on service delivery.

A recent study focused on the connection between service concepts; i.e. services to be delivered and service systems that were currently being delivered and whether or not they were effective (Hoeyi and Makgari, 2021). The study centered on interviewees from the areas targeted in other municipalities. However, the study does not present a holistic enquiry into governance-service delivery linkages, and certainly not in a municipal or local government context. The study aimed to critique the governance shortcomings and their impact on service delivery for the municipalities under study, as well as the municipal audit records and the socio-economic indices to determine which data were measured in existing municipal governance models to measure the impact of sector composition in order to build on the theory on resilience (Van Aswegen *et al*., 2020).

However, the study lacks a local government focus, more particularly a senior management perspective, and it lacks a holistic governance perspective, and thus there is a knowledge gap that this current research study seeks to fill (De Feyter, 2016).

Leedy (2021) explains that identifying the problem is the most fundamental part of any research study; it is the 'heart' of any study. In other words, unless there is a problem, there is no need for research to be undertaken. The South African Human Sciences Research Council (SAHRC, 2018) states that ineffective governance and poor leadership significantly affect service delivery in South Africa. Phago (2013) confirms that ineffective leadership and poor governance hamper the provision of services in municipalities.

Therefore, the problem statement for this study emanates from the fact that governance failures lead to a decline in the provision of effective and efficient service delivery in most municipalities in South Africa. As a result, service delivery is affected at the local sphere of government. The problem emanates from governance failures and their effects on basic service delivery. It is important to bring about congruence between governance and service delivery to improve the quality of life of citizens. Hence, this study presents an attempt to bring about such congruence.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The study's main aim is to determine the effectiveness of the governance framework in urbanised Northern Cape Province municipalities.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

The main research objective of this study is to uncover how urbanised municipalities can model an effective and efficient governance framework to enable urban municipalities to deliver basic services to their communities. It is in this context that the following sub-objectives are sought to be achieved.

1. Identify the factors that influence governance and service delivery in urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province.

2. Examine the effects of poor governance on service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province.

3. Formulate a sustainable governance framework for improved service delivery in urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province.

4. Provide policy insights and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question of this study is:

> *How does poor governance impede the delivery of basic services at the five selected urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province?*

This primary research question raises several sub-research questions which are:

1. What are the factors that influence governance and service delivery in urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province?

2. How does poor governance affect service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape?

3. Which is the optimal sustainable governance framework that improves service delivery in urbanised Northern Cape Municipalities that can be adopted?

4. What progressive policy insights and recommendations can be put in place to enhance governance and service delivery in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities?

1.6 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY, AXIOLOGY

1.6.1 Ontology

Ontology refers to assumptions about the nature of reality; that is, the assumptions that shape the way in which one sees and studies the research objects (Saunders *et al*., 2019). In the context of this study, the ontology determines how the world of governance and service delivery is viewed. The researcher has been involved as a senior manager in the local government sector for at least 22 years, during which he has occupied the position of municipal manager. Furthermore, he has been involved in Project Consolidate, a targeted local government intervention initiative sanctioned by COGTA, aimed at assisting local municipalities to become viable entities. Since 2012, the researcher has served on numerous national and provincial bodies representing local government practitioners.

In the past 22 years, the researcher has championed numerous institutional reforms in his capacity as accounting officer, including the amalgamation of smaller municipalities into a geographically bigger unit. In the researcher's view, intentions of turning municipalities into viable units have not fully been realised since many municipalities continue to suffer from an inadequate resource base, linked to the socio-economic challenges of communities, vast geographical areas, unemployment, and poverty (COGTA, 2014).

Governance and service delivery challenges are tied to the low skills levels of public officials and politicians, resulting in poor planning and implementation (Kanyenze *et al*., 2017). Political intervention in decision-making and appointments negatively impacts on performance of municipalities (Ndevu and Muller, 2017). Furthermore, lip service is paid to consequence management since the inferior performance of municipalities is not followed by sanctions, resulting in repetitive mediocre performance and manifesting in poor audit outcomes, service delivery backlogs, and dilapidated service delivery infrastructure (Ndevu and Muller, 2017).

The researcher has noticed a decline in the trust of the public towards municipalities. Consequently, municipalities suffer serious reputational damage, leading to a breakdown in municipality-community relationship (SALGA, 2015; Edwards and McGee, 2014). Dissatisfaction with the delivery of poor services was reported as early as the first outbreak of community protests in post-Apartheid South Africa in 2015 (Matebesi, 2018). All of these render the municipal planning and implementation environment inadequate to facilitate improvement and innovation in the delivery of services.

The researcher believes that the current state of service delivery falls far short of that proposed in the post-Apartheid constitutional democracy. The triple problems of poverty, unemployment, and unequal access point to severe socio-economic problems (Kanyenze *et al*., 2017; Mawere, 2017). The absence of development, justice, and good governance are cited as conditions under which under-development thrives (Mawere, 2017). This should be viewed against the background that Black South Africans were subjected to oppression and discrimination under colonialism (Kanyenze *et al*., 2017). The fact that these challenges prevail, despite government efforts, shows that previous interventions have not been successful (Kanyenze *et al*., 2017). Many resources are wasted, and this is untenable.

For the researcher, fixing service delivery challenges involves both the private sector and government working in a symbiotic relationship in a complex, evolving environment where it is difficult to discern the lines of demarcation between economic, political, and social agendas (Colander and Kupers, 2014; Rainey and Araujo, 2015).

Whilst the complex evolving implementation environment cannot be controlled, it can be influenced, requiring continuous scrutiny and interrogation as to how policy guides society towards favourable ends (Colander and Kupers, 2014). The researcher is of the view that this way of looking at the policy environment requires that policy be seen in an integrated and holistic way, which indicates a link between the researcher's ontological perspective and epistemological paradigm (Dutta, 2017).

Based on the researcher's subjective views and passion for socio-economic transformation, the study was undertaken from a relativist perspective, for the issues that have been noted regarding service delivery are many, as are the causes, and thus multiple realities of service delivery and governance exist. Furthermore, the solution to the problem is multi-dimensional, and besides the researcher's views, there could be many other potential solutions to these issues. This is in keeping with the ontological notion of the social world as 'an emergent, concept- and activity-dependent, value-driven and politically contested part of the natural world' (Bhaskar, 2016:11). These attributes render the subject matter open to an exploratory qualitative research type, which resonates with inductive reasoning as an analytic tool.

Consequently, a researcher is required to create a clear position regarding the reality that he/she research believes(ontology), the nature and sources of knowledge that the research derives(epistemology), and be equally sensitive to the values of the research activity(axiology)(Aliyu,2020). For all these concerns, researcher needs to be based on certain research paradigm and its basic philosophical perspectives.

Therefore, a paradigm defines a researcher‘s philosophical orientation, or perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that influence what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted (Okesina, 2020). Thus, without adopting a paradigm, as the first step there is no foundation for subsequent choices regarding methodology, design and method.

From its philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology), and ethics and value systems (axiology), a paradigm leads researchers into research question(s), selection of participants, instruments and data collection procedures as well as data analysis(Aliyu,2018).

Together, these three paradigmatic aspects (ontology, epistemology and axiology) help to determine the assumptions and beliefs that frame researchers' view of a research problem, how they go about investigating it, and the methods they use to answer the research questions (known as methodology) (Nguyen,2019; Aliyu,2020). They interact in a dynamic, multi-virtuous and systematic way, together forming a guiding framework for a congruent and coherent system of thought and action (Patton, 1990). Therefore, in locating your research proposal in a particular research paradigm, the understanding what the research will uphold, and be guided by the assumptions, beliefs, norms and values of the chosen paradigm as shown below (Kivunga and Kuyini,2017).

1.6.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how one can communicate knowledge to others (Burrell and Morgan, 2016). For example, the multidisciplinary context of governance and service delivery renders different types of knowledge legitimate, e.g., numerical data, textual data, facts and opinions. Thus, a range of epistemological options are available to researchers, providing a large choice of methods. However, particular epistemological assumptions favour certain types of research methods, as explained below, in relation to the epistemological research paradigm for this study.

The researcher adopted an interpretivist and constructivist epistemological paradigm for this research because it is a qualitative study. The primary focus of research undertaken in the interpretive paradigm is the way human beings attempt to make sense of the world around them, to understand the fundamental meanings attached to organisational life (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Meaning comes into existence with human encounters with the experiences of the world, as no truth is waiting to be discovered (Al-Ababneh, 2020).

The constructivist aims to understand and interpret behaviour, as well as understand a specific context, rather than predict cause and effect. Constructivism may be more concerned with the empathic or subjective understanding of human action, rather than the forces that are deemed to act upon it. Subjectivism refers to the perception that comes from anything but the object to which it is ascribed; meaning that the object itself makes no contribution, thus there is no underlying true meaning that is imposed the object exists independent to perception (Crotty, 2018).

Interpretivists believe that reality is relative and multiple. Far from emphasising rationality, the focus is on discovering multiple subjectivities (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Therefore, there can be more than one reality and more than one single structured way to access such realities. Constructivism takes any person's account as true, and as valid as any other people's account, so long as it makes sense according to the context in which that person finds him or herself (Dixon, 2013). The interpretive paradigm seeks to explain the stability of behaviour from the individual's viewpoint (Wright, 2015). The constructivist assumes that one cannot separate one's self from what one knows. Further, the researcher and the matter that is studied are linked in such a way that who we are, and how we understand the world, are central parts of how we understand ourselves, others, and the world around us.

Our knowledge does not present the world, but is indicative of how we, subjects, have revolved to fit into the world according to our experiences (Wright, 2015). There are many alternative ways of fitting into the world, based on our experiences. The constructivist presents an epistemological view of knowledge as being acquired through construction thereof, rather than being transmitted.

Constructivism holds that we gain understanding and knowledge about our world through meaning-making exercises by engaging in the processes of constructing individual interpretations of our experiences (Mouton, 2015). Being different from physical phenomena, human beings create meaning, and interpretivists study these meanings (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Constructivism excludes the idea of a dominant social reality that influences the creation of meaning but aims to understand how different realities or interpretations are constructed, rather than searching for reality itself.

Knowledge does not reflect an objective, ontological reality, but is developed or constructed as we go through our life experiences. Interpretivists hold that people ascribe different meanings emanating from diverse cultural orientations and circumstances, and at various times, and as such, they create and experience different social realities. The interpretive approach seeks culturally-derived and historically-situated understandings of the global social life (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Further, our insights into humanity are based on the discovery of definite, universal 'laws' that apply to everybody (Saunders *et al*., 2019).

Knowledge generated is observed through socially constructed and subjective interpretations, linking constructivism to the researcher's relativistic ontological perspective, which assumes that reality as we know it is constructed inter-subjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (Maserumule, 2020). Interpretivism suggests that theories and concepts are inevitably too simplistic to present the full richness of the social world (Isaeva *et al*., 2015). Therefore, the greater the diversity of interpretations, stories and narratives, as well as historical context factors that researchers can gather, the more the understanding (knowledge) they can create through their research (Matebesi, 2018; Isaeva *et al*., 2015).

For the interpretivist, the complexity of social reality requires collecting what is meaningful to research interviewees. Social research is complex and not conducive to theorising on definitive laws. Social research demands behind the scenes investigative generalisations due to the complex nature of social sciences and philosophy of this interpretivist philosophy (Saunders *et al*., 2019). This methodology is not an appropriate method for generalisation due to the changing state of organisations and various interpretations by people, as well as the complexity and uniqueness of the world (Matebesi, 2018; Saunders *et al*., 2019).

The researcher adopts phenomenology as an approach to do this study, focusing on the interviewees' recollections and interpretations of their life experiences. The aim is to enter the social world of research interviewees and understand that world from their point of view (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Furthermore, because constructivism is open to multiple views on how a problem may eventually be explained, it resonates with an open-ended exploratory qualitative research design.

Thus, a qualitative research approach was used in relation to societal issues that are complex in nature and open to multiple interpretations. This is despite any prior knowledge that the researcher might have about a matter under enquiry. The nature of interpretivism renders it appropriate for issues that are complex, multiple, and unpredictable in relation to what is predicted as 'reality'. Further, the researcher ensured that the data collected were capable of dealing with the research problem and consequently could explain the issue studied.

1.6.3 Axiology

Axiology is a term that refers to what is important to the researcher or the ethical issues that the researcher attends to as he or she prepares a proposal for reserach (Adu, 2020), henceforth it is a philosophical approach that focus on value judgement of the study or determines the research right decisions (Govender and Govender, 2020). As such, the current study axiology hinges on determining the effectiveness of the governance framework in urbanised Northern Cape Province municipalities in a bid to improve the governance system and service delivery in those affected urbanised municipalities contextual to the study objectives and problem statement. Therefore, axiology is important in the study because it clarifies the aim of the study by establishing whether it seeks to explain, predict the world, or simply to understand it, and to showcase the study values (Flecknoe, 2021). As a result, axiology will then help the researcher to understand the issues of value that underpins his or her study that should be prioritised in the critique.

Differently phrased, axiology refers to the ethical issues that need to be considered when planning a research proposal (Chowdhy, 2019). It involves defining, evaluating and understanding concepts of right and wrong behaviour relating to the research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Axiology per research paradigm include: value-neutral; value-laden and balanced; value-laden, biased and culture-sensitive; and value-driven (Okesina,2020). This consideration is founded on the understanding that all humans have dignity which must be respected, and they have a fundamental human right to make choices which you as a researcher must respect. It considers what value we shall attribute to the different aspects of our research, the participants, the data and the audience to which we shall report the results of our research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017; Saunders, Lewis *et al.,* 2019).

Implementation of ethical considerations focuses on four principles which one needs to uphold when dealing with participants and data; privacy, accuracy, property, and accessibility (Okesina, 2020; Kathri 2020). Privacy concerns what information participants will be required to reveal to the researcher or to others about themselves, their associations or organisations (Okesina, 2020; Faw *et al.,* 2020). It considers the conditions and safeguards under which data will be gathered and analysed. What things, for example, can participants keep to themselves, and not be forced to reveal to the researcher or any other people?

Accuracy considers who is responsible for the authenticity, fidelity, and accuracy of information (Okesina, 2020; Faw *et al.,* 2020). Similarly, it considers how the researcher will cross-check with participants so they know the researcher has recorded the data accurately. It also makes it very clear who will be held accountable for any errors in data, and if any party were to be injured, how they be compensated.

Property considers who will own the data (Okesina, 2020). Will there be any payment for the data? If so, what will be the just and fair prices for the exchange of data? Who will own the channels, such as publications and media, through which information will be disseminated?

Accessibility considers who will have access to the data. How will the data be kept safe and secure? (Okesina, 2020). Under what conditions and with what safeguards will researchers and participants have access to the data? How will access to the data be gained?

A balanced axiology assumes that the outcome of the research will reflect the values of the researcher, trying to present a balanced report of the findings. Value-laden and balanced axiology assume that the researcher accounts for their bias and those of the participants in presenting a balanced report of findings (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017; Nguyen, 2019, Okesina, 2020).

Put differently, the bases on which one decides what is meaningful or not, relevant or irrelevant, as well as the value of the outcome of our research – these are all axiological considerations (Chowdhury, 2019).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (BRIEF)

The study examines the challenges of poor governance towards service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province using a qualitative methodology. These concepts are further explained in Chapter 3. This section presents a brief overview of the study design, target population, sample and sampling procedure, data integrity, data collection instruments, and ethical considerations.

1.7.1 Explanatory study design

A research design is a plan or outline that shows how a study will proceed (Mouton, 2018). This study used a qualitative, explanatory approach to address the research objectives. This approach was chosen as the researcher wanted to uncover the reasons why a phenomenon exists, hence an explanatory approach into why things are the way they are (Creswell, 2016). This fitted with the objectives of the study.

Neuman (2020) argues that the researcher, with data that need to be collected, measured and analysed, must adhere to the following guidelines; if the design is qualitative and explanatory/exploratory, the type of research required is inductive, where questions and assumptions and required, and if the data are to collected by means of interviews or focus groups, the data are then analysed using codes and themes.

This study adopted an explanatory research philosophy so that explanations for the subject matter under study could be clarified, responsive insights could be generated, and solutions to the study objectives noted (Polit and Beck, 2017). Therefore, the study was guided by Neuman's (2020) principles when the fieldwork was conducted.

1.7.2 Study target population

A target population refers to the overall set of potential interviewees from which responses can be drawn (Bergmann and Close, 2015). The study target population comprised all 50 interviewees per municipalities consisting of senior managers, middle managers, public representatives, and policy experts from each of the five municipalities in the Northern Cape Province (Sol Plaatje, Ga- Segonyana, Dawid Kruiper, Nama Khoi and Emthajeni).

1.7.3 Study sample and sampling procedure

A sample refers to a cluster, or representative group, of interviewees that participate in the interview processes (Neuman, 2020). The study sampled at least 50 interviewees from each of the five urbanised municipalities, in line with the study objectives, hence a total of 250 participants. The study used a purposive sampling procedure to select as sample of interviewees for the interviews to ensure that there was originality in the information gathered from the interviewees. The information was recorded on a tape recorder to avoid bias (Rutakumwa, Mugisha, Bernays, Kabunga, Tumwekwase, Mbonye and Seely, 2019).

1.7.4 Research instrument

A research instrument refers to the tool that will be used to collect data from the interviewees in the study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015). The study used interviews as the primary tool of collecting data from the interviewees (Cox, Barratt, Blumenfeld, Rahemtulla, Taggart and Turton, 2017). The data were recorded on tape, and stored safely, thus giving attention to privacy and ethical issues (Youssef Wright, Delpech, Davies, Brown, Cooper, Sachikonye and De Visser, 2018).

The interview method was preferred because it enabled the researcher to rephrase questions that were not understood by the interviewees. It was cost effective, and also enabled the interviewer to connect with the interviewees, thereby ensuring that the researcher obtained the information he sought from the interviewees.

1.7.5 Data collection instruments

The study used face-to-face and telephonic interviews to collect data to ensure that the input of the interviewees was factored in wholly (Robson, 2017). This method helps the interviewees to ask for clarity to questions that they do not understand.

1.7.6 Data integrity

Data integrity refers to the manner in which research data is complete, stable, accurate, and free from a researcher's bias (Thornhill, 2020). The study ensured that the data was of the highest integrity.

1.7.6.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the manner in which the views of the interviewees are accurately captured by the researcher and presented in the analysis through a triangulation approach and observation of interviewees (Polit and Beck, 2017). The study therefore abided by these principles to ensure that there was a high level of credibility in the data collected.

1.7.6.2 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to noting that all the original ideas from the interviewees are captured accurately during the interviews (Krefting, 2009). The study recorded the interviews to ensure that the information collected was not distorted.

1.7.6.3 Conformability

Conformability refers to the manner in which the data are reliable, and this was done in the study through open coding (Creswell, 2016).

1.7.6.4 Dependability

Dependability refers to the way the same data can be used numerous times during various times in various situations or environments and still remain dependable. This was achieved in the study through open coding (Creswell, 2016).

1.7.6.5 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the research results can be utilised again in similar contexts by another person (Holloway and Galvin, 2016).

1.7.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is the procedure of making raw data into information which can be used (Saunders *et al.,* 2015). This study used open coding to achieve this result (Polit and Beck, 2020).

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (BRIEF)

The theoretical framework presents the researcher's philosophical stance informing the methodology, and thus providing the context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria (Crotty, 2018). It is a framework based on existing theory in a field of enquiry that is related to, and/or reflects, the hypothesis of a study (Adom, Hussein and Agyem, 2018). The theoretical framework guides the research and should resonate with every aspect of the research process, from the definition of the problem, literature review, methodology, presentation, and discussion of the findings, as well as conclusions that are drawn (Botha, 2019).

In this study, the theoretical framework interrogates the theoretical foundations for the research, discussing the epistemology and ontology of the 'urban', as well as the epistemology of governance in their historic context. Further, governance theories are elucidated in order to create an understanding of municipalities as socio-ecological systems, operating in a structural, wider, and specific context. Thus the theoretical framework provided a basis for understanding how municipalities as socio-ecological systems operate, which understanding is informed by the concepts of adaptive governance (Meuleman,2018; Dryzek,202016), systems theory (Rosas, 2017), organisational resilience (Holling, 2016) and panarchy theory (Folke,2016).

These concepts and their interrelations will be discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of theoretical multiplicity; a meta-paradigmatic approach (Karpouzoglu, Dewulf and Clark, 2016). Therefore, these discussions pave the way for a theoretical proposition to be adopted for this study, providing a foundation for changing and transforming governance and service delivery in a contextual governance environment. Relational exchange, in its various forms, is noted as critical to effecting change and transformation of governance and service delivery (Castaňer and Oliveira, 2020; Zagumny, 2019).

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because the findings may provide a meaningful contribution to informing decision makers in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities when formulating governance structures orientated to the delivery of service in poor communities. Rich data was obtained by collecting and analysing both primary data (semi-structured interviews) and secondary data (the literature review) contributing to the common body of knowledge in South Africa on governance in urban municipalities.

Post-Apartheid South Africa has guaranteed freedom for all, but the majority of the population are poor, and freedom has not bought poor communities relief from the previous under-development they suffered during the Apartheid regime. Sefara (2014) states that service delivery in South Africa continues to be extremely slow, and rural and township living conditions are still less than optimal after all these years into democracy. These poor socio-economic standards have been attributed to poor leadership and ineffective governance (Sefara, 2014; Naidoo, 2015).

This study was prompted by the twin problems of ineffective leadership and poor governance in municipalities, which have resulted in declining standards of service delivery in most municipalities in South Africa (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016). The literature shows that insufficient leadership, poor skills, and ineffective governance frameworks are the primary causes of poor service delivery; ultimately, the inability of elected councillors in local government to deliver on promises made during elections (Naidoo, 2015; Maserumule, 2020).

This is the situation, despite an extensive framework of governance, particularly the idea of good governance, as is discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review. The question is why, despite an extensive good governance framework, are there continuous governance and service delivery failures? What are the foundations of these failures? Maserumule (2020:81) states that ‘good leadership is a vital aspect of efficient governance and effective service delivery at the government local sphere’.

The Auditor-General’s Reports reveal that the Northern Cape municipalities have had poor audit outcomes continuously for five years (2017/2018); thus clearly pointing to significant problems in these municipalities. This study aimed to uncover the extent to which a lack of leadership and ineffective governance contribute to the agonisingly slow pace of service delivery in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

In addition, the body of research on smaller towns is limited (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016), mostly focusing on the national level, and investigations are regional-specific (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016). Few researchers are investigating small towns in South Africa, and there is an absence of research from those areas of South Africa where there are many small towns, such as the Northern Cape (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016).

The governance-service delivery nexus is under-researched, with a few studies dealing with the Free State (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016; Rogerson, 2016). These studies are approached from a neo-liberal perspective, as well as from the perspective of power relations between government and non-government stakeholders. These studies were also undertaken from metropolitan and large city perspectives, which are then extrapolated to smaller towns and cities, disregarding the fact that the context of metropolitan and larger cities differs from smaller towns and cities in relation to population density, power relations, population share, political interest, economic diversity, and scale (Arendt, 2018).

Practical investigations into what is included in the smaller city context, at least in so far as the sample municipalities are concerned, are essential for the process of transformation of governance and service delivery. Therefore, the impact of power relations on governance and service delivery remains unknown in the context of smaller cities in the Northern Cape and is a subject of much speculation. Furthermore, the literature regarding studies from an adaptive governance perspective in relation to these areas is virtually non-existent; at least from a theoretical multiplicity perspective.

For these reasons, the researcher is of the view that this study can provide significant insights into the governance of urbanised areas since the research results in the formulation of a responsive, urbanised municipal governance framework designed to improve the delivery of services in municipalities; especially those in the Northern Cape Province.

1.10 DELIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

With most research studies there are limitations and delimitations to the study. To begin with, the study focused on the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities and did not consider rural municipalities within the Northern Cape. In addition, the study did not incorporate inputs from other municipalities nationally. Therefore, the findings of the study are limited to the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities. Moreover, the study used a qualitative approach to gather data through interviews to analyse and did not use qualitative approach that could provide a scientific analysis of the data to strengthen the results obtained from the study.

Moreover, previous studies within the same context were limited to a period of eight years, 2010 to 2018, and hence this study updates the literature and accounts for the 2018 to 2022 financial period (SALGA, 2018). The study is restricted to a focus on the severe issues of poor governance in regard to the delivery of services, with specific reference to the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities. Numerous case studies within the Northern Cape municipalities were analysed through case-based specific research. This means that the findings and recommendations of the study cannot be generalised and are only applicable to the stated municipalities.

1.11 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The dissertation comprises eight chapters. A brief synopsis of each chapter follows below.

Chapter 1: This is an introduction and provides an overview of the study. The chapter outlines the reasons for the study, as well as limitations and delimitations. This is followed by the problem statement and research questions. The objectives of the study, as well as the outline of chapters and the definition of key terms and concepts are discussed. A brief overview of the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities is also given. Finally, there is a brief overview of the research methodology, and research design is outlined.

Chapter 2: Reviews the extant literature dealing with governance and service delivery in municipalities and conceptualises the topic in the discipline of Public Administration in a bid to identify gaps in literature and how they ought to be addressed. This chapter is entirely linked to chapter and is gleaned in the light of chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Discusses the theoretical framework of the study, including a comprehensive review of the important literature on this topic. The secondary sources consulted for this review comprise books and journal articles, newspaper articles, various pieces of legislation, web-based material, conference proceedings, annual reports, and municipal documents and records.

This chapter is linked to chapter 2 and it highlights how governance and service delivery is grounded in the academic discipline of Public Administration. The issue of governance is extensively discussed, including its ontological and epistemological foundations. The chapter also highlights various theories of governance as published by various scholars. Finally, the variables of the study as well as its context within the field of service delivery are discussed in line with study objectives, problem statement and research questions.

Chapter 4: Provides the details of the research methodology used to conduct this study. The justification of the adopted research approach is also provided. As the terms ‘research methodology’ and ‘research design’ are two elements of research often used interchangeably, an attempt is made to clarify the difference. Furthermore, this chapter explains the design and methods of data collection.

Chapter 5: Provides the findings of this research study. The findings of the study are discussed, summarised, and elaborated upon.

Chapter 6: Presents, evaluates, and interprets the study’s findings in line with the study objectives, theoretical framework underpinning governance implementation in municipalities and the literature review. The chapter goes further to discuss the current circumstances in which the five municipalities in Northern Cape function. Therefore the chapter 2 to 6 comprehensively addresses the study’s first and second objective.

Chapter 7: Critiques, develops, and proposes a robust hybrid and sustainable municipal governance framework that provides a broad, yet concise framework that can serve as a roadmap for urbanised municipal service delivery or performance. This chapter addresses the third objective of urbanised governance framework contextual to the urbanised municipalities’ case in Northern Cape Province.

Chapter 8: Presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings of the study objectives, and specifically, the last objective that provides policy insights and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities. Further, the chapter discusses several recommendations in relation to measures to overcome several factors that influence municipal service provision in the urbanised municipalities under study.

All in all, the thesis is constituted by eight interrelated chapters that build on each other and helps to address the study problems statement, objectives and research questions comprehensively.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter outlined the rationale and scope of this research study, as well as noting citizen needs and wants regarding service delivery in the post-Apartheid era of democracy. The backgrounds of the case study municipalities were given, as well as the challenges of governance and service delivery experienced by municipalities in general, forming the basis for this chapter.

The problem statement was noted, as were the aims and objectives of the study, and a brief outline of the research methodology was given, as was the study's importance. The limitations of the study were identified and discussed, and the research philosophy and theoretical framework were briefly discussed. The next chapter, the literature review, discusses municipal governance frameworks and their effects on service delivery at a global, continental, and local level.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the literature review of the study and the context of the governance and service delivery environment in Northern Cape Province local government in South Africa. This chapter also provides an outline of specific theoretical, regulatory, and statutory frameworks of municipal governance and their effects on service delivery relevant to the South African public sector, also presenting both a global and African continental perspective. The literature is presented in the light of the importance of addressing the problem statement, aim, objectives and research questions; aspects that will be explained in the next section of this chapter.

The researcher departs from the view that there is not yet a fully developed theory of governance, and that governance provides an analytic framework, or at least a set of criteria that define those objects that are 'worthy of study' (St Pierre, 2018). The development of the concept of governance is explored in the context of its proximity to the concept of Public Administration, locating governance in a global context. The meaning and context of participation, accountability, service-orientation, and good governance are explored in a global and historic context. These concepts are considered as essential elements of the South African governance system, requiring that their meaning and content are also explored in a South African local context. Further, exploring governance in a South African context invokes that consideration be given to an African perspective on governance and related aspects. In the main, this is indicative of gaps in the literature pertaining to the subject under research, which is further explored in the subsequent chapters.

The discussion of governance structures gives credence to the significance of institutional arrangements in bringing about governance systems capable of facilitating the delivery of quality services. It also takes cognisance of various factors impacting on the governance and service delivery environment. Governance frameworks and factors impacting on the governance environment are key references in the problem statement, aims, objectives and research questions.

Consistent with qualitative research being inductive in nature, exploring meanings and insights in a given situation, the researcher used inductive theory development to uncover the core elements emerging from interactions with the research participants to understand how these elements could be used to develop a framework for local government interventions (Bansal *et al*., 2018; Mohajan, 2018). More so, an interpretivist philosophy tends to lead researchers to induction (Saunders *et al*., 2019). In inductive reasoning, there is a gap between the conclusions reached and the premises observed, and the conclusions being judged are supported by the observations made (Babu, 2015; Saunders *et al*., 2019).

Thus, whilst conclusions are supported by our observations, they are not guaranteed, for observations are open to alternative conclusions (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Conclusions that may be untested are generated. An inductive approach involves generating or building a theory, following the collection of data, as well as the identification of themes and patterns (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Data are followed by theory.

Inductive theory development is argued to be suitable to address social issues because of its ability to address complex topics such as the one under enquiry in this study, for which there are multiple solutions (Eisenhardt *et al*., 2016; Coccia, 2017). Therefore, this chapter comprises a review of important documentary sources on the topic. A literature review is regarded as the engine of every research study. For this reason, the concept is defined and discussed in Section 2.2 of this chapter to ensure a broad understanding.

2.2 THE RATIONALE FOR LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section the term ‘literature review’ is defined, and its importance is discussed. A literature review is an important part of any research study, and no research study should commence before conducting a preliminary literature review. Malan and Theron (2016:97) define a literature review as ‘a structured evaluation and classification process to benchmark what academics and researchers have written on a particular topic, including the formulation of a research problem and the data collection methods adopted'. Malan and Theron (2016) and Babu (2015) note that a literature review provides the foundation for the research journey.

A literature review is undertaken for several reasons; chief amongst them is to avoid duplicating previous studies. Other reasons include ascertaining the 'acceptable definitions of core terms and concepts in specific fields of study, determining research methods and tools to prove research validity and reliability, establishing added information in specific fields of study, and learning how other fieldworkers previously investigated similar research problems' (Mouton, 2016:87).

The significant purposes of a literature review are also outlined as follows; 'it assists the researcher to obtain knowledge and expertise on the selected topic, allows for the sharing of results of related studies, links the researcher's study to current debates in a specific field of study, fills in the existing gaps in the literature, extends the researcher's knowledge, provides a framework to establish the significance of the study, allows for a benchmark to compare the results of the study to others, and assists the researcher to formulate research questions, problems, and objectives' (Malan and Theron, 2016:45).

Researchers review the relevant literature and synthesise previous findings on the topic of interest. In this way, knowledge gaps can be highlighted, and research methods devised on how to fill these identified gaps. The review and synthesis should be informed by, and address the problem statement, aims, objectives and research questions; all of which find expression in the failure of municipalities to fulfil their constitutional and legislative mandate.

The problem statement locates such failure in the complexities and dynamics inherent in the governance system and its surrounding environment. Further, the problem statement suggests limited knowledge regarding how these complexities and dynamics manifest in the urbanised municipalities under study, as well as lacking knowledge from the perspective of senior officials. Good governance and effective leadership are noted as crucial drivers of service delivery, resonating with the aim, objectives, and research questions of this study.

Thus, the problem statement, aim, objectives, and research questions require that the literature review should unpack the causes and effects of governance and service delivery, as well as unpacking the design and content of governance-service delivery systems or frameworks.

This chapter will undertake this through critically discussing contemporary literature from a global, African and local South African context. Thus understanding governance and service delivery is critical to address the problem statement, aim, objectives research questions of this study. For the researcher, such understanding must be located in the context of the concept of Public Administration, which confirms the global dimension of governance, and thus service delivery.

As Botes *et al*. (2010) note, public administration deals with implementing the policies of government policies within public institutions so that services can be provided to the citizens. According to Du Toit and Van der Waldt (2017), public administration includes all the processes and activities that can be used to improve the socio-economic conditions of society. Thus, government institutions achieve their policy objectives 'through policymaking and implementation' (Thornhill and Hanekom, 2019:15). Before proceeding to navigate the literature, the researcher finds it prudent to provide a clarification of the concepts and terms used throughout this thesis.

2.3 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS

Various terms/concepts can be used differently, depending on the context within which they are used. In this study, the core concepts and terms are defined avoid any misunderstanding.

2.3.1 'Public Administration' and 'public administration'

Thornhill (2016:795) traces the origin of 'Public Administration' (PA) to an article written by Woodrow Wilson in 1887 that examines the theory of the discipline of Public Administration. The author states that Wilson's article, entitled 'The Study of Administration' distinguishes between 'PA as an academic discipline and PA as government in action' (Thornhill, 2016:795). In this study, the researcher notes that

Public Administration is an academic discipline, while public administration deals with the execution of government policy. The distinction between the two terms (Public Administration and public administration) is still the subject of much debate amongst theoreticians world-wide (Van der Waldt and Du Toit, 2017). The researcher did not deal with these debates in this research study.

As a process and activity, public administration deals with the execution and implementation of government policy (Thornhill and Van Dijk, 2020). Public administration is relevant and operates in the realm of the social sciences, as well as involving, more than in any other profession, the manipulation of ideologies, materials, and technologies by all that operate in the public sphere (Abel, 2017).

Public administration is also said to be unique in that it operates in a high realm of concepts and theories, involving a discourse of continuous discovery and justification amongst traditionalists and those that sought innovation in the public realm (Abel, 2017:684). This aspect is a crucial theme for this study. Public administration deals with public matters and how to manage public infrastructure. Public administration requires specialised knowledge and skills to manage resources (human, financial, material, and information) and render them as beneficial services/products to ensure the needs and wants of communities are met. This is how socio-economic development takes place (Backeberg, 2017).

2.3.2 Local government

Cloete (2019) states that local government is the lowest arena of government, decentralised from national government. Maserumule (2020) notes that local government is the primary face of service delivery as it is the government level which is the closest to the community. It is the level of government at the coalface of service delivery. In this study, local government refers to that lowest sphere of decentralised government; the sphere tasked with the responsibility of basic service delivery to the citizens.

2.3.3 Governance

Maserumule (2020:281) posits that 'governance is a conceptual presentiment of good governance'. However, according to Bovaird and Loffler (2015:6), governance refers to 'the interaction between different stakeholders to influence public policies'. Kuye and Kakumba (2018:19) underscore the concepts of 'public participation, collaborative efforts, and collective actions'. Therefore, governance includes 'efforts to construct participation and policy responses to ensure that municipal affairs function properly' (Munroe, 2016:53). In this study, governance refers to interactions and engagements in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities which pertain to local communities and the other stakeholders, and which deal with issues of governance and service delivery.

2.3.4 Service delivery

Service delivery means providing government activities and/or benefits for citizens (Fox and Meyer, 2019). Service delivery is providing public activities and benefits, or satisfaction, to communities (Batley and McLoughlin, 2015; Rasul and Roger 2018). So, it can be seen that service delivery provides both tangible and intangible benefits. Service delivery can also be internal or external, and this depends on whether the recipients are internal or external stakeholders. Internal service delivery is necessary first before external service delivery can take place (Cloete and Auriacombe, 2017; Schoute, Budding and Gradus, 2018; Yu *et al*., 2019).

There are three aspects to service delivery; a target market, a service, and a delivery mechanism (Ponsignon, Smart and Maull, 2011). 'Target market' refers to the clients/customers, the 'service' means both those tangible and intangible benefits, and the 'delivery mechanism' determines the way they are provided to the stakeholders; i.e. the facilities and equipment, resources and infrastructure. As Ponsignon *et al*. (2011) state, how these three aspects interact determines how successful the implementation of service delivery is as value must be created for both the citizen and the municipality.

This value can be measured by assessing customer satisfaction, customer retention, and profitability. Value thus comes from both the customer and municipality (Lusch 2021). Service delivery involves value creation for both communities and municipalities (Hoeyi and Makgari, 2021). It suggests that delivering services requires consideration of the communities, the service to be delivered, as well as the manner in which services are to be delivered. Thus, in this study, service delivery involves communities in terms of both the service target and the service to be delivered.

2.3.5 Municipality

Section 151 of the Constitution states that the local arm of government comprises municipalities, which must be established in South Africa (as cited by Lusch, 2021). Further, Section 151 provides that the local authority resides in the council of the municipality with rights to govern (Batley and McLoughlin, 2015). The municipal executive council, headed by a mayor, presides over the governing of a municipality as the mandate of a municipality is to provide service delivery, i.e. satisfy the basic needs of the people within its jurisdictional area (Hoeyi and Makgari, 2021). In this study therefore, municipality refers to the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities, which are the sample municipalities for this study.

2.3.6 Leadership

Northhouse (2019:74) defines leadership as the 'process of influencing others to achieve the set goals and objectives of the institution'. This author notes that leadership arises in a group, where attention is paid to common goals (Northhouse (2019). Leadership is 'the ability to influence others through inspiration, motivation and passion to achieve a certain purpose' (Munroe, 2016:53). Leadership in this study refers to the skill and ability to persuade subordinates and other stakeholders so that an organisation's goals and objectives can be achieved.

2.3.7 Urbanised Municipality Definition and Contextual Meaning

An urban municipality is a densely populated or intermediate density municipality in the sense of the municipal degree of urbanisation similar to the urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province (Batley and McLoughlin, 2015). As directed by the Constitution, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act of 1998 contains criteria for determining when an area must have a category-A municipality (metropolitan municipalities) and when municipalities fall into categories B (local municipalities) or C (district municipalities) (Lusch, 2021).

Therefore, Northern Cape struggles with a unique settlement pattern that is characterised by isolated urban and quasi-urban areas scattered over a province that is approximately 1000 km in length from the west to the east (Kruger, 2015). Van Aswegen Retief and Drewes (2020) describe the Northern Cape as a single urban region with Kimberley, the seat of Sol Plaatje municipality, as its centre, supporting a network of urban core regions and providing the link to other national areas.

The Northern Cape does have other regional growth centres; key areas or towns in terms of function and diversity, which have a significant impact on the whole of the Northern Cape province (Van Aswegen *et al*., 2020). The National Government classifies municipalities, according to their economic centrality, as urban core, in terms of which Northern Cape main economic centres are classified as follows; Dawid Kruiper and Sol Plaatje, whilst Ga-Segonyana, Emthanjeni and Nama Khoi are classified as peripheral (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017).

This suggests that the Northern Cape is unique in relation to its settlement patterns and that there is no consensus on how these patterns should be categorised. The pattern of central towns serving surrounding settlements leads the researcher to refer to these municipalities as urbanised municipalities, of which the two larger towns, David Kruiper and Sol Plaatje, are classified as secondary cities. Moreo (2019), in the context of the Northern Cape demographics, states that these municipalities adopt an urban posture.

2.4 EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: GLOBAL DIMENSION

2.4.1 Origin of the concept of Public Administration

This section seeks to provide a brief account of the origins of Public Administration, presenting the broader context for the study. Public Administration is both an academic and political science discipline and came into being at the beginning of the 20th century (Guogis, Smalskys and Klimovský, 2020; Pillay, 2016). The term 'Public Administration' is the academic discipline as presented at universities and universities of technology here in South Africa, and the term 'public administration' is used in the context of procedures, policies and activities of the government (Thornhill and Van Dijk, 2020). Therefore, references to 'Public Administration' and 'public administration' in this research study should be understood in this context.

Public Administration has been examined as two periods of time; 'traditional Public Administration and New Public Management' (Göçoğlu, 2021:67). Various approaches in the literature highlight principles and values relating to Public Administration. These are based on criticisms of other, or previous, Public Administration approaches (Göçoğlu, 2021; Malan and Theron, 2016). These approaches have been shaped to meet some new demands created by the new era, environment, and conditions (Göçoğlu, 2021, Ndulu, 2021).

The first period of Public Administration sprouted at the beginning of the 18th century, as Kameralism emerged with the regular observations, records, and education of public officials who contributed to Germany and Austria's governance (Göçoğlu, 2021). In the 18th century, the scientific discipline of Public Administration was formulated Professor JHG Justi in Prussia, with contributions from a leading Public Administration scholar at the time, Christian Wolff (Thornhill, 2016). Thornhill (2016) postulates that Lorenz von Stein, a professor in Vienna, was responsible for the development of Public Administration in Europe, but many scholars consider his work more in the realm of administrative law.

These scholars tried to address Public Administration from a more systematic perspective (Spicer, 2018). However, Public Administration started to become a discipline in itself with Woodrow Wilson's study published in 1887. Wilson's study dominated the period's Public Administration understanding (Göçoğlu, 2021). Other historic publications are 'Principles of Public Administration' by Charles Jean Boning, 'Introduction to the study of Public Administration' in 1926 by LD White, 'Principles of Public Administration' in 1927 by WF Willoughby, and Dwight Waldo's 'Public Administration' is the art and science of management as applied to the affairs of the state (Pillay, 2016:231).

Max Weber is one of the most crucial scholars who influenced Public Administration significantly through his conceptualisation of the ideal bureaucracy in his book '*Wirts haft und Gasselschaft'* (as cited by Hausner, 2018). Weber developed the 'ideal bureaucracy' to manage large-scale organisations (as cited by Weber, 1948). Weber's articulation of public administration has been adopted by the state (Göçoğlu, 2021). This period has taken place in the literature as traditional or classical Public Administration and has been at the forefront of clearly defined organisational structure, functioning, and hierarchical relations (Göçoḡlu, 2021, Ndulu, 2021).

Many researchers consider Thomas Woodrow Wilson as the father (or founder) of Public Administration (Pillay, 2016; Maserumule, 2020). Thornhill and Van Dijk (2020:100) disagree by explaining that 'although Woodrow Wilson is considered to be the founder of Public Administration, he only re-invented the science that had been developed in Europe'. Furthermore, 'Public Administration is older than the view that it had been established after Wilson's article' (Thornhill and Van Dijk, 2020:100).

Their article further traces the origin of Public Administration in the 16th century in Western Europe (Thornhill and Van Dijk, 2020). Thornhill (2016) and Maserumule (2020) concur that Woodrow Wilson was the founder of the study of Public Administration in the USA, and Wilson is noted as being more influential in the field of Public Administration than Von Stein and other scholars, mainly because of his treatise, 'The Study of Administration', published in 1887 in the Political Science Quarterly (Thornhill and Van Dijk, 2020; Maserumule, 2020).

Although Wilson is commonly referred to as the father' of Public Administration, he had merely added to the prevailing discourse which had been circulating before his 1887 (Maserumule, 2020). He had acknowledged that the conversations had started in Europe, noting in his article that 'it was discovered on European shores by French and German professors. It speaks little of the English language or American principle' (as cited by Maserumule, 2020:72).

He clearly stated in his article that, 'if Americans need to adopt it, they must Americanise it not only in language, but in principle, thought and aim' (as cited by Maserumule, 2020:72). Furthermore, 'it must learn the American constitution to be employed' (as cited by Maserumule, 2020:73). This information guides one as to whether Wilson was the father or the founder of the global discipline of Public Administration.

Since the publication of Wilson's 1887 article, the field of Public Administration has undergone many changes and broadened considerably. However, there is wide consensus that the primary factors of this academic discipline are the 'management and implementation of public policy at all levels of governance', reflecting various 'epistemological trends in the evolution of the discipline' (Pillay, 2016:36).

2.4.2 THEORETICAL PARADIGM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

2.4.2.1 New Public Administration

New Public Administration (NPA) comprised an intellectual exercise to rebrand Public Administration as mere public administration. At a conference known as Minnowbrook I, in 1968, a team of young scholars worked to evolve Public Administration into what they considered a fairer system (Cameron and Milne, 2019:72). The Minnowbrook I conference was 'largely a response to a question of the relevance of Public Administration to the contextual dynamics and realities of that time and its future as an academic discipline' (Maserumule, 2020:356).

NPA criticised the problematic relationships between politics and administration, and focused on social justice, equality, and fairness (Waldo, 1971). According to Denhardt and Denhardt (2015:39), the ‘theoretical foundation of the NPA was embedded in social equity and [on] democratic grounds’. The essence of the NPA was ‘based on the contention that the discipline should be extricated from its historical homely confines of political science, and also from its management orientation’ (Maserumule, 2020:358).

The young scholars at the Minnowbrook I conference eschewed the prevailing, traditional models of Public Administration, rejecting those models focused on the philosophy of bureaucracy. The demanded new models, built on the foundations of trust, openness, and all-embracing communication (Maserumule, 2020). According to Henry (2018), NPA was far too ambitious and was not successfully implemented and in time the model, New Public Management, replaced it.

2.4.2.2 New Public Management

The period after the 1970s saw classical Public Administration being criticised for clumsiness, inefficiency, and failure in the new conjuncture (Göçoğlu, 2021). Thus, the New Public Management (NPM) presents the primary second period of Public Administration. Under the influence of neo-liberal ideas and the argument about the state’s role in socio-economic affairs, the idea of transferring the management procedure of the private sector to the public administration was developed (Göçoğlu, 2021; Hood, 2009).

This saw the adoption in the 1980s of principles of the private sector business approach, based on efficiency and practicality to public administration. Hood (2009) and Osborne and Gaebler (2020) immensely contributed to the theory of public administration by modernising public governance and by orienting the principles of its activities towards the practice of business management (as cited by Guogis *et al.*, 2020).

These scholars, through their analysis of the drawbacks of the reform of NPM, illuminate the need for citizen involvement in governance, and refer to the provision of social welfare and servitude to citizens, rather than clients (Guogis *et al.*, 2020). As a result, the later period of the NPM era introduced the concept of governance, describing the inclusion of other actors in the management process (Göçoğlu, 2021).

The NPM focuses on results and measurement in a qualitative way, e.g. productivity linked to effectiveness, shorter periods, and lower costs (Guogis *et al*., 2020; Nederhand, 2018). It presents a move away from process-oriented accountability to results-oriented accountability (Schwarz, 2002). The NPM is prescriptive, describing what governments should do (Sha and Sha, 2016:14). Government decides what they want, specifies outputs, and decides which organisation can best deliver the services (Nederhand, 2018; Osborne and Gaebler, 2010). This is referred to as market accountability, introducing competition amongst potential service providers (Schwartz, 2002).

Nederhand perceives the NPM as the 'transfer of business principles and managerial skills from the private into the public sector'; i.e. strategic and performance management techniques and performance indicators (Nederhand, 2018:92). The implication is that the NPM is considered to be a liberal, free market approach (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015). Citizens are viewed as customers and thus as a means to an end; i.e. people are viewed as economic units, not democratic interviewees (Pillay, 2016). It can be induced that the market-model provides economic choices with little scope to shape services that are to be rendered.

However, the life of society cannot be reduced to economic modernising; i.e. seeing society only in terms of economic parameters, and engagement only in economic terms. Kuye (2017) asserts that the growth of NPM forced states to be more responsive to their citizens. The most striking assertion is that the NPM failed to improve accountability, transparency and responsiveness, and in fact led to various public sector crises (Nabatchi, 2017). These can to a certain extent be attributed to resistance from those whose interests and powers are protected through traditional public administration; e.g. relaxation of red tape and controls to dilute power (Schwartz, 2002). Other factors were difficulty with identifying measurable outputs and objectives, developing valid measures, and collecting reliable data in a timely manner and at reasonable costs (Schwartz, 2002).

The market model rests on the assumption that economy and efficiency are at least as important as the quality of services being provided (Peters, 2016). Researchers debate whether implementing the principles of NPM does really lead to excellent, efficient, and effective governance models (Pillay, 2016). More so, in the South African context, it did not result in improved governance and service delivery. Whatever the case may be, the NPM and other market-related reforms led to the involvement of the public, private, and non-governmental actors in the public service (Nabatchi, 2017). According to Hood (2009), 'the emergence of the NPM was perceived as the only way to rectify the irretrievable failures and moral bankruptcy in the old public management' model (Hood, 2009:35). However, the NPM did not live up to expectations, and the New Public Service (NPS) model took over.

2.4.2.3 New Public Service

The New Public Service (NPS) criticised the NPM's neo-liberal perspective on a multi-dimensional basis and proposed a new model emphasising values such as people, citizens, democracy, civil society, and public service (Göçoğlu, 2021). The principles of openness, transparency, social justice, social responsibility, social equity, absence of corruption, and many more, are characteristics of the NPS (Guogis *et al*., 2020).

It leans towards citizens as users and evaluators of services, with less focus on efficiency and costs (Guogis *et al*., 2020). Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) state that the theory behind the NPS is founded in the mutual relationship comprising both government and citizens, in terms of collaborative efforts and action. According to Ferlie, Pettigrew, Ashburner and Fitzgerald (2016), there are similarities in the ideology of NPM and NPS, and these embrace sustainable development and empowerment, performance standards, setting and monitoring targets, and implementing a framework of responsibility accountability. The NPS views both processes and results as important.

The literature consulted on governance practice in South Africa shows that the proposed paradigms of the NPS were never seriously implemented. The researcher suggests that the predominant economic considerations influencing governance practice in South Africa are major obstacles, mainly because they require that people be treated as an 'economic unit', making it difficult to value people as central to efforts to improve human wellbeing. Thus, previous approaches in South Africa have followed a one-dimensional, neo-liberal economic paradigm.

2.4.2.4 Governance perspective

The NPS was succeeded by the Governance Perspective in the field of Public Administration, and this is noted as a most significant development. Denhardt and Denhardt (2015:23) explain this governance perspective came into being due to the perceived 'weaknesses in the neo-liberal, free market-based NPM approach'. It introduced the concept of governance as the network of interactions and collaboration, with the view of achieving and sustaining important policy objectives in an effective and efficient manner (Cloete, 2002).

The notion is that for governance to be successful, interaction between the state and society is required. For the researcher, it presents a move away from a single focus on implementation of a neo-liberal paradigm towards the recognition that achieving policy objectives requires engagement between society and the state.

2.5 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

2.5.1 'Batho Pele' principles

In the South African context, public administration is governed by the values and principles outlined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution, which embraces various values and principles such as a high standard of professional ethics; the economic, efficient and effectiveness utilisation of resources; being development-oriented; the provision of services fairly, equitably, impartially, and without bias; responding to citizens' needs and demands; encouraging citizens to participate actively in policy-making processes; making leaders accountable for their actions; and demonstrating transparency in all government activities (The Constitution of SA, 1996).

The government introduced the idea of 'Batho Pele', i.e. putting people first in all issues that affect them, in 1997 (Batho Pele Handbook, 2015). 'Batho Pele' is not considered as a plan of action, but the idea of public servants to help and acknowledge the rights of all citizens in order to improve their lives (Batho Pele Handbook, 2015:21-28). The principles of 'Batho Pele' include 'engaging and consulting citizens about the level and quality of service; informing citizens about the level and quality of service they are entitled to; having equal access to services; treating citizens with courtesy; providing timely, accurate and comprehensive information about services; informing citizens about how government departments and entities are managed; and offering best value for money for services delivered' (Batho Pele Handbook, 2015:34-38).

This brings to the fore a people-centred approach, similar to the notion of 'Ubuntu' where the community as a whole share assets (Nzimakwe, 2014). In 'Ubuntu people are seen not as individuals, but as part of a community, living within an interdependent relationship, thus introducing an element of ethics into governance' (Nzimakwe, 2014:52). 'Ubuntu' is a gateway to improving service delivery through people, leadership, and action, and returning to the principles of 'Batho Pele' is good governance (Nzimakwe, 2014).

Various comments and views have been forwarded about the 'Batho Pele' principles, some of which include the fact that 'Batho Pele' principles emphasise that people be granted opportunities to access the services that they deserve (Manamela and Rambuda, 2016). 'Batho Pele' is premised on the commonality that the government's custodian of the principles of integrity, accountability and efficiency are the public servants who must be ethical, honest, accountable, and transparent in all their dealings with citizens (Kjaer, 2015).

'Batho Pele' principles demonstrate respect for the rule of law and order, and public servants must demonstrate integrity and impartiality if they are to render an effective public service administration (Pillay, 2016). Thus, the principles of 'Batho Pele' serve to ensure governance in public administration (Manamela and Rambuda, 2016), and further, 'Batho Pele' principles should be embraced as a guide for leadership excellence and outstanding governance in public administration to further promote service excellence for citizens (Phago, 2018).

For the researcher, the 'Batho Pele' principles encourage a two-way relationship between communities and municipalities in order to accelerate service delivery and community development. Thus they emphasise that government and communities share governance and service delivery responsibilities. Further, these principles imply that governance and service delivery have legal and ethical foundations; aspects that are built on in later chapters of this study.

2.5.2 Service orientation

The NPM paradigm aims to create a public sector which is focused on communities. Stewart and Clarke (1987) argue that having a public service orientation requires that the public servant's primary focus is on delivering services for the public and not delivering services to the public (Stewart and Clarke, 1987). The emphasis is accordingly on the public and not on the service. Thus, service orientation is informed by the 'Batho Pele' principle, i.e. people must be served for they come first.

Denhardt and Denhardt (2014) are of a similar view in their views on a New Public Service as opposed to management; one which is focused on empowering the citizen and serving not managing the public. Service-oriented public service employees are more committed to the operations of the institution, focusing on services to be delivered, than those with an economic orientation (Crewson, 2017).

Crucially, service-orientation is premised upon avoiding subscribing to a single economic approach to service delivery and governance. Further, a service-orientation implies not serving self-interests (Sanei and Abedian, 2020; Simpson and Willer, 2015). The focus is on the human beings being served, rather than the services being provided to human beings. Thus, services are not considered as products or commodities to be provided to human beings, but in terms of their significance for improving human wellbeing.

2.5.3 Public participation

2.5.3.1 Describing public participation

It is accepted that there is no specific and accepted definition of public participation (Khanyile and Mavee, 2018). Participation is associated with multiple ends and is given divergent social, political, and methodological meanings (Fritz, Claudia and Binder, 2018).

From a South African perspective, public participation, as an instrument of developmental local government, can be defined as 'an open and accountable process through which individuals and groups within communities can exchange views and influence decision-making in government, aimed at ensuring particular interests' (Sekgala, 2016:42). Public participation is also accepted as a core element of good governance, essential for modern democracies, and is linked to human rights (Arnstein, 1969; Menny, Palgan and McCormick, 2018). It is also defined as a 'process in which community members take part in government's activities' (Motsitsi and Mzini, 2016:72).

Draai and Taylor (2019:23) underscore that 'communities are required to get involved from the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of projects to ensure the transfer of skills, knowledge, and ownership to the local inhabitants'. Thus, facilitating information dissemination and improving public awareness by actors of local government are critical components of public participation (Tufle, 2017). In doing so, effective participation ensures an informed citizenry (Khanyile and Mavee, 2018). This portrays inclusivity as inherent in public participation, in the sense of actively and meaningfully engaging citizens and communities (Pineda, 2020).

Inclusive participation and decision-making promote the informed implementation of decisions with decreased unintended consequences, e.g., through cultural barriers (Pineda, 2020). From this perspective, participation is significant for its potential to 'enhance learning processes and improve the quality of decisions' (Nkoane, 2016:11), as well as 'contributing to empowerment and promoting democratic citizenship' (Masiya, Davids and Mazenda, 2019:25).

Thus communities are empowered to have a stake in their own development (Khanyile and Mavee, 2018), instead of merely endorsing what is offered to them (Biljohn, 2017). In this way, participation contributes towards individual growth, through developing self-importance, self-worth, inventiveness, creativity, and accountability, as well as enhancing authentic relational exchange. Key to these are that the public are not viewed as passive recipients of services, and are treated as co-owners of public assets. It facilitates a common perspective and understanding of participation and service provision (Fritz *et al*., 2018; Nkoane, 2016). It indicates to participation happening in a relational space and which is outcomes-oriented (Fritz *et al*., 2018; Nkoane, 2016)

2.5.3.2 Public Participation: Legislative framework

In the South African context, the inexplicable link between participation and service delivery finds expression in legislation. In terms of Section 152(1) of the Constitution, 'the objects of local government include providing democratic and accountable services to the community, ensuring services are provided in a sustainable manner, and fostering and encouraging participation in local government affairs that affect the daily lives of the community' (Fischer, 2021:21).

Section 160(4)(b) of the Constitution states municipal by-laws can be formulated by the council, but they must be published first for public comment (Tengeni, 2016). Section 19(3) of the Municipal Structures Act (MuSA) notes that a council can devise various structures for public participation, and that they must review them annually in conjunction with the communities (Tengeni, 2016). In terms of the MuSA, a municipality has to provide feedback to the citizens regarding the 'mechanisms, processes, and procedures to encourage and facilitate participation, including council meeting notices and its committees' (Fischer, 2021:42).

Chapter 4 of Municipal Systems Act (MSA) states that a council in a municipality needs to engender a culture of governance which is participatory, and all citizens are encouraged to take part in local affairs (Babu, 2015). The MSA is clear that the community must be involved in a municipality's decision-making process. In addition, the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) states that community participation in required in areas of municipal finance; especially regarding the budgeting process (Fischer, 2021).

2.5.3.3 Participatory governance

Generally, service delivery is to be effected in a participatory environment (Sebake, 2016). Therefore, a failure to provide services can be considered a failure to effect participation (Matebesi and Botes, 2020; Sebake, 2016). Recognition and legal entrenchment of participation are empty in the absence of mechanisms to facilitate participation. Constitutional entrenchment provides a foundation for continual re-evaluation of existing means and introduction of new means to ensure participation (Babu, 2015; Fischer, 2021). Further, it provides a basis for setting requirements to ensure adherence to legislation, of which the literature provides some direction and guidance.

According to Vivier and Wentzel, (2013), there must be clear channels of communication between communities and the government to make sure that government is responsive and efficient. Meaningful participatory governance addresses specific needs and priorities relevant to citizens, whilst empowering citizens to fully participate (Nkoane, 2016; Beyers, 2016; Motsitsi and Mzini, 2016). Empowering citizens is crucial, for any meaningful participation is dependent upon some basic shared understanding (Giovanni and Lotti, 2017). Thus government, as the main player, is the catalyst for local communities, as it must educate and create awareness amongst the citizens about their right to participate in decision-making processes (Sebake, 2016).

Empowered citizens are able to engage with co-planning, co-designing, co-delivering, and co-evaluating of services, thus providing a holistic frame of reference in terms of managing the quality-of-service delivery (Biljohn and Lues, 2018). In this regard, it is crucial to leverage and optimise the participation benefits that certain stakeholders hold. For example, it is argued that civil society organisations are extremely good at public participation, for the following reasons: Firstly, civil society can agitate and mobilise communities to partake in government decision-making systems; secondly, civil society can ensue all dealings are transparent and communicate information about policies; and thirdly, civil society makes a major contribution to the quality and efficiency of government services and financial management (Mukamunana and Brynar, 2016; Tengeni, 2016). In addition, civil society may at times perform government functions or activities, and then is in a position to ensure public sector transparency and accountability (Tengeni, 2016). Thus, civil society involvement, or the lack thereof, has a bearing on municipal performance relating to service delivery (Auerbach, 2017; Brass, 2016).

In relation to meaningful participation and engagement, the literature provides some guidance as to what it may encompass, effectively proposing a participatory hierarchy. Arnstein's proposed levels of participation draw from her experience with programmes relating to urban renewal and model cities (Arnstein, 1969; Babu, 2015). Arnstein (1969) proposes three broad tiers consisting of eight levels. The three broad tiers are non-participation, which includes manipulation and therapy; tokenism, which includes informing, consulting, and placation; and citizen power, which includes partnership, delegated power, and citizen control (Arnstein, 1969).

Arnstein's (1969) eight levels are manipulation, i.e. participation is announced, but there is no participation in practice; therapy, i.e. participation is just an exercise to cure or educate the participant, a mere public relations exercise; informing, i.e. potentially a first step to legitimising participation, provided that there is provision of channels of feedback; consultation, i.e. a beneficial of participation which is not mere lip service; placation, i.e. the one who holds the power keeps the authority to judge the quality of the advice to interviewees; partnership, i.e. power is distributed through negotiations between citizens and power holders; delegated power, i.e. citizens occupy the majority position on committees and have the power of decision-making; and citizen control; i.e. those who do not hold power are responsible for managing the tasks of planning, formulating policy, and overseeing the administration thereof (as cited by Tengeni, 2016). Thus, citizen control means the wholesale involvement of the community in decision-making, and they can directly influence policies and procedures (Babu, 2015).

In keeping with a hierarchical approach to participation, Menny, Palgan and McCormick (2018) propose a five-step model of participation; information, consultation, co-operation, collaboration, and empowerment. In the same vein, Goodman and Thompson (2017) differentiate between non-participation (where the usual purpose is not to engage stakeholders in planning, implementation, evaluation, and decision-making, which aims to treat and educate interviewees); symbolic participation (which affords opportunities to be heard and having a say, without any assurance to exclude the participants from the ultimate decision-making power); and engaged participation (through which stakeholders are given shared decision-making authority with powerful stakeholders and collaboratively manage projects based on stakeholder priorities).

Arnstein's (1969) model of participation reflects a linear logic of 'the more participation, the better' (as cited by Fritz *et al.*, 2018:35). Participation is one-dimensionally conceptualised as a function of the degree of power which is intentionally being handed over by the power-holding actor (Chalves and Koafness, 2018). This presents a realist understanding of power; e.g. the transfer or not of some of the power emanating from intentional and unintentional practices and discourses of participation (Fritz and Binders, 2018).

However, the researcher takes issue with the notion of public participation being hierarchical in nature with citizen control held as the goal of participation (Collins and Ison, 2016:2). For the researcher, it flies in the face of participation being a dynamic process and that diverse types of participation may occur at the same time. These, coupled with the dynamic, unique, and flexible nature of societal challenges render a strictly hierarchical approach to participation flawed. Different contexts may require distinct kinds of participation; i.e. the boundaries between various kinds of participation are blurred (Menny *et al.*, 2018). Thus, it is crucial in any given instance to analyse the situation and determine and apply the appropriate form or forms of participation.

Furthermore, the aim of participation should be to improve the provision of services. Participation involves considering the views of citizens and being responsive to societal needs and expectations (Biljohn and Lues, 2018; Van Der Waldt, 2018). Therefore, the literature on participation provides a foundation for comparing levels of participation to levels of service provision. Participation without power equates to no power at all, recognising participation as the cornerstone of democracy.

Therefore, municipalities should avoid mechanisms, processes, and structures of public participation being mere symbolic participation or pseudo-structures (Mbele, 2017; Goodman and Thompson, 2017; Mbelengwa, 2016; Runji, 2016; Arnstein, 1969). However, studies have shown that more than 50% of South African citizens are of the view that their inputs are not taken seriously, and that the systems and procedures for participation need to be improved for successful engagement (Menny *et al*., 2018).

There are mixed views on the extent of civil society involvement in South Africa Further, there is widespread agreement that public participation in South African government structures is less than optimal at the municipality-community level (Sithole and Matonzi, 2015). On a national level, the Freedom House Report on freedom in the world states that South Africa fairs extremely well in relation to civil society organisations working in the field of human rights and governance, and that there has been an improvement in democracy since 2018 under the influence of the institution of the Zondo Commission (Freedom House Report, 2019). However, the CIVICUS report tracking civic spaces indicates a narrowing in civic space (CIVICUS, 2019).

This goes against promoting a citizen-focused service delivery. Therefore, local government must improve its functioning by becoming a provider of services, increasing the satisfaction of service users, developing optimal local governance structures, and empowering citizens to take control of their own affairs (Biljohn and Lues, 2018). It involves eradicating inherent restrictions to citizen participation pertaining to who should be involved, space of negotiations, some assumptions about what issues are at stake, the degree of expectation about what the outcome of participatory structures should be, and the behaviour expected from citizens (Nkoane, 2016).

Thus a critical part of effecting meaning participation is ensuring inclusive participation by all relevant stakeholders, implying that such stakeholders be appropriately identified and defined, for there are divergent definitions of stakeholders, e.g. civil society (Grote, 2020; Kastrati, 2016; Cohen and Arato, 2010; World Bank, 2018). Botha (2019) and Naidoo (2015) suggest that service delivery can be improved by consulting different role players such as non-governmental organisations, the private sector, civil society groups, and community-based institutions to advance the quality of services through fostering potential partnerships in the provision of efficacy in service delivery (Naidoo, 2015).

For the researcher, the true value of civil society engagement vests in the extent to which it improves governance and service delivery, not whether or not there has been engagement.

2.5.3.4 Motivation and rationale for public participation

Phago (2018) suggests involving the community as the main aim to improve the municipal approach to service delivery, and through this approach thus ensuring improved service delivery as well as calling the government to account for decisions and policies implemented when such actions do not improve their lives.

Masango (2002) provides four fundamental reasons for citizen involvement in governance, namely; the liberalisation of processes of policymaking and implementation, involving the masses in public institutions, significance of obtaining information by the makers and implementers of policy from society and vice versa, and the democratic requirement of having a responsive government. Other reasons for community involvement are located in the advantages of public participation, such as self-respect, self-sufficiency, and the understanding of group dynamics. Individually and communally communities can access the tools of democracy to overcome challenges as a collective (Mzimakwe, 2020).

These factors imply that the motivation for participation is premised upon the expectations of being beneficiaries of participation, building of relational capital, building of cognitive capital, and building of structural capital to enhance collective action through co-operation (Giovanni and Lotti, 2020). This portrays community participation as crucial to human development, as well as development in general. Thus, the rationale for participation is grounded in the significance of the collective capacities of government and communities in improving service delivery.

2.5.4 Accountability

2.5.4.1 Describing accountability

Accountability, like public participation, is perceived to be a prerequisite of good governance (Manamela and Rambulda, 2016). According to Tengeni (2016), it is implicit that public representatives must be held accountable for their actions or inactions toward their communities, by following regulatory frameworks and moral values to obtain results.

For the researcher, the Constitution envisages a conception of accountability and transparency, focused on improving services and requiring various measures to give effect to the obligation of accountability; e.g. access to information (Kosack and Fung, 2014). Kosack and Fung (2014) illustrate that citizens must be active interviewees in the process of delivering services, e.g. through information flow.

They pose the following action cycle; provision of accessible and salient information to users, information induces users to change their decisions and actions, actions affect providers in a way that they find salient and consequential, and this provides a response constructively (Kosack and Fung, 2014).

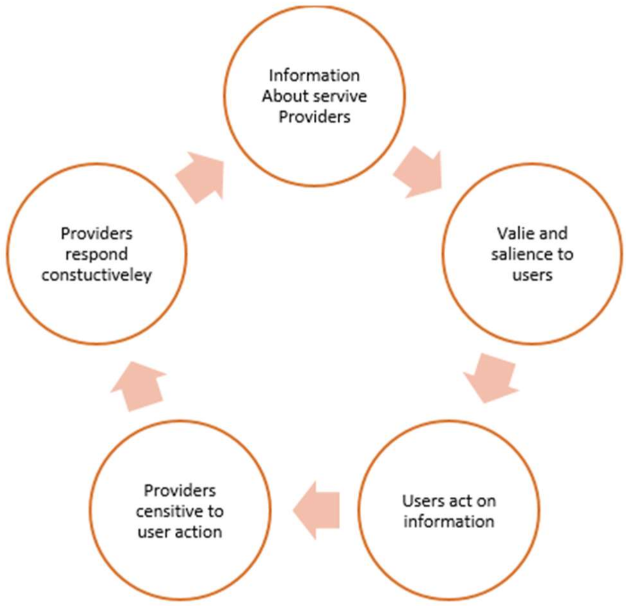


Figure 2-1: Transparency action cycle

Adapted from Kosack and Fung (2014)

Citizens may engage with the providers of public services directly, as shown in the figure below, using the 'short route' or the 'long route', by using political power to press policymakers and politicians to improve the quality-of-service delivery. Thus, service delivery is a dynamic and interactive process.

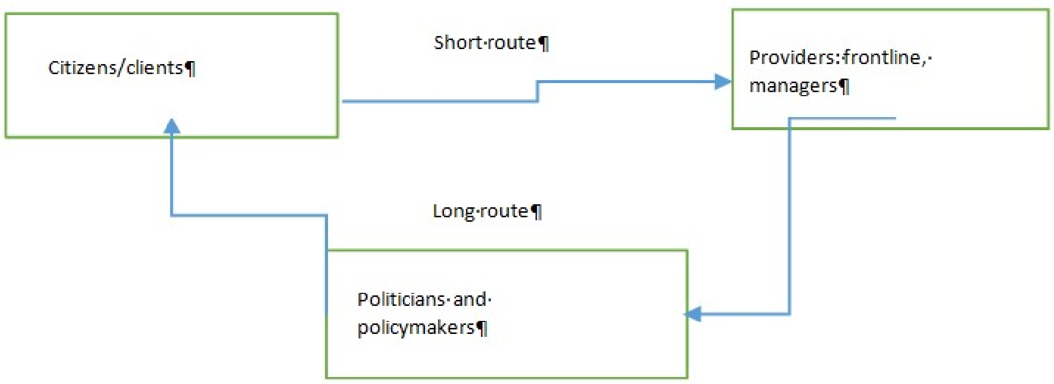


Figure 2-2: 'Short' and 'long' routes to accountability

Adapted from SALGA (2020)

2.5.4.2 Accountability: legislative framework

Ewalt (2001) holds that the state is bound by accountability to focus on clear, specific objectives linked to effective strategies when monitoring and reporting on its performance. Accountability and transparency are said to ensure that citizens could hold government accountable (Caiphus, 2017).

Society is represented by government and public officials, and Section 195(1)(f) of the Constitution requires government and public officials to be answerable to society. Different views have been raised in relation to Section 195 of the Constitution, some of which are a demand that reasons be provided for any government undertakings (Thornhill, 2020:81), a requirement that government and officials accept responsibility for their actions or lack thereof (Fox and Meyer, 2019:1), and that public representatives are obliged to account for their execution / non-execution to their constituency (Napier, 2017).

The basis of governance enshrined within the Constitution include consultation, standards of service, accessibility, courteousness, provision of information, openness and transparency, and the provision of compensation and value for money (DPSA, 2017; DPSA, 2014).

2.6 GOVERNANCE

The contemporary meaning and content of governance in the South African context derives from the concept of good governance and is intimately linked to the development of the concept of good governance (SALGA, 2022). Thus a discussion of the concept of good governance enhances our understanding of the rationale and understanding of the concept 'governance'. The concept of governance is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

2.6.1 Development of the concept of good governance

Governance in the South African context is often discussed in relation to the concept of good governance, and bears significance in the South African service delivery chain. In this section the researcher provides a brief overview of the concept of good governance, as it elucidates the meaning of the concept of good governance.

The notion of good governance first appeared in the 20th century, with business analysts and economists impressing the structures and strategies of corporate management to increase productivity and profits (Caiphus, 2020). The evolution of good governance in the 20th century related to the debt crisis in developing countries in the 1980s and has remained at the forefront of government since the mid-90s of the 20th century (Ariely, 2009). From the 1980s to 2018, donors like the World Bank and the USA require management and good governance before providing aid (Ariely, 2009; Pillay, 2016).

Furthermore, good governance is a requirement to facilitate successful economic and administrative reform processes (Caiphus, 2017). Under the pretext of universalistic and commercialised views of good governance, good governance is explained in relation to concepts such as democracy, public participation, accountability, and transparency (Meyer, 2018; Caiphus, 2017). The good governance requirement throughout the new millennium has been premised on demonstrating an earnest commitment to financial and social improvement in a politically stable accountable government by the people, where the rule of law applies and corruption is controlled (Pillay, 2016). The World Bank claims a strong correlation between governance indicators and economic performance.

2.6.2 Requirements for good governance

The following have also been set as requirements for good governance; accountability, the rule of law, incorruptibility, policy development, clarity, responsiveness to the people's needs and requirements, consensus orientation, effectiveness and efficiency, and participation (Tshisonga, 2016; Pillay, 2016; Ketani and Moulin, 2014). Ardielli refers to the main characteristics of good governance as lawfulness, fairness, timelines, persuasiveness, adequacy, collaboration, accountability, openness, and friendliness (as cited by Ariely, 2009).

Other definitions for good governance include ‘a comprehensive policy-making process encompassing a wide range of issues in the implementation of such policies’ (Hubert, 2021:188), and relating to the public administration process, as well as key criteria such as answerability, democracy, ethics the rule of law and clarity (Ewalt, 2001: 9-11). Keping (2018) views good governance as the operative and proactive co-operation between the government and its citizens, and the participative political powers are key to its success. However, it is obvious that good governance is difficult to define due to the qualitative nature of the concept (Meyer, 2018).

Concerns with the idea of good governance relate to good governance traditionally setting international standards, focusing on processes, and institutions supporting a particular conception of governance. Good governance models propose a ‘one-best-way’ model (Eva, 2019; Andrews, 2018). The issue with focusing on processes and institutions is its failure to make comparisons across countries, and even within one country, without conducting deeper analytical studies (Rangi, 2018; Sandarum, 2018). The focus is on uniformity instead of considering the individual historic, political, and economic conditions of each country (Grindle, 2017). Some processes and institutions lead to divergent governance outcomes, and dissimilar processes could lead to similar outcomes in different settings.

Andrews (2018) is critical of the mentioned approach to good governance, for his argument is that this approach may encourage dangerous coercive structures, institutional duplicity, and failing states. Such an approach deprives institutions of an opportunity to have regard to the way governance and service delivery become effective, whilst also effectively lacking an underpinning theoretical structure outlining developmental roles and structures (Andrews, 2018).

Andrews (2018) asserts that before government propositions specific modes of governance or measures effectiveness, an underpinning structure must be in place. Transnational organisations attempt to address the ‘one-best-way’ model by critiquing and through establishing assessments, monitoring, and rankings (Pillay, 2016).

The researcher condenses the critique of the good governance approach as being an inflexible approach to be applied to an inflexible and dynamic governance and service delivery environment. The challenges relating to descriptive models of governance may be addressed by a focus on the relationship between good governance and development, thus linking governance to service delivery (Pillay, 2016). South Africa's acceptance of good governance as a veritable mechanism for enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm does not yield the desired outcomes.

At the very least, rampant corruption and poor service delivery are indicative of such failures. The researcher subscribes this to the influence of a finance orientation of governance, as advocated by the World Bank and related organisations. Sutcliffe and Bannister (2020) posit that in the local governance context, governance is often seen as a primarily financial process, yet it has institutional management connotations. In the South African context, the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 (PFMA) and the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 (MFMA) support good cooperative governance practices advancing transparency, accountability, and practicing sound management principles.

2.6.3 King Reports on corporate governance

The King Reports are an accepted source for South African corporate governance, objectively promoting sound principles and practices on cooperative governance. The Institute of Directors in Southern Africa (IoDSA), in pursuit of ethical and effective leadership, invested The King Committee to advance corporate governance through the development of governance principles, thereby influencing and advancing high standards in business to influence, develop, and advance corporate governance and directorship by pursuing ethical and effective leadership in South Africa. This resulted in King Report I in being published in 1994, followed by King Report II in 2002, King Report III in 2009, and King IV Report in 2016; setting international standards of the best governance practices (Institute of Directors, 1994; 2002; 2016; 2009).

The King I Report was initiated in response to corporate failures and the need for a code for cooperative governance at the time. Reference in the code to organisations serving society and stakeholders is exploitive in the absence of civil society or NPO's sectoral-specific requirements. Thus, these reports were initiated in response to the business environment placing much more ethical pressure and the increasing impatience of corporate citizens and corporations in protecting their reputations. King II outlined directors' responsibilities as well as integrated reporting and audit practices to ensure checks and balances were in place within organisations thereby ensuring stakeholder security (Smart and Creeman, 2013:221).

The King III Report built on the King II Report, ensuring stakeholder security by adding practices such as stakeholders' approval of non-executive directors' payment structure, directors' performance evaluations, stakeholder relationships, business rescue, financial and accepted transactions, and governance and alternative dispute resolution. These were added to keep track with the plethora of legislation enacted since the adoption of the King II Report, including alignment with the Companies Act of 2008. Therefore, the King III Report maintained a focus on stakeholder participation, also making inroads into stakeholder inclusion (Langeni, 2018:196).

The King I, II and III Reports were criticised for lacking civil society or non-profit organisation specifics and strongly focusing on stakeholder protection. This, together with a growing focus on stakeholder expectations in terms of civil society activism and push-back from shareholders, led to the adoption of the Independent Code of Governance for the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) sector in South Africa, which included leadership, fiscal, and legal principles (IODSA, 2016:5-7). It paved the way for the King IV Report, which included NPO sectoral specifics that focus on four governance outcomes; ethical culture, good performance, effective control, and legitimacy (Wyngaard, 2017:2-4).

The King IV Report, being outcomes-based, presents a departure from the mindless compliance or explanation approach of the first three King reports. These were to ensure that organisations contribute to their own growth through the implementation of effective control measures (IODSA, 2016). King IV departs from the first three reports by being underpinned by concepts such as the inclusivity of stakeholders and the approach to organisations as integral parts of society. This departure brings into focus a people-centered approach.

2.6.4 Governance structures in South Africa

2.6.4.1 Introduction

Constitutional entrenchment of principles of ‘Bath Pele’, accountability, participation, and service-orientation, and thus of governance, is solidified through the operations of various legislatively mandated governance structures. The independence and impartiality of these institutions are constitutionally entrenched.

2.6.4.2 Public Service Commission (PSC)

Sections 195 and 196 of the Constitution mandate the PSC, as outlined in Chapter 10, to promote various values and principles governing public administration. The PSC, through various forums, assists the Executive, Parliament and Provincial Legislatures in improving service delivery through addressing public complaints.

2.6.4.3 Public Protector (PP)

Section 186 of the 1996 Constitution, supported by the Executive Members’ Ethics Act of 1998 and the Public Protector Act of 2012, mandates the PP to look into any alleged misconduct by government departments, entities, or subjects and report on and advocate for appropriate corrective action. Recommendations, findings, or corrective actions issued by the PP can only be judicially reviewed and set aside by a court of law (Thornhill, 2020).

2.6.4.4 Auditor-General (AG)

Section 188 of the Constitution mandates the AG as to examine and audit all accounts, as well as the financial statements, of all government departments and entities financed entirely or partially by the public purse. In terms of the Public Audit Act of 2015, the AG can scrutinise any case of suspected misuse and embezzlement of public funds, as well as wasteful and fruitless expenditure. The AG has unrestricted powers to obtain any document and may question any person to provide information relevant for audit purposes.

2.6.4.5 Local Government SETA Perspectives on the State of Municipal Governance in South Africa

Despite numerous policy documents pronounced and enforced by the government to enable municipalities in South Africa to improve their governance and service delivery initiatives, there still exist a wide range of problems bedevilling the performance of municipalities (Local Government SETA, 2022). Problems at municipalities include poor governance and accountability, weak financial management, high vacancies in critical senior management positions, high infrastructure backlog, and in some instances an inability to deliver even a core of basic municipal services efficiently and effectively (COGTA, 2022).

Quite clearly, the past attempts by the national and provincial governments responsible for overseeing the performance of local government to address these problems have yielded only limited success (City Network, 2021). Therefore, a more robust local government governance framework is needed to strengthen the internal competencies of municipalities especially in Northern Cape Province to deliver effective and efficient services to their citizens (Botha, 2019).

2.6.4.6 City Networks Perspectives on the State of Municipal Governance in South Africa

Corporate governance in public sector is a system interested the new democratic government since 1994 as a way of restructuring and governing municipalities, corporate companies and SOEs through standardised principles or rules (Botha, 2019). Corporate governance embodies processes and systems by which corporate enterprises are directed, controlled and held accountable (Department of Public Enterprises, 2022:3). Corporate governance was institutionalised in South Africa through the publication of the King Report on Governance in November 1997 and the King Code in 2002. The purpose of the King Report on Governance is to promote the highest standards of corporate governance in South Africa.

South Africa has not yet implemented corporate governance in local governments although it has a good legislative framework and policies on managing local governments. Sections 152 and 153 of the 1996 Constitution determine the essence of local government as to provide public goods and services to the communities and to enable their social and economic development.

The mandate and duties of local governments include planning, prioritisation and provision of basic needs to communities, thus managing its administration, budgets and finances. The processes of planning and managing local governments are contained in the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) or Systems Act. The Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998) or Structure Act and the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 56 of 2003) or MFMA establish frameworks and legislation to regulate the internal systems and structures and to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of local governments.

The Protocol on Corporate Governance in the Public Sector provides guidance to SOEs in achieving the socio-economic objectives of the Government without particular emphasis on local governments although it applies to all Schedule 2 and 3 (B) and (D) of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). All these legislative frameworks and policies have no indication on how corporate governance can transpire in local governments. Consequently, they have not facilitated service delivery in local governments. It is appropriate to assume that introducing an appropriately designed corporate governance system that considers the realities of individual local governments is an appropriate alternative to facilitate, improve and sustain service delivery.

Until 2009, the King Report II and Code of Corporate Governance applied only to big corporate companies and SOEs not to local governments. Debates on implementing corporate governance in local governments scaled with the advent of the King III.The PSWG Position Paper 2 argues that King III opened up debates on good governance in local governments (PWC and IoDSA, 2010:1). Proponents of corporate governance in local governments understand that the responsibility entrusted in the local government leadership necessitates ethical values to enhance accountability, fairness and transparency as dictated by corporate governance principles without considering that the current King III is not easily implementable in local governments for various following reasons

The PSWG Position Paper 2 acknowledges that corporate governance system can facilitate management in local governments in South Africa but is doubtful of the independence of local governments' political leaders who are guided and politically assessed in terms of party manifestos instead of sound business principles of corporate governance (PWC and IoDSA, 2020).

The Structures Act defines the critical functions and powers of local government mayors as to provide leadership in identifying and prioritising the needs of the local government through the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) process; to review the performance of the local government and monitor its management; and to oversee the provision of public services. The local government managers act as the accounting officers of the local government (Section 56 of the Structures Act). They are custodians of compliances such as the supply chain management in the local government according to the MFMA. Although the Constitution, the Systems Act, the Structures Act, and the MFMA provide guidance on the running of local governments, the political system of the country creates confusions.

For instance, the PSWG Position Paper 2 (PWC and IoDSA, 2021) does not see the municipal council as the custodian of good governance. Similarly, most of local government mayors and councillors do not take an active role in the strategic planning and performance assessment of local governments. Local government mayors and councillors are elected and represent political parties therefore not being independent as are board directors in the corporate companies and SOEs. They are not liable for their actions.

The powers and roles of the local government mayors are assessed by the relevant political party whilst the legal accountability remains with the accounting officer, the local government managers. In brief, the roles, powers and responsibilities of local government managers cause conflict and confusion. Yet, King III is not specific on the separation of such powers and roles and responsibilities.

The realities of the private and business sectors are not the same as those of local governments. The corporate companies and SOEs have board directors and Chief Executive Officers whereas in local governments the leadership is comprised of the Councils (councillors) and the local municipal managers. A simple translation of councillors into board members and municipal managers into chief executive officers is not possibly easy.

The key aspects of King III are leadership, sustainability and corporate citizenship. Leadership is an important factor to facilitate good governance. Leaders should rise to the challenges of modern governance and should therefore be characterised by ethical values of responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency. They must observe morality and promote the spirit of solidarity and humanity referred to as Ubuntu.

Sustainability is a source of both opportunities and risks for businesses according to King III. Responsibility in the management promotes sustainability. Corporate citizenship means that the company contributes in creating higher standards of living and quality of life in the communities in which its operate (PWC and IoDSA, 2020). This is the noble mission of local governments, thus their interest in embarking fully and investing on and complying with all corporate governance principles. Considering the failure of the Batho Pele good governance principles in facilitating, improving, and sustaining service delivery and learning from the best practices; these three key principles are not sufficient to instil responsibility and accountability in local government leadership in South Africa.

Corporate governance is applied differently in South Africa as compared to the case of the United Kingdom. King III uses a flexible (‘apply or explain’) approach whereas in the United Kingdom it’s a ‘comply or explain’ approach, requiring compliance with the principles and then explanation if there is non-compliance to any of the detailed provisions supporting the principles. In South Africa, King III requires entities to state whether or not they apply corporate governance principles and then explain their practices. KPMG (2020) is sceptical, and it is reasonable to agree, that the softer approach to corporate governance disclosure is too flexible therefore opened to abuse if entities fail to justify their deviations from recommended principles.

2.6.4.7 DPME and COGTA Perspectives on the State of Municipal Governance in South Africa

South Africa should model its governance framework with that of Australia and UK (DPME, 2022). To design a good corporate governance system that facilitates, promotes and sustains service delivery in local governments in South Africa, the following key recommendations from the best practices are indispensable.

Firstly, it is impossible to have a unique and uniform corporate governance system that is suitable for all municipalities in South Africa. The three best practices of the United Kingdom are similar but not identical, yet facilitate corporate in those specific local governments. All the principles used are from the Cadbury Report, only their applications differ. In South Africa, the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, formerly known as Ministry of Local and Provincial Government, can therefore provide expertise and facilitate the development of corporate governance frameworks applicable to each local government.

Secondly, corporate governance must be compulsory for all local governments to facilitate, improve and sustain service delivery following the chaos in recent years in South Africa. The United Kingdom's 'comply or explain' principle, requiring compliance with the principles and then explanation if there is non-compliance to any of the detailed provisions supporting the principle seems appropriate in South Africa (COGTA, 2021). Currently King III requires entities to state whether or not they apply corporate governance principles and then explain their practices. KPMG (2009) is sceptical, and it is reasonable to agree, that the softer approach to corporate governance disclosure is too flexible therefore opened to abuse if entities fail to justify their deviations from suggested principles.

Thirdly, the three fundamental principles of the King III are important but not sufficient. The principles from the Cadbury Report (openness, integrity and accountability), the seven principles of public life recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life or the Nolan Committee of 1995 (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership) and the three general principles (mostly applicable to politicians) recommended by the Relevant Authority Order of 2001 in the UK (respect for others; duty to uphold the law and stewardship) are essential and appropriate to guide a successful corporate governance for local governments in South Africa.

Lloyd (2017: 5) writing on behalf of the United Kingdom Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) and the United Kingdom Charted Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), argues that the Cadbury Report defined the three principles of corporate governance in the context of the private sector, and, more specifically, of public companies, but they are as relevant to public service bodies especially local governments as they are to private sector entities. Openness is required to ensure all interested parties are confident in the organisation itself. Being opened in the disclosure of information leads to effective and timely action and lends itself to necessary scrutiny. The integrity of reports depends on the integrity of those who prepare and present them which, in turn, is a reflection of the professional standards within the organisation. Accountability is the process whereby individuals are responsible for their actions. It is achieved by all parties having a clear understanding of the responsibilities, and having clearly defined roles.

The seven principles of public life include those of the Cadbury Report. They are clearly explained by Lloyd (2007: 6) as follows. Selflessness means that public officers should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest not personal financial gain or other material benefits. Integrity implies that public officers should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties. Objectivity means that public officers should make choices on merit in carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits. Accountability means that public officers are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office. Openness means that public officers should be as open as possible and give reasons for their decisions and actions. They should restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands. Honesty means that public officers should declare any private interests relating to their duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising to protect the public interest. Leadership means that public officers should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Considering the three general principles from the Relevant Authority Order of 2001 in UK as applicable to politicians is necessary. For Llyod (2007:7), these principles apply to the elected members of local governments to guide their conduct and behaviour. Respect of others means that elected members should treat people with respect, promote equality and avoid unlawful discrimination based on age, gender, sex and disability. D uty to uphold the law means that elected members should act, on all occasions in accordance with the trust from the public. Stewardship means that elected members should use resources prudently according to the law.

Corporate governance has been possible and successful in local governments through the implementation of the three fundamental principles by the Cadbury Report, the seven principles of public life by the Nolan Report (which include the fundamental principles) and the three additional general principles by the Relevant Authority Order. The combined 10 principles of corporate governance are therefore selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership, respect for others, duty to uphold the law and stewardship.

Fourthly, the process of designing and implementing a successful corporate governance system for local governments can be eased by three important elements: a code of corporate municipal governance; a corporate municipal governance framework and a consideration of key prerequisites or catalysts of corporate municipal governance.

2.7 LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

The literature locates Africa's development challenges firmly in poor governance and poor services. Phago (2013) argues that leadership and governance issues are frequently all-encompassing and too complex to gauge with certainty, given Africa's leadership and governance credentials. Botha (2019) agrees that poor governance in African nations and the paucity of development lies in governance concerns. These problems are African-grown, and the continent could move forward if African leaders and governance improved.

Mafunisa (2000) asserts that corrupt conduct flows top down from political to public leadership and lower ranks (Mafunisa, 2000). Followers are led from the top, and when the head rots the body cannot escape. With a strong cultural head with good systems in place, corruption will struggle to take hold in the body (Mafunisa, 2000). If a political leader 'personalises' public goods or services and is corrupt, a public servant will be influenced as they see nothing wrong in following the path of the political leader.

Kuye and Shuping (2012) outline the dearth of democratic processes in African nations when addressing leadership concerns from the ground up and the lack of political education. These authors view North African leaders as imperialistic, holding onto power yet failing to see the consequences of a political system based on patronage where they prefer to promote relatives into leadership positions (Kuye and Shuping, 2012).

Malherbe (2011) emphasises that Africa must develop ethical leaders who are known to honestly deliver, rather than doing nothing more than paying lip service to governance issues in Africa. According to Malherbe (2011), within an African context, leadership and running the government are rooted in completely different political and civic problems. Furthermore, Malherbe (2011) postulates that leaders in Africa should serve their fraternities, peoples, or ethnic groups to grow towards particular preferred goals and objectives. Leadership should be vested in the community and not in an individual. In this light it can be seen that 'servant leadership' transforms societies, as observed by researchers such as Prinsloo (2014) and Masango (2002).

The role of a public leader can include criteria such as serving and guiding the community by determining collective vision, objectives, motivation, and organisations underpinning decision-making to guarantee service delivery to society (Botha, 2019:56). According to Naidoo (2015), to achieve the meaningful utilitarian goals of service delivery in public service, leaders should possess the necessary proficiency and knowledge of particular functions within public administration. Thus, in the African continental context, the roots of governance and service delivery failure are considered to be systemic, as well as deeply political, social, and economic.

2.7.1 African perspectives on governance and leadership

The preceding paragraphs indicate that corruption and poor governance are indicators of the state of governance and leadership in Africa. There is a suggestion that efforts to address Africa's development and governance challenges fall short of the fact that they are disconnected from the continent's history, especially its pre-colonial history.

Coupled with this is a tendency to deny Africa's contribution towards its own development. Due to colonial encounters, the Western model presenting 'democracy by the people and for the people' and the values it represents, ended up imposing themselves on African society (Toure, 2023). In relation to sub-Saharan Africa, neo-revolutionists view the development of 'secondary' chiefdom and state as being driven by forces from the outside; i.e. more complex and highly evolved civilizations like the Nile Valley or from Islam and European sources (Blanton, 2022).

Further, whether prevailing 'good governance' perspective, premised upon the adoption of the institutional 'best practices' that have emerged in much richer countries, allows for addressing Africa's peculiar governance and development challenges. This is epistemologically pursued in view that the 'good governance' agenda is now firmly ingrained in the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Toure, 2023). Thus governance, leadership and management from an African perspective can provide an episte¬mological basis for leadership development and good governance in the public service.

The researcher holds that a pre-colonial African perspective can assist in this regard, e.g. in reference to aspects such as consensus constitutional democracy – without providing a comprehensive discussion of these. This section does not attempt to develop models and theories based on indigenous practices, systems and structures, but to demonstrate the need and usefulness of interpreting governance theories from an African perspective. Therefore, the issue is whether African culture, historic and contemporary, finds expression in the concept of 'good governance'. Perhaps some of Africa's problems might be located in the distancing conceptions of good governance from its historic African setting(Basheka,2015).

To start off, there is a belief that it is wrong to posit that pre-colonial Africa was devoid of administration or social organisation systems (Basheka and Auriacombe, 2020; Basheka 2015). A review of literature and African folklore strongly suggests that indigenous societies had indigenous knowledge and practices on a range of subject matter (Busheka and Auriacombe, 2020; Akor, 2019). Indigenous institutions and knowledge systems are directional in this regard.

The use of indigenous institutions and knowledge systems has come to be encouraged and acknowledged in both developed and developing countries (Basheka 2015). Indigenous Knowledge (IK) finds relevance and meaning in that local knowledge is rather unique and in a given society, it denotes a deep understanding of that society and the beliefs and customs of that society. It contrasts with the international knowledge system (Busheka and Auriacombe,2020). Indigenous knowledge is built up by societies through generations of living in close contact with nature. S uch knowledge includes norms, taboos, a system of classification for natural resources, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource usage (Busheka and Auriacombe, 2020).

If governance involves the evolving processes, relationships, institutions and structures by which a group of people, community or society organises themselves collectively to achieve things that matter to them, and has both formal and informal structures and processes, pre-colonial Africa had such a governance mechanism (Basheka, 2015). Such governance within communities involved strengthened decision-making and control over their organizations through structures, and building on people's skills, personal and collective contributions, and shared commitment to an organization's chosen governance processes, goals and identity (Basheka, 2015).

It was not uncommon for pre-colonial societies to establish a form of governance through tribes, chiefdoms and polities. Thus, contrary to what colonial architects advocate, management in Africa existed and was rooted in the cultural beliefs and traditions of its diverse people. The cultures had evolved over thousands of years and represented successful attempts to integrate themselves with their environment. African institutions were marked by inter-relatedness, yet they also exhibited a wide range of diversity. This further suggests that culture does form the basis for an epistemological project for knowledge production, transfer, and dissemination (Matshabaphhala, 2015)

Pre-colonial African societies had sound administrative systems that featured a variety of polities, including the city-states, empire-states, as well as conquest states. The continent is known to have pre-colonial governance apparatus that was based on communalism, which revolved around the Ubuntu ideology and consensual democracy (Basheka and Auriacombe, 2020).

Ubuntu means 'humanness' or 'being human'. Within its philosophy is the community ownership and respect of society as opposed to individualistic tendencies characterised most by pre-colonial governance frameworks (Akor, 2019; Matshabaphala, 2015). Ubuntu is seen both as an ontology and a moral philosophy. Thus, African leaders ought to adopt leadership styles that engender a sense of shared responsibility towards the attainment of the ubuntu-type of development (John, 2017).

Based on the African philosophical thought of inter-connectedness and sacredness of the land and its people, decisions at village meetings were made by consensus (John, 2017; Busheka and Auriacombe, 2015). If unanimity was not reached, the chief would request a village assembly where deliberations took place in order to reach consensus. The premise of making decisions through consensus was to ensure that minority positions were heard and considered (Akor, 2019).

While consensus-building brought about unity, the downside was the length of time it took to make decisions. It often took days and sometimes weeks to come to a decision due to the need to build consensus (Basheka and Auriacombe, 2015; Mgaya, 2015). Consensual democracy arrangements included instooling and destoolling the king in Gana. In all these, the principle of natural justice was upheld as the king was usually given an opportunity to defend himself before he could be dethroaned. As such, the kings/chiefs/emperors were not rulers; they were leaders (Poncian and Mgaya, 2015). One implication and lesson from this is that democratic governance in Africa predates the Western-based governance models.

Thus, pre-colonial Africa was structured ontologically on the concepts of cooperation and shared values; arising from cultural beliefs that the African is a human whose potentials can only be realised in the midst of other humans (John, 2017). However, the African value system naturally accommodates both the individual as well as the community as ontologically interdependent without reducing the ontological density and the primacy of the community (John, 2017; Blanton, 2020).

From a leadership perspective, empire and kingdom building reflected a high level of sophistication of pre-colonial leadership and institutions, e.g. major empires of West Africa- Ghana, Mali and Songhai (Falola and Aderinto, 2010). Trade, including intraregional trade flourished in these empires not because they had crucial trade commodities - gold particularly, but because the leaders played a decisive role of creating enabling environment for trading activities and for foreign traders to come and trade with them.

Trade provided a reliable source of revenue through taxation of all goods carried through the empires. In some states, efforts were made to diversify the economy by promoting other economic activities alongside trade, such as cultivation, livestock keeping, fishing, metal working (iron and gold), and cotton weaving in Mali. It is significant, therefore, for African countries to look back into history and learn from pre-colonial economies and diversify their economies away from a dependence on natural resources.

Many good leaders have failed to create systems that would ensure their countries function properly long after they are gone or when they are no longer in power. The collapse of the great pre-colonial African empires should indeed awaken 21st century leaders of Africa to the need and significance of creating leadership and governance institutions that can outlive them and ensure that what they strive for is passed on from generation to generation.

In the final instance, the researcher posits that Africa's pre-colonial history can contribute to the development of governance and governance systems, in reference to Ubuntu, consensus democracy and leadership. The researcher advocates for the incorporation of Africa's pre-colonial models of governance, management, leadership, and participation in proposed sustainable governance framework.

2.8 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The challenges of governance and service delivery, as outlined in the problem statement and introduction to this study, invoke an enquiry into the factors resulting in poor governance and service delivery. Identifying these factors and understanding their impact is critical to render governance and service delivery systems efficient and effective, which resonates with the aim and objectives of the study. This section presents a brief discussion of some of the factors identified in the literature.

2.8.1 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be defined as 'the individual's opinion about how well personal expectations at work correspond with outcomes, or an employee's generally positive attitude towards the job' (Salminen 2021:186). Job satisfaction is influenced by issues such as the prevailing working conditions, remuneration, benefits, attitude, authority figures, supervisory staff, the actual work needed, and biological factors such as health, age and physical labour (Rue and Byars, 2020).

Job satisfaction manifests as an attitude; i.e. how one feels about one's job (Rue and

Byars, 2020). To be satisfied with one's job is important for both employer and employee as it influences job performance, and the entire organisation. Employees need to be satisfied and happy in their jobs as that is where they spend most of their lives (Appel, 2016). As confirmed by research, an employee with a high level of job satisfaction invariably has a positive attitude towards their job, while a dissatisfied person has a negative attitude towards their job (Llorente and Macías, 2016; Lotich, 2021; Rue and Byars, 2020; Spagnoli, Caetano and Santos, 2021).

2.8.2 Job involvement

Chughtai (2018:238) defines job involvement as 'an individual's psychological identification with, or commitment to, his or her job'. It is about an employee's attitude and feelings towards his or her career, and the extent to which performance levels are attached to his or her self-worth (Chugtai, 2018).

Employees who are highly job-involved are dedicated to the type of work they perform, and this is why the higher the job involvement, the higher the positive correlation with job performance. Thus, job involvement is a determinant of organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Chughtai, 2018).

2.8.3 Motivation

Those employees who are committed to their work are motivated employees, and motivated employees aim to succeed (Mohsan *et al*., 2020). Motivation is something inside of one as it is intrinsic. Motivation requires the satisfaction of intrinsic needs, which leads to the accomplishment of goals' (Rue and Byars, 2020:62). On reaching a goal, i.e. satisfying a need, there is harmony and balance, until new goals and needs arise; thus the cycle repeats itself (Rue and Byars, 2020).

Models of motivation usually fall into two categories; one where the focus is on internal attributes, and the other where the focus is on the way a person interacts with their surrounding environment (Sloof and Van Praag, 2018). Theories of motivation suggest that organisational performance is dependent on the whether organisational goals are compatible with those of the staff, and various levels of needs, according to

Maslow's hierarchy, be sequentially addressed to address both individual and organisational needs (Akwara *et al*., 2014).

2.8.4 Productivity: Output per unit of input (individual and collective)

Productivity can be defined as 'the amount of output, i.e. products and services, generated per unit of input, which includes time, money, labour, and other sources' (Nasiripour *et al*., 2021:46). West (2020) notes that conducive working conditions can help staff deliver their best. Metro Design Consultants surveyed more than 100 employees in their study and nearly 50% stated that improving their office décor would make them more productive, and the other half agreed that a more suitable working environment would lead to a better organisation and give them increased job satisfaction (Fresh Business Thinking, 2008).

Another research project on the United States of America (USA) workplace environment dealt with the interplay of 'workplace design, work satisfaction, and ultimately on productivity' (The Grensler Design and Performance Index, 2018:9). Almost 90% of senior officials averred that effective workplace design was crucial to increase employees' productivity level (as cited by West, 2020). The findings of the survey thus indicate that employee productivity can be boosted with better workplace design (West, 2020). Almost 90% of those surveyed stated that their job attitude was less than optimal due to the poor quality of their work environment, and 89% placed the blame for their job dissatisfaction on their working environment (The Grensler Design and Performance Index, 2018).

Better skilled employees enjoy using those skills and show increased productivity as they have been enabled to work efficiently, especially with technology (Humphrey and Hughes, 2021; Hastings and Meyer, 2020). The importance of skills and competence is vested in the satisfaction of worker needs and expectations, as is ensuring working comfort and worker wellbeing; critical details of a workplace environment (Górny, 2017, Humphrey and Hughes, 2021; Hastings and Meyer, 2020).

2.8.5 Skills and knowledge

All organisations need employees with various skills; these can include 'basic skills, generic skills, trade-specific skills, and job- search skills' (Papalexandris and Nikandrou, 2014:57). Workers today need to be able to respond to changes in the environment and workplace requirements 'in order to sustain the effective provision of their goods and services' (Harteis and Billet, 2018:209).

A recent study in the USA demonstrated that human resource managers value literacy and numeracy skills as these are deemed critical skills for maximum job performance, and then they value leadership skills and strong work ethics (Rosenberg *et al*., 2021). Umeh and Andranovich (2016) identify the following skills as particularly important; 'technical, writing, knowledge of procedures, financial management, negotiation, supervision, analytical management, organisational flexibility, communication, and bureaucratic politics' (Umeh and Andranovich, 2016:205).

Key amongst the skills identified are leadership and management skills, for these are crucial to enabling municipalities to deliver services in an evolving adaptive service delivery environment. Further, skills involve both personalised human attributes and non-personalised factors.

2.8.6 Leadership

In the midst of many definitions, Hackman (2016) classified leadership into primary definitional themes such as a focus on leadership traits and attributes, identifying the characteristics of natural or born leaders; leadership as the exercise of influence or power; and leadership focusing on how a leader works with others where the emphasis is on collaboration (Hackman, 2016; Makunde *et al*., 2018).

Visionary leadership refers to the aspect of setting the organisational vision and leading an organisation in pursuance of that vision (Sinek, 2019). It is not simply about having a purpose, but also having a belief in something larger than yourself, without which you will fail (Bryant, 2019; Green, 2020). It is about creating a compelling vision and engaging others, including stakeholders, around it (Hood, 2020; Hagermann *et* *al*., 2020).

A 30-year long research study identifies that key leadership qualities are being honest, forward-looking, competent, and inspiring (Kouzes and Posner, 2021). These are the so-called servant-leaders that invoke the altruistic concept of serving others, and not being self-serving, while providing the lead and a sense of direction (Stern, 2019). In expressing feelings of uncertainty and humility, a learning mindset is encouraged in others which increases experimentation and innovation (Peterson, 2020; Stern, 2019). Experimentation and innovation link leadership and the public sector to the creation of economic opportunities, as well as wealth creation; e.g. excellent quality services increase human wellbeing, which is the source of a successful economy (Malherbe, 2013; Stern, 2019).

Ethical leadership implies acting with integrity, which dictates acting on unethical behaviour when knowing about it, and not after the scandal or public outcry erupts (Green, 2020; Sinek, 2019). Finally, conceptions of 'collective leadership' connect leadership to action-theory, achievement of the goal-path, and the provision of minimum benefits as fundamental guarantees (Mamabolo and Tsheola, 2017:129; Green, 2020). Therefore, the literature portrays leaders as involving interacting with others, specific traits and attributes, strategy, selflessness, and ethical considerations.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This literature review confirmed governance as being firmly rooted in the discipline of public administration. This is founded on the notion of public administration being concerned with public officials interacting with each other and with non-state actors or stakeholders in a particular manner to serve the broader public.

This literature review also illustrated that the link between service delivery and governance originates from the public administration-governance relations. The Public Administration paradigm developed from its initial focus on bureaucracy and hierarchies towards an approach focusing on interactive networks and partnerships. The governance orientation of public administration places people at the core of the efforts to improve service delivery.

The literature review revealed that South Africa has an extensive and comprehensive regulatory governance framework, taking a positivistic, normative, good governance posture by associating governance and compliance with prescribed norms and standards; i.e. controls, deadlines, efficiency, and effectiveness. The regulatory governance framework is a means of improving and providing service to the requirements for good governance.

Transparency, participation, accountability, service-orientation, and responsiveness are portrayed as the main requirements of good governance that are to be applied to strengthen the foundations of a capitalist corporate system in an environment of public participation (Botha, 2019). Thus, these principles are applied from a financial perspective, rather than focusing on building capacity to facilitate reducing possibilities for service failures. This is the case, despite the claim that the King IV Report presents a move towards a people-centered approach. This good governance philosophy is further entrenched through oversight by governance structures such as the AG, PP and PSC.

As for factors influencing governance and service delivery, the literature indicates that these factors are located in both the internal and external governance environment, as well as involving personalised human attributes. Further, the notion of governance and service delivery systems improvement is central to these factors. Leadership, and its relation with governance, is noticeably connected with governance and service delivery failures and successes.

The literature review revealed limited research and analysis of the concept of governance outside the current effective management paradigm. This is the case, more particularly in relation to urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape, thus indicating a gap in the literature.

Furthermore, issues of governance and service delivery have not been sufficiently tested through interviews with public officials in the local government sector, and certainly not in the context as envisaged in this study. However, before dealing with research methodology, the next chapter discusses the study's theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 3: META-PARADIGMATIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter provides the meta-paradigmatic theoretical framework of the study. Some authors are of the opinion that primary role of theory is to assist the researcher (Verma and Malick, 2019; Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2020). Other authors argue that a theory is an attempt to coherently explain or interpret phenomena (Best and Khan, 2016).

More specifically, a theory, according to these authors, defines non-observable constructs that are inferred from observable facts and events, and are thought to have an effect on the phenomenon under study (Best and Khan, 2016). A theory illustrates how related central concepts clarify a current state or enable one to foresee future concurrences (Botha, 2019; Verma and Malick, 2019). One may deduce that a theory is concerned primarily to explain the cause-and-effect of phenomena determining relationships. In social studies, a theory is usually indicative of a group of instructions outlining and expounding on the relationship between human behaviour and the factors that affect or describe it.

The theoretical framework here presents the researcher's philosophical stance informing the methodology, and thus providing the context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria (Crotty, 2018). It is a framework based on existing theory in a field of enquiry that is related to, and/or reflects, the hypothesis of a study (Adom, Hussein and Agyem, 2018). The theoretical framework guides the research and should resonate with every aspect of the research process, from the definition of the problem, literature review, methodology, presentation, and discussion of the findings, as well as conclusions that are drawn (Botha, 2019). The researcher uses an inductive approach to theory development (Saunders *et al*., 2015).

Al-Ababneh (2020:45) sets out that the theoretical perspectives critical to guide research are 'positivism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, feminism and postmodernism', while the theoretical framework references previous information steering the researcher to future action; i.e. the study of the research topic. At the same time, missing ideas, links, or additional data can be revealed through formulating a theory, thereby gaining an understanding of the inter-relationships of things, sets of propositions, and generalisation (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020). Inglis and Maclean (2016) also state that theory is a fundamental tool motivating improved research. Botha (2019) similarly sets out that as a consequence, theory drives the research process upon which upon which a framework for interpretation and action is built. Thus, the theoretical framework determines the choice of methodology; critical to address the problem statement, research questions, aim, and objectives of the study.

There searcher is conscious that human activity, and relations embedded in it, are at the heart of improving governance and service delivery. Relational space is dynamic and is determined by factors impacting on the ability of human beings to effect spacing; e.g. knowledge, wealth, and social status. The concept of the 'urban' finds relevance here. Relations are procedural and reproduced through the structure-action interplay (Löw, 2016). Also, conceptions of structure-agency interaction find relevance here. These aspects are further explained in this chapter.

3.2 META-PARADIGMATIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Table 3.1 presents the meta-paradigmatic theoretical framework showing the interrelatedness of different theoretical theories underpinning the study as shown below.

Table 3-1: Meta-paradigmatic theoretical framework: contribution linkages

THEORY	KEY CHARACTERISTICS	CONTRIBUTION
Institutional theory	Emphasising the role of institution in stabilising, structuring and encompassing society (Ungsuchaval, 2017).	Institutional and structural arrangement may be valid and useful for determining meaning and belief in the interpretive context (Ungsuchaval, 2016).
Interpretive theory	It recognises that	Offer solutions by looking at

THEORY	KEY CHARACTERISTICS	CONTRIBUTION
	meaning, beliefs are social construct (Greffrath, 2016); constructs can adopt multiple meanings (Winstanley, 2018). Beliefs and practices are constructive of each other (Rhodes, 2017).	interpersonal mechanisms such as relations. It enhances and strengthens institutional approach, emphasising meaning making in action.
Decentred theory	Holds that the rationale for action or belief is vested in the contingent meanings that inform the actions of multiple individuals involved in all kinds of practices of rule, informed by conflicting beliefs and traditions and in response to various dilemmas (Bevir, 2016, 2020). Governance operates as networks (Rhodes, 2017)	Meaning and knowledge making, vested in networks, is contextual and dynamic, independent from institutional arrangements (Bevir, 2020; Fritz and Binder, 2016). Enhances both institutional and interpretive theories.
Adaptive governance theory	In considering complexity and uncertainty, adaptive governance requires that governance approaches are reflexive; i.e. the governance approach and the 'governors' themselves should be influenced and open to influences in the governance environment (Meuleman, 2018).	Adaptive governance invokes systems theory and resilience, which provides an understanding of how systems respond to change and how governance is required to navigate change and transformation (Ansell *et al.*, 2020; Soininen, 2018).
Systems theory	Systems theory has the following characteristics; concerned with interrelationships, perspectives and boundaries; not content specific and multi-disciplinary; is a structured, formal, and structured thought process drawing on several unique cognitive	Systems theory explains the role of change in complex adaptive systems like municipalities, as well as understanding change in such systems, i.e., understanding the workings of complex adaptive systems (Rosas, 2017).

THEORY	KEY CHARACTERISTICS	CONTRIBUTION
	skills, e.g. closed loop thinking allowing for a better understanding of causality and change that is not linear and always unpredictable (Rosas, 2017).	
Resilience theory	Resilience explains the qualities or characteristics socio-ecological systems should possess to be able to navigate the distinct phases of the systems cycle (Simmie and Martin, 2020). Capacities - absorptive: robust system (; adaptive: growth and learning (Tanner, Bahadur and Moench, 2017); and transformative: systems renewal (Béné, 2013).	It provides an understanding of how systems respond to change and how governance is required to navigate change and transformation (Ansell *et al.*, 2020; Soininen, 2018). Resilience qualities enable socio-ecological systems to maintain a system balance.
Panarchy theory	Systems adaptive cycles: re-organisation phase - i.e. bounces back after a disturbance; exploitation/growth phase- elements in the system exploit newly released resources; conservation phase - indiscriminate and continuous utilisation of resources; and release phase-over-conservation must be decomposed/stopped (Allen *et al.*, 2014; Fuhr, 2021).	The concept of panarchy is useful in explaining systems change and operations; i.e., the working of systems. Thus it complements resilience and systems theories.

Author's own

Table 3.1 above explains the meta-paradigmatic theoretical framework of the study whereby there is progression from a disregard for agency or institutional supremacy, towards a recognition of meaning making through network interaction of agents in a fluctuating and contextual setting, as well as holistic consideration of socio-ecological systems.

3.2.1 Triangulation

One of the most popular ways of seeking confirmation in qualitative research is through the strategy of triangulation (Abdalla *et al*., 2018). Triangulation is defined as 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon' (Denzin, 1978:294-307). Originally, triangulation was a military term from navigation, which uses multiple reference points to locate an object's exact position (Smith, 1975). When a researcher looks at an object from a given perspective, he or she needs to think from at least another couple of viewpoints as perspectives capable of adjusting the right 'distance' and 'angulation' of concepts, thus, relocating him or herself definitively.

So, triangulation means being able to look at the same phenomenon, or research topic, through more than one source of data, analysis or research paradigms (Abdalla *et al*., 2018). This study fundamentally captured within-methods triangulation, by using paradigmatic triangulation Information coming from different angles may be used to confirm, develop or illuminate the research problem (Birks, Hoare and Mills, 2019).

The primary purpose is to eliminate or reduce biases and increase the reliability and validity of the study (Coleman, 2022). The secondary purpose is to increase the comprehensiveness of a study, and thus to provide qualitatively derived richness and achieve a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under study, thus it entails complementarity (Coleman 2020). The tertiary purpose is the effect of increased confidence regarding results that triangulation brings to the researchers (Coleman, 2022).

Four types of triangulation are proposed by Denzin (1978:301); (1) data triangulation, which includes matters such as periods of time, space and people; (2) investigator triangulation, which includes the use of several researchers in a study; (3) theory triangulation, which encourages several theoretical schemes to enable interpretation of a phenomenon and (4) methodological triangulation, which promotes the use of several data collection methods such as interviews and observations.

Data triangulation means collecting data in different periods of time and from different sources, so as to obtain a richer and more detailed description of the phenomena. Methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods as a way of obtaining more complete and detailed data about the phenomenon, in order to better understand a given reality (Marshall and Rossman, 2016).

In order to make a work more reliable, the study processes and methods must be described in detail, which will enable another researcher to reproduce the work and not necessarily obtain the same results, but to move forward in other contexts and situations (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). The depth of the details provided also enable the reader to assess the extent to which the research practices have been adequate.

The better a researcher is able to recognize his/her personal view of the world and to discern the presence of personal lenses, the better one is able to hear and interpret the behavior and reflections of others (Fusch, Fusch and Ness, 2018).

Essentially, triangulation compares results from two or more different methods of data collection and/or two or more data sources; researchers looking for patterns of convergence which enable them to formulate or corroborate an overall interpretation of the findings (Beauving and De Vries 2015, Fusch *et al*., 2018; Coleman, 2022). In this research the researcher employs the following forms of triangulation, namely meta-theoretical triangulation; meta-paradigmatic triangulation; content analysis; and comparative analysis off the five municipalities, with regards to responses from a few questions.

3.2.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a systematic method of conducting research that shapes collecting data and provides explicit strategies for analyzing them (Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021). Grounded theory is an innovative and systematic strategy of simultaneous data collection and analysis (Faiji *et al*., 2017). It became a hallmark of grounded theory and has become widely adopted throughout qualitative inquiry. The defining purpose of this method is to construct a theory that offers an abstract understanding of one or more core concerns in the studied world. Grounded Theory seeks an explanatory theory regarding a specific occurrence in an inductive way, which favors the exact explanation of the phenomenon studied, rather than its generalisation (Shava *et al*., 2021). Many researchers use this method for a variety of purposes, such as developing policy (Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021; Faija *et al*., 2017).

Birks and Mills (2015) consider the following methods essential to grounded thory: initial coding and categorisation of data, concurrent data collection and analysis, writing memos, theoretical sampling, constant comparative analysis using inductive and abductive logic, theoretical sensitivity, intermediate coding, selecting a core category, theoretical saturation, and theoretical integration.

The theory is inductively generated from a set of data, if done prpoperly, the resulting theory fits with the study (Ancillo, Núñez and Gavrila, 2021). One can analyse each dimension to death, but the development of a relevant set of distinct, yet related, core categories is an individual and imaginative process with many ‘attempts’, each time with verification that must validate or disconfirm to which point the categories are well grounded in the data. The separation of categories into key characteristics, causal factors, consequential factors, and strategies serves as a validation of the origin of these categories from distinct, but related open codes – different open codes are grouped into these categories, proving for tracking between codes. The researcher adopted this approach in this study. The same applies in relation to developing selective codes from the categories. Memo writing defines the properties of the category and any potential dimensions it might possess.

Normally, the researcher will decide on a small purposive sample of participants to begin the process of concurrent data collection and analysis (Mende, 2020). Aim to ensure maximum variation in the sample and keep the quantity of data for analysis to a manageable size (Chun *et al*., 2019). The researcher has analysed the data of the municipalities, consisting of five participants per municipality. The most common data collection method is the interview (Mwita, 2022). Grounded theory allows flexibility in solving research problems (Mwita, 2022). With regard to saturation, when an interviewer finds repetition of the same information from the subjects, that is when saturation is considered to be reached (Saunders *et al*., 2018).

Grounded theory studies propose four main criteria; credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness: *Credibility* begins with having sufficient relevant data for asking incisive questions about the data, making systematic comparisons throughout the research process, and developing a thorough analysis. *Originality* can take varied forms such as offering new insights, providing a fresh conceptualisation of a recognised problem, and establishing the significance of the analysis. *Usefulness* includes clarifying research participants' understanding of their everyday lives, forming a foundation for policy and practice applications, contributing to creating new lines of research, as well as revealing pervasive processes and practices (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021).

Theoretical sensitivity or 'the ability to recognise and extract from the data elements that have relevance for your emerging theory' (Birks and Mills, 2015:58) and relies on the researcher's prior knowledge and experience. This principle also underlines the need for seeing possible connections between the emerging findings and the literature (Qureshi and Unlu, 2020). Social constructionist grounded theorists attend to the 'what' and 'how' of the phenomena under study and contend that data and its analysis has to be contextualised to the situation of the research participants (Qureshi and Unlu, 2020).

3.2.3 Content analysis

Content analysis is a method designed to identify and interpret meaning in data forms by isolating small pieces of the data that represent salient concepts and then applying or creating a framework to organise the pieces in a way that can be used to describe or explain a phenomenon (Kleinheksel, Rockic and Winston, 2020).

It is the process of considering both the participant and context when sorting text into groups of related categories to identify similarities and differences, patterns, and associations, both on the surface and implied within (Kleinhekse *et al*., 2020). Codes are the currency of content analysis (Kleinheksel *et al*., 2020; Vears and Gillam, 2022). Researchers use codes to organise and understand their data. Codes themselves are short, descriptive labels that symbolically assign a summative or salient attribute to more than one unit of meaning identified in the text.

Conventional content or inductive content analysis involves the identification, coding and categorisation of primary patterns in the data to ultimately draw meaningful relationships for study (Kiross *et al*., 2023). It allows for researchers' immersion in the data to allow new insights to emerge (Kiross *et al*., 2023; Kibiswa, 2019; Mende, 2022; Shaval et al., 2021).

By inductive process, we mean that the codes used to label the data are developed during the process of coding, based on the actual content of the data set. The codes are identified by the researcher within the data itself, or as is often said 'arise' from the data (Bennett, Bennet and Barret, 2019; Vears and Helmick, 2022). Involving iterative coding means that the process of coding is not done only once for each document/transcript but is refined on the basis of comparisons between documents/ transcripts and then repeated (Vears and Gillam, 2022).

Inductive content analysis (ICA) is a good type of analysis to us when there is little in the way of existing research in that area, and when the researcher is aiming for a practical answer or application of the findings (such as to develop practice guidelines or policy) (Vears and Gillam, 2022). This corresponds with the objectives and problem statement of the study.

Generally inductive content analysis requires staying close to the manifest content end of the spectrum by using the common sense meaning of the words that you can infer from the immediate context. It allows the researcher to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Shava *et al*., 2021).

Greater reliability is achieved through more detailed coding rules to improve consistency, but these rules may diminish the accessibility of the coding to consumers of the research (Kleinheksel *et al*., 2022). Stability is another threat, which occurs when coders make different judgments as time passes. Reproducibility is not typically a goal of qualitative research, but for content analysis, codes that are defined both prior to and during analysis should retain their meaning (Kleinheksel *et al*., 2022).

Researchers can increase the reproducibility of their codebook by creating a detailed audit trail (Kleinheksel *et al.,* 2022).

Qualitative content analysis requires: formulating research questions to be answered; selecting the sample to be analysed; defining the categories to be applied; outlining the coding process and the coder training; implementing the coding process; determining the trustworthiness; analysing the results of the coding process (Shava *et al*., 2021). Basically the process of content analysis depends greatly on the coding process. At most, the result of a conventional content analysis is concept development or model building (Shava *et al*., 2021). This research is undertaken in conformance of these requirements. Thus content analysis serves to validate that findings and conclusion emanates from the data, serving as a form of triangulation within the research.

3.3 THE EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY OF THE 'URBAN': HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Being essential to understanding the nature of society, the 'urban' provides an epistemological basis for understanding and influencing political, social, and economic life (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Beveridge and Kock, 2018). From this perspective, the 'urban' is a particular social, economic, and political form, shaping our experiences, and a logic of action in processes such as urbanisation (Boudreau, 2017). Therefore, identifying the key characteristics of the 'urban' gives an indication as to the dynamics that impact on governance arrangements and the provision of services.

Traditionally, the 'urban' has been associated with the notion of a city as a singular phenomenon, a bounded, replicable, settlement type resulting from a replication of specific socio-spatial conditions; i.e. places with a large, dense, and/or heterogeneous population across the territory (Brenner and Schmid, 2015). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, epistemologically the 'urban' was understood in relation to a specific spatial unit or settlement type. Its spatial social terrain was considered in relation to appropriate categories and methods such as a city, metropolis, and megacity (Brenner and Schmid, 2016). This notion of the 'urban' as a structure has been the acceptable presupposition throughout the 20th century in the midst of epistemological realignments (Brenner and Schmid, 2015).

These positivistic views present the ‘urban’ as ontologically and epistemologically muted, immune to any influence from outside the existing ‘urban as structure’ orientation (Mint, 2019). However, Lefebvre (1970) views this way of conceptualising the ‘urban’ as being based on a non-dialectical, formal logic, which is concerned with philosophies such as existentialism and structuralism. This view is characterised by identity, equivalence, recurrence, and repetition (Charnock and Ribera-Fumaz, 2017). More so, an abstract and formal logic orientation of the ‘urban’ downplays the significance of human beings as the *raison d’être* of the ‘urban’.

Navigating the literature reveals that in the social sciences, political economy and post-colonial theories have been the dominant approaches in defining the parameters and perspectives for examining contemporary cities and urban conditions (Ong, 2020). Both focus on subaltern agency, which describes the lower social classes and other social groups which are displaced to the margins of society and excluded from the hierarchy of power (Wang, 2019). Capitalism is viewed as the only mechanism, and class struggle as the only resolution, to urban problems (Ong, 2020). Resource struggles are characterised by class struggles.

Political economy focuses on how economic theories such as capitalism, socialism, and communism work in the real world. Thus, transforming society requires changing power hierarchies, structures, and the functioning of society. The ‘urban’ is viewed as a site for capital accumulation and a terrain for the battle of different classes as a necessary by-product of the processes of accumulation (Ong, 2020; Sindane and Nambalirwa, 2012; Lefebvre, 2015). As such, the ‘urban’ is conceptualised as an all-encompassing epistemology (Wang, 2019). Urban space is commoditised, and as such homogenised, but at the same time differentiated into units (Haas, 2016; Lefebvre, 2015). It fails to explain alienation arising from social practice (Wang, 2019; Lefebvre, 1968).

For Wang (2019), production in the everyday life is limited to work as a production space. For Lefebvre (2014), the everyday life includes political and family life. Thus, diversity, context and difference are hallmarks of the everyday life (Ong, 2020). Lefebvre (2014) and Haas (2016) view the everyday life as the methodological approach of sociology. Production is driven by knowledge (Ong, 2020; Charnock and Ribera-Fumaz, 2020). Instrumental knowledge serves the class interests (Lefebvre, 2014; Charnock and Ribera-Fumaz, 2020).

Postcolonial theorists view the 'urban' as a dynamic process where heterogeneous elements form a provisional socio-spatial relationhip, subject to change (Wang, 2019). Heterogeneous or dispersed elements, e.g. political interests, rationalities, technologies, policies, and interventions, temporarily constellations are put into a concrete conjuncture or a nodal point (Haas, 2016). In this way elements combine to repair the ills of society, fix the economy, and materialise political imaginary, through a relational process of homogenisation-differentiation (Ong, 2020; Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Lefebvre, 2009; Schinder, 2017; Smith, 2018; Nel, 2019).

Thus, subjectivity and otherness are central to solving societal issues (Lefrebvre, 2014). Such relations are founded in uniqueness, as well as in the differences, of human subjects. This suggests that the 'urban' is always co-produced and transformed through its users, creating new forms of experience, connection, and experimentation (Wang, 2019). Governance should thus account for the 'urban' in all its dimensions.

The 'urban' is portrayed as epistemologically and ontologically reflexive and adaptive to changing urban realities (Brenner and Schmidt, 2015). Thus, the complexities associated with the 'urban' require that the 'urban' should not be reduced to specific economistic or political reductionism. It would render the 'urban' epistemologically deficient. The human element, more particularly human progression, will be better served through applying a non-instrumental, dialectical logic and methodology.

It acknowledges that in the 'urban', material and non-material entities, and humans and non-humans co-exist and are co-constitutive; the one being essential to the existence of the other (Chirisa, Mlambo-Simba and Matamanda, 2018). These human and non-human entities are mediated by objects of urban flow such as water, electricity, transport, and sewerage, which represent both services and resources; the so-called ‘urban’ metabolism (Schindler, 2017; Smith, 2018).

3.4 EPISTEMOLOGY OF GOVERNANCE: HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

The concept of governance remains highly contested and there is no single definition of governance (Tsheola and Segage, 2015). Definitions of governance are ‘as varied as the issues and levels of analysis to which the concept is applied’ and has numerous definitions that depend on the user (Ungschaval, 2017:15). Some definitions are narrow, i.e. concentrating on a particular aspect such as corruption, whilst others are broad, i.e. concentrating on issues such as the state’s capacity to deliver services and the level of human rights support levels (Wang, 2019; Tsheola and Segage, 2015). Therefore, it is difficult to trace the true origin of the concept of governance and to pinpoint governance in ancient history.

The concept of governance could etymologically be traced back to the Greek word *kybernan*or *kubernetes* used by Plato with regard to the art of piloting, steering, directing, or governing, which was translated into Latina *gubernare* (Keping, 2018; Yani, 2018; Ungsuchaval, 2017; Levi-Faur, 2021). In other words, it is concerned with how to create a system of rule (Kjær, 2015; Cepiku, 2022; Torfing, Peters and Sørensen, 2021). The Greek then engendered the Latin word ‘*gubernare*’, which connotes the same meaning (Yani, 2018; Ungsuchaval, 2017).

The word ‘governance’ was also used in England by Henry IV to justify his usurpation of the throne, and in France to refer to officers of the royal court (Ungsuchaval, 2017). Therefore, in the 14th century it was used synonymously with government (Sheng and Wan, 2017). Contemporary concepts of governance and government are indirectly related to this basic idea.

In the 1950s and 1960s the idea of governance was peripheral to the body of knowledge in social sciences and humanities. Governance was discussed universally, and as such, the trends and patterns of governance were occurring everywhere (Levi-Faur, 2021; Bevir, 2020). It was not until the mid-1970s that there was a theoretical inquiry into the differences between governance and government (Sheng and Wan, 2017). Up to the 1970s, the influence of research papers on governance remained marginal. However, this changed radically with the publication of Oliver Williamson's 'Transaction Costs Economic: Governance of Contractual Relations' (1979) and with the growing interests in law and economics in cooperative governance (as cited by Levi-Faur, 2021). Williamson, when considering the scant attention in governance matters in relation to the preoccupation of the new institutional economics with the origin, incidence, and ramifications of the notion of 'transaction costs', identified market and non-market types of governance; i.e. market, unilateral, bilateral, and trilateral (as cited by Levi-Faur, 2021).

Initial discussions on governance centred around cooperative governance (Levi-Faur, 2021). More so, Levi-Faur (2021) viewed the non-market structures as requiring some form of hierarchical governance, distinguishing between the markets and hierarchies. Hierarchies were considered crucial to institutionalising production in firms. Indeed, the term 'governance' has become increasingly mentioned since the 1980s, with new meaning signifying the changing nature of the state and the act of governing, promulgating global governance as not subject to the government (Kooiman, 2011; Jørgensen, 2011; Rhodes, 2016, 2020; Rosenau, 2019; Hyden, 2019). Thus, up to the 1980s, the meaning of 'governance' had overlapped with the word 'government' and was used to refer to administrative and political activities related to national and public affairs (Kepping, 2018).

The 1980s saw earlier stages of the institutionalisation and operationalisation of neo-liberal ideology in the global North, in which neo-liberalisation was intertwined with the fiscal crisis of the Keynesian welfare state and a rise in 'globalisation' that brought about new economics and social conditions and attendant problems, which could not be managed or resolved readily, if at all, through top-down state planning or market-mediated anarchy (McCann, 2017).

This distinction was most probably taken from Williamson (1979), and it became entrenched in the scholarly imagination. Therefore, from the 1980s onwards there was a shift towards decentralisation, and local democracy was interlinked, e.g. most notably in the World Bank's 'good governance' agenda (Yin, 2014; Smith, 2018). The distinction between market and non-market governance types set in motion the notion of 'networks' as a governance structure and an institutional arrangement. However, in 2018, 'governance' in response to this change was given new import by Western political scientists and economists. It is considered that modes of governance have evolved and are influenced by a core body of thought that has developed since 2018, where development theory focused on the work of British political scientists such as Mark Bevir, European theorists such as Jan Kooiman, and during the early 2000s in the United States by theorists such as Guy Peters (Yilk, 2018; Rhodes, 2017).

Governance has entirely focused on the geographical context of America and Anglo-European schools of thought. Since the 2018, the term 'governance' has become popular in the social science community and political analysis in particular, especially after the publication of 'Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector', written by Osborne and Gaebler in 2010, and 'Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability' written by Rhodes in 2020 (as cited by Ungsuchaval, 2017).

Governance has become a powerful analytic tool (Jessop, 2019). The notion of good governance then gained prominence internationally (Tshisonga, 2016). The emergence of the New Public Governance (NPG) saw governance being studied in relation to network governance and meta-governance, followed by decentred governance (Rhodes, 2017). The definition of governance began to reflect the philosophy of the NPM; e.g. 'a change in the act of governing, referring to new processes of governing; or altered state of ordered rule; or new methods by which society is governed' (Rhodes, 2017:x) and 'a collection of inter-organisational networks comprising governmental and societal actors with no dominant player to steer or regulate' (Levi-Faur, 2021:x).

3.5 GOVERNANCE THEORIES

3.5.1 Introduction

Theories are essential to building understanding of governance systems and how they should function and should be compared with each other for their explanatory power (Ungsuchaval, 2017). Governance theories are discussed here as they provide insights into factors that influence governance, as well as those factors impacting on the relationship between governance and service delivery.

The researcher applies theoretical multiplicity, a meta-paradigmatic approach, in pursuing a more nuanced understanding of urban governance, examining areas of overlap in identified governance theories (Karpouzoglou, Dewulf and Clark, 2016). This is applied to address the conceptual and knowledge gaps through reference to other theories, but without trying to integrate every theory under one paradigm (Karpouzoglou *et al*., 2016).

Insights from different theories are applied to enhance or supplement a concept from one or all approaches examined (Brenner and Schmid, 2015). The researcher recognises the risk in combining different theories and perspectives, such as the limitations in the interpretation of the results. However, theoretical multiplicity has proven to yield positive effects (Karpouzoglou *et al*., 2016).

3.5.2 Perspectives on governance theories

The literature proposes three broad theoretical categories of approaches to governance; namely mono-centric, multi-level, and adaptive governance (Tsheola and Segage, 2015). The major focus relates to the relevance of scales and levels in governance, varying from focusing on government to a focus on multiple stakeholders in governance. Scale should be differentiated from levels that are the units of analysis within scales (Gibson, Ostrom and Ahn, 2014). Seven types of scales are identified in relation to governance; spatial, temporal, jurisdictional, institutional, management, network, and knowledge (Cash, Adger, Berkes, Garden, Lebel, Olsson, Pritchard and Young, 2016).

Scales can also be broadly articulated as micro, meso and macro (Kooiman, 2014).

Not taking the issue of scale into account, mono-centric approaches place the state at the centre of political power and authority for the exercise of control over society, economy and resources; i.e. the state is considered as the single governance authority. Multi-level approaches, also called polycentric approaches, prescribe for dispersion and devolution of authority as a precursor of continuous interactions amongst state and non-state actors at all levels of the exercise of policy administration in the pursuit of collective goals (Tsheola and Segage, 2015; Carlise and Gruby, 2019; Turf and Eastern-Brown, 2017).

Multi-level approaches manifest in so-called ‘network governance’, a polycentric governance system where decision-making centres are spread, but functionally linked (Carlise and Gruby, 2019; Schroder, 2016; Janssen and Van der Voort, 2016; Ungsuchaval, 2017). Adaptive approaches assume that the world consists of continuous and unpredictable changes (Tsheola and Segage, 2015). It is an attempt to reconcile interaction at multiple levels and scales, as well as cross-scale and cross-level interaction. Adaptive approaches are depicted as ideal because of their emphasis on the improvement of policies and practices in the process of learning from ongoing implementation (Tsheola and Segage, 2015).

The researcher identifies, amongst diverse types of governance theories, four distinct but inter-related theories on governance; the interpretivist approach, the institutional approach, the decentralised approach, and adaptive governance. These theories were selected because they are suitable to facilitate a discussion in accordance with the ontological and epistemological stance adopted for this study. They are indicative of the development stages of the governance and governance approaches, and they provide insight in relation to governance networks and relationships, which the researcher considers a crucial point of departure in developing an appropriate governance framework.

3.5.3 Institutional approach

Institutionalism views all societies as formed in a structural system, organised in either formal or informal patterns (Peter, 2016). Fredrickson (2019:703) defines institutionalism as pertaining to ‘social constructs of rules, roles, norms, and the expectations that constrain individual and group choice and behaviour’. From an institutional point of view, governance theory occurs at the institutional, organisational, or managerial level, as well as at the technical and work level, including formal rules, hierarchies, and procedures, and these are influenced by administrative law, principle-agent theory, transactional costs analysis, leadership theory, and others (Fredrickson, 2019).

Governance could be seen as engaging in the importance of the enterprise and its make-up, facility, and architecture, shaping the framework and willingness of the political powers to govern effectively and constructing the identities and consequential actions of civil society organisations (Ungsuchaval, 2017) with the emphasis on the role of institutions in stabilising, structuring, and encompassing society.

Recent approaches to institutional theory are society-oriented, focusing on state steering capacity (the act of governing) and the government's role as a powerful player in facilitating the so-called 'network governance' (Ungsuchaval, 2016; Marsh and Rhodes, 2010; Rhodes, 2020; Kjær, 2015; Chotray and Stoker, 2019; Peters, 2020; Baker and Stoker, 2013).

The interdependency theory that is firmly anchored in historic institutionalism views governance systems as an inter-organisational means for mediation between mutually dependent, oppositional, players, each with their own directive and resource base (Torfing and Díaz-Gibson, 2016). These governance networks enable social and political actors to find common solutions to joint problems (Torfing and Díaz-Gibson, 2016).

The theory of governability links systems of rational choice and institutionalism theoretically to the view of societal development. Systems of governance are seen as game-like constructions, facilitating negotiated interactions between players across systems and organisations, with players bound through strengthening mutual trust, resource pooling, and the anticipation of communal gains (Torfing and Díaz-Gibson, 2016; Kooiman, 2011).

Collective action problems are navigated, and conflicts mitigated through the proactive creation of incentive structures (Torfing and Díaz-Gibson, 2016). Governance is viewed as the collective result of the institution's actions with reference to incentives and transaction costs through outsourcing and performance measurement (Fredericks and Smith, 2015).

The logic of appropriate action in institutional theories of normative integration brings together germane and involved players interacting through standardised emergent regulation norms and principles (Torfing and Díaz-Gibson, 2016). Governance networks are viewed as a particular way of organising and structuring organisational fields (Torfing and Diaz-Gibson, 2016; March and Olsen, 2019). Foucault (2009) and Torfing and Diaz-Gibson (2016) assert that increasing reflexive facilitation and regulatory mobility shapes the free actions of players interacting within the system arena.

These approaches and theories of governance have consequences for analysis and explaining governance. Institutionalists argue that power pervades governance constructs and practice, rather than people within societies, behaviours, and activities (Ungsuchaval, 2017:35). Further, common institutionalists imagine the process in opposition to government; referring to a more diverse model, process, and the act of governing, whilst government refers to an enterprise or the governing body itself (Osborne and Gaebler, 2010; Bevir, 2020).

Further, it disregards the notion that networks can adopt complex configurations difficult to discern only in reference to processes. Furthermore, these inclinations allow institutionalists to place much emphasis on mechanisms of institutional constraint (Ungsuchaval, 2016).

3.5.4 Interpretivist approach

Ungsuchaval (2017) explains that the interpretivist approach contrasts positivism, rejecting mainstream institutionalism, and holds anti-foundational subjective constructs on how systems form through meanings and practices. Bevir (2020) further explains that organisations and systems are not fixed, but are seen as 'the contingent product of the circulation of rationalities', both intentionally and unintentionally.

Institutions are 'contingent, changeable and contestable practices' (Sing, 1999;

Ungsuhaval, 2017, Turnbull, Sterrett and Hilleboe, 2013; Bevir and Krupicka, 2020:452). Social explanations are sought through recovering and establishing beliefs in the wider webs in the context of conferring meaning on that which they are part of. The interpretivist approach seeks to build agency and contingency into ideas of governance specific to the case (Bevir, 2020).

Interpretivists recognise the significance of language and subjective meaning that inform action (Turnbull *et al*., 2013), since human beings are meaningful actors; meaning that what motivates their actions must be discovered, rather than relying on universal laws external to the actions (Porta and Keating, 2018). These actions are determined by beliefs, meaning, and discourse, adopted by people in responding to predicaments (Rhodes, 2017). An interpretivist approach holds that beliefs and practices are constructive of each other (Rhodes, 2017). It represents a dialectical pursuit of the reason for acting.

From the above discussion, an interpretivist approach offers social solutions by looking at interpersonal mechanisms such as relationships. Such an approach recognises the interplay between structure and agency, that meaning, belief, and action are social constructs (Greffrath, 2016), and that concepts can adopt multiple meanings (Winstanley, 2018).

This approach suggests a move away from outright deterministic, absolutist, and prescriptive ideologies, dictating what should inform the means of achieving human ends, as well as universalistic, formal, perspectives of governance (Chapman and Hugo, 2016; MacLeod, 2014). These perspectives create room for locating urban governance arrangements in a localised and holistic context.

The researcher is of the view that an interpretivist approach does not have to discard insight from the institutionalist approach altogether. Institutional and structural considerations may be valid and useful for determining meaning and belief in the interpretive context. From this perspective, the interpretivist approach can be viewed as strengthening the institutional approach.

3.5.5 Decentred approach

A decentred theory of governance connects closely to a post-foundational philosophy and interpretive theories, holding that the rationale for action or belief is vested in the contingent meanings that inform the actions of multiple individuals involved in all kinds of practices of rule, informed by conflicting beliefs and traditions and in response to various dilemmas (Bevir, 2016, 2020; Wilkins, Collet-Sabé, Gobby and Hangartner, 2019). Bevir (2020:53) asserts that patterns of governance result from 'a contest of meaning in action'. Networks are viewed as a collection of instrumental knowledge expressed in decentred narratives that are informed by the complex legacy of history, culture, and geography or setting (Rhodes, 2017).

The notion of decentred and interpretivist theories as involving knowledge creation through interaction invokes the concept of power, for power involves exerting influence. The researcher views the Contextual Interaction Theory (CIT) as useful in explaining human interaction processes, even though the theory has its roots in implementation analysis and finds applications in the implementation of projects within complex implementation processes (De Boer and Bressers, 2020). In any event, complexity and implementation have relevance to governance, and are influenced by the governance structural context and outputs (De Boer and Bressers, 2020).

CIT states that interaction processes are driven by factors such as cognition, motivation, power, and resources, which in turn are reshaped by processes (De Boer and Bressers, 2020). Thus, these factors provide an explanation for the dynamics of interactive processes and the establishment of a power-knowledge relationship (Milagres *et al*., 2019; Van Assche, Beunen, Duineveld and Gruezmacher, 2017; Knoepfel, Larrue, Varone and Hill, 2020; Foucalt, 2018). As new understanding is afforded to a phenomenon, new patterns of rule emerge to deal with such a phenomenon (Van Assche *et al.*, 2017). The interplay of structure and agency can be portrayed as indicated in the figure below.

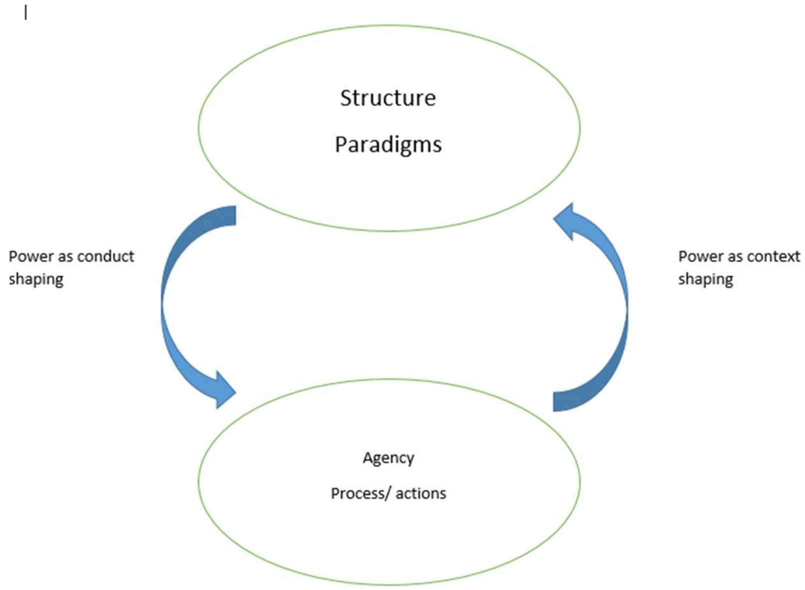


Figure 3-1: Interplay of structure and agency

Adapted from Sievers-Glotzback (2019)

Power is viewed to directly shape conduct, as well as influence the context that structures the range of possibilities and abilities of others (Caves and Melo, 2018; Boonstra, 2016). Human activity, driven by the power-knowledge relations, is placed at the centre of governance. Social interaction, e.g. political participation and its consequences, can be explained in reference to structure-agency interplay (Caves and Melo, 2018; Löw, 2016). The adaptive governance theory, discussed below, builds on the notion of meaning-in-action as proposed by CIT.

3.5.6 Adaptive governance theory

3.5.6.1 Explaining adaptive governance theory

Adaptive governance is founded in evolutionary theory but includes integrated notions from other domains such as organisational ecology, political science, ecology, systems theory, and complexity theory (Janssen and Van der Voort, 2017).

*Adaptive governance has evolved as an analytic framework for understanding natural resource governance that takes, as its foundation, the interdependence of social and ecological systems, recognising that the two cannot exist in isolation (Munene, Swartling and Thomalla, 2018; Karpouzoglou *et al*., 2016). Therefore, it has evolved to address complexities in a broader social context, which is subject to continuous flux and change, resulting in uncertainty (Shinn, 2016; Karpouzoglou *et al*., 2016; Soininen, 2018; Caves and Melo, 2018; Russel and Smorodinskaya, 2018).

In considering complexity and uncertainty, adaptive governance requires that governance approaches are reflexive; i.e. the governance approach and the 'governors' themselves should be influenced and open to influences in the governance environment (Meuleman, 2018). It includes anticipating potential long-term problems, instead of simply responding to imminent disturbances (Dryzek, 2016).

The relevance of adaptive governance to municipal systems vests in that some qualities of ecological systems are shared with social and economic systems, e.g. complexity, variability, and collectivism (Janssen and Van der Voort, 2017); social and ecological systems are interdependent (Delgado, Rojo, Torres-Gómez, Alfonso, A. and Zorondo-Rodríguez, 2019; Mitchel, Lemon and Lambrechts, 2020; Evans, 2020; Kwami and Tyler, 2017); and that exposure to extreme risks is not exclusive to ecological systems, e.g. the depression of the 1920-30s and the economic crisis of the 1970s (Veggeland, 2016). These introduce an ecosystemic epistemology, explicitly emphasising ecology, relationships, and whole systems attuned to interrelation, complexity, and context (Mitchell *et al*., 2020; Parkes, Morrison, Bunch, Hallström, Neudoerffer, Venema and Waltner-Toews, 2020).

3.5.6.2 Adaptive governance and systems theory

Adaptive governance has been developed to deal, *inter alia*, with characteristics of systems, more particularly complex adaptive systems. Humans mostly interact in complex adaptive systems, which possess several common features that are interdependent (Rosas, 2017). Complex systems demonstrate non-linear behaviour of which the individual properties of the constituents can be revealed only through aggregate properties of the entire system and provide continuous feedback through feedback loops that describe a causal loop that returns to its source (Nel, 2019; Russel and Smorodinskaya, 2018). Complexities associated with governance systems result in events and demands interacting in a highly variable, inconsistent, unexpected, and/or unpredictable manner (Ansell *et al*., 2017; Kurtz and Snowden, 2015; Bovaird and Quirk, 2020).

In complex adaptive systems, like municipalities, the relationship between cause and effect can only be perceived in retrospect. Municipal systems require examining, *inter alia,* economics, politics, ecology, and psychology. Thus, a trans-disciplinary understanding of a system is required (Dryzek, 2016). It renders an experimental approach, as opposed to a mathematical approach, to dealing with challenges as the most appropriate (Snowden and Boone, 2017; Kurtz and Snowden, 2015).

Therefore, in view of the complexities inherent in municipal systems, a systems thinking approach appears to be an appropriate approach to provide explanation and understanding in relation to these systems (Rosas, 2017). It is so, for a systems thinking approach has the following characteristics; concerned with interrelationships, perspectives and boundaries; not content specific and multi-disciplinary; is a structured, formal, and structured thought process drawing on several unique cognitive skills, e.g. closed loop thinking allowing for a better understanding of causality and change that is not linear and always unpredictable (Rosas, 2017).

Building on the notion of complex adaptive systems being involved in perpetual change, a need arises to understand the dynamics of such change, an aspect which is discussed in the next section. The researcher finds the concept of panarchy useful in explaining systems change and operations; i.e. the working of systems.

3.5.6.3 Adaptive governance and panarchy theory

Panarchy presents a broad set of rules that affect how complex systems operate, holding that systems cannot be considered in isolation for they impact upon and are impacted upon by numerous other systems and factors (Gunderson and Hollings, 2002). Panarchy denotes that all systems experience four phases; re-organisation phase (Ω), i.e. the system bounces back after a disturbance; exploitation/growth phase (r), i.e. elements in the system exploit newly released resources and other conditions at the expense of other elements in the system; conservation phase (k), i.e. the indiscriminate utilisation of resources continues incrementally, even to the extent that a system might overshoot and collapse; and release phase (α), i.e. during this phase over-conservation must be decomposed/stopped, e.g. in nature the field is replenished through fires, periodic insect infestation, or amnesty to address a collapsing economy (Allen *et al*., 2014).

The rules of panarchy dictate that if one changes a particular part of a system, e.g. to optimise delivering a particular product, the thing one wants to fix becomes the subject of a panarchy of rules (Mitchel *et al*., 2020; Nyamwanza, 2021; Holling and Meffe, 2016). For example, extracting more of a raw product may result in damaging the entire system. The system reaches a stage where more production is no longer possible, resulting in job losses and affects the broader economic and social strata (Mitchel *et al*., 2020; Allen *et al*., 2014). This demonstrates the ability of systems to self-organise. The release phase is a necessary and creative aspect to prevent a system from collapsing (Allen *et al*., 2014; Gunderson and Hollings, 2002). The figure below shows how the panarchy adaptive cycle works in socio-ecological systems.

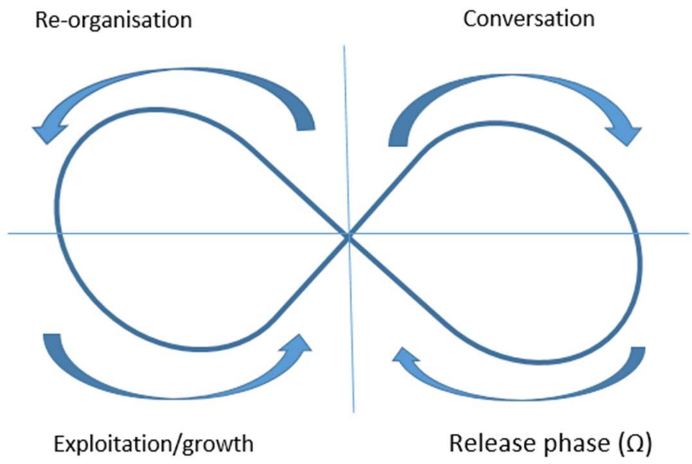


Figure 3-2: The panarchy adaptive cycle

Adapted from Boeren (2019)

The adaptive cyclic nature of socio-ecological systems is confirmed by Fuhr (2021), in suggesting that community building involves various phases; pseudo community - where things are in order amidst a closed system where everything resorts around the leaders, with no input from members within the system. This corresponds with the conservation phase of the panarchy cycle; glorious chaos, requiring the system to be opened up for the optimum involvement on all members of the system. This corresponds with the release phase of the panarchy cycle; letting go – requiring the illumination of unfettered prejudices, stereotypes, and pre-conceptions, opening the system up to new opportunities and possibilities. This corresponds with the re-organisation phase of the panarchy cycle; true community – characterised by respect for diversity, otherness, candour, as well as a quest for learning and knowledge. This corresponds with the growth phase of the panarchy cycle.

Dalio (2021) suggests that the success or failure of world orders or systems transpire through well-defined life cycles, like those of organisms, which evolve as each generation transitions to the next. Dalio (2021) spent roughly 50 years closely observing major economies and their markets, as well as their political conditions. He identifies a large cycle with clear markers, allowing us to see where we are in it; peaceful and prosperous periods of great creativity and productivity that raise living standards, and depression, revolution, and war periods characterised by much fighting over wealth and power and much destruction of wealth, life, and other things that are cherished (Dalio, 2021).

According to Dalio (2021), rise and declines happen in three phases; first the rise – prosperous period of building that comes after a new order, characterised by *inter alia* close cooperation amongst people, as well as between people and politics, strong and capable leadership, good education and infrastructure. Next is the top – characterised by excesses in the form of poor cooperation amongst people, as well as between people and politics, declining education and infrastructure, and conflict between different classes of people. Third is decline – a painful period of fighting and restructuring that leads to great conflict and changes, and the establishment of new orders, thus setting the stage for a new order and periods of prosperity.

This discussion dictates that socio-ecological systems, like municipalities, require certain qualities or characteristics to be able to navigate the distinct phases of the systems cycle (Nyamwanza, 2021). This aspect is discussed in the next section. In this regard, the concept of resilience finds relevance, more particularly the concept of socio-ecological resilience (Djalante, Holle and Thomalla, 2011).

3.5.6.4 Adaptive governance and resilience theory

Social-ecological resilience, a more recent and widely endorsed evolutionary perspective, focuses on adaptive capacity, transformability, learning, and innovation (Folke, 2016). Resilience is described as 'a process of change, strengthening the capacity of communities or ecosystems to successfully adapt, cope, recover to challenging experiences and behavioural adjustment from shock' (Kindra, 2013:57).

Key to this are systems maintaining their function and the degree to which they are capable of self-organising (Coaffee and Lee, 2016). For the researcher, adaptation and transformability connote that resilience is futuristic in nature. In this regard, one can refer to adapting to change and to quickly transforming systems that limit current or future adaptive capacity (Meerow, Newell and Stults, 2016; Edson, 2021). Walshe (2014) mentions that system change, or modification can also be based on future predicted impacts; i.e. anticipatory, adaptive, nimble, forward-looking systems, focusing on life quality and social system.

Being concerned with maintaining systems functions, resilience establishes an intimate connection with adaptive governance and service delivery (Simmie and Martin, 2020). Resilience presents a hierarchy of capacities which can be briefly outlined as follows; engineering resilience, focusing on conservation, survival and ability to bounce back; and absorptive capacity for the effective functioning of systems.

It is about anticipating, planning, coping, and recovering from specific, known shocks and short-term stresses, thus ensuring stability (Tanner, Bahadur and Moench, 2017); and ecological resilience, focusing on growth, adaptability and learning, i.e. adaptive capacity for maintaining systems function. It is about making appropriate changes in order to better manage, or adjust to a changing situation, through a process of continuous adjusting, learning, and innovation (Jeans, Castillo and Thomas, 2020); and socio-ecological resilience, focusing on adaptability, transformability and learning, i.e. adaptive and transformative capacity for maintaining and transforming systems. It is about fundamentally addressing the root or structural causes of disturbances or hazards (Pelling, Obrien and Matyas, 2014; Béné, 2013).

The desirability of capacity in relation to complex adaptive systems can be summarised as follows; absorptive capacity appears not to be entirely a desirable property, since impacts are felt and accommodated instead of adapted to and systems do not improve (Walshe, 2021); adaptive capacity is beneficial, but negative since the system returns to its previous state with no improvement (Walshe, 2014; Edson, 2021); and transformative capacity enables a system to transform into a new more resilient structure, accompanied by critical functions resuming, thus resulting in an improved system (Edson, 2021).

From this perspective, it appears that considerations of systems' improvement should be focused on securing adaptive and transformative capacities; the absence of which will more likely result in a failed or collapsed system. These discussions of these capacities raise issues pertaining to resilience parameters linked to these capacities.

It is argued that resilience is a set of conditions and processes, rather than being a fixed-end state (Turnbull *et al*., 2013). Therefore, fully leveraging the potential for resilience to advance human wellbeing requires resilience to be framed within a descriptive position such as sustainable development (Peres, Landman and Du Plessis, 2016). Such normative description creates room for focusing on the effects of the governance environment in its diverse dimensions, i.e. social, economic, political, ecological and cultural.

From these perspectives, resilience parameters are portrayed as contextual and flexible in their conceptualisation and implementation. Non-normative descriptive factors such as significance and variety, existence of natural resource endowments, access to new knowledge, inherent capacity of systems for adaptation and self-organisation, modularity and connectivity, institutional and organisational inertia and change, and systems of adaptive governance are factors influencing governance and service delivery in municipalities (Kakderi and Tasopoulou, 2017).

3.6 GOVERNANCE: ADAPTATION, TRANSFORMATION AND ECO-SYSTEMIC BALANCE

3.6.1 Introduction

The concept of resilience, presenting a hierarchy of capacities as explained in the previous section, portrays adaptive and transformative capacities as the catalyst for building flexibility and momentum for positive and radical change over time (Jeans *et al*., 2020; D’Orville, 2020).

Ziervogel, Cowen and Ziniades (2014:23) describe transformative capacity as ‘a well-developed sense of agency’. Thus, human activity is portrayed as the real catalyst for change and transformation. Also, resilience and systems thinking portray governance systems as complex, dynamic, social-ecological systems, involving human-nature dynamics (Li, 2020; Jacobs, Edwards, Markovic, Cottrill and Salt, 2020). Thus, explanations for adaptive and transformative capacities should be pursued through exploring human activity.

Understanding human activity and their relationships to systems change or transformation will enable the introduction of appropriate interventions aimed at restoring the system's balance. This provides an analytical dimension to governance in the context of systems as an object of analysis (Borisoglebsky, Naghshbandi and Varga, 2019).

3.6.2 Governance and human condition: Eco-systemic balance

The researcher finds a lead to exploring the foundations of essential power relations that impact upon, or are implicated by, change and transformation in Arendt's (1958) perspective on the existential and embodiment of life of humans from deep history to the present. The researcher holds that Arendt's (1958) articulation of the human condition provides an explanation for the complexities associated with socio-ecological systems. For Arendt (1958), the human condition, as considered by the ancient Greeks, self-reflectively enacts the way one acts in the world; i.e. the way one undertakes the human condition through various epochs throughout civilization.

Arendt (1958) proposes a hierarchy of dimensions of human condition, i.e. that the *vita activa* or active life is constituted by three fundamental human activities, each of which respond to a basic condition for life (as cited by De Sousa *et al*., 2020). The *vita activa*, as contrasted with the *vita contemplative,* or contemplative life, refers to the human life that strives to do something, corresponding with basic conditions for life, i.e. the circumstances of life encountered by people (Arendt, 1958).

In the absence of these human conditions, existence would cease to be human (Arendt, 1958; De Sousa *et al*., 2020). The *vita activa* is about the life we live together with others, now and in the future (Stonebrige, 2020). The *vita activa* is about going beyond merely crafting a way, striving for some point which might be free from labour, e.g. through automation or artificial intelligence (Stonebridge, 2020). For Arendt (1958), the essence of human relations and its value are found in the human condition, manifested through the interplay of the dimensions of human life and factors of human life.

The author further distinguishes three fundamental dimensions of human activity, or as she refers to it as the ‘human condition’ or ‘human existence’, as well as concomitant factors of human life (Arendt, 1958). Thus, the *vita activa* is viewed to have three components. Firstly, labour, which is viewed as an activity that persists throughout the life of a human being, emphasising the intimate proximity of human needs to the biological processes of the human body (Arendt, 1958). It is about the things we do to stay alive, that are necessary for us to sustain ourselves, e.g. sleeping, eating etc.

Man is intimately linked to the fruits and the pains of labour, viewing us as all being equal at a primordial biological level (Arendt, 1958). Thus, it is about serving our most basic biological needs (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). There is nothing special about labouring, besides being simply what we do to survive, to eat, to keep healthy, to shelter ourselves, and to keep life reproducing; i.e. goods are consumed in order to preserve the species (Stonebridge, 2020).

The focus is on the physical and material world (Arendt, 1958). Human existence is portrayed as a teleological determinate. All animals labour with or without coaxing, referring to a communitarian aspect of labour that defines us as biological beings or bio-animals (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). No differentiation is made between labourers (Stonebridge, 2020). It is linked to the concept of animal *laborans*; i.e. a human being akin to a beast of burden, a drudge condemned to routine, which produces goods with a fixed duration (Arendt, 1958). It invokes the concept of homo *laborans*, an hour’s worth of work is an hour’s worth of work (Arendt, 1958). Arendt (1958) suggests that labour is driven by a desire to fill our basic biological needs.

Labour is mapped with economies, for *homo laborans* were the drivers of the economic system (Arendt, 1958). The overall trajectory of economies is towards the conservation of resources in a hierarchical way, so that we have fewer and fewer winners over time, irrespective of the state; e.g. communistic, autocratic, or bureaucratic (Arendt, 2018). Thus, employing labour by necessity implies a hierarchical, authoritarian relationship between an authoritarian figure and the subordinates (Wang, 2019).

The neoclassical growth model says that if you keep on producing more of the same, e.g. the same type of factories and farms, without using new technology, then you enter a 'long-run steady state', i.e. the economy may get larger, but the standard of living may not rise, and productivity and wages may not rise for a lack of capital, thus deepening the technological change (Samuelson and Nordhaus, 2020:23). The model presents the production of physical objects. The focus is on process improvements and productivity gains (Muras and Hovell, 2014; Cloete, 2020). The thrust of an economic impulse is thus hierarchical; totalising control of human activity aimed at satisfying biological primal needs with a short-term and individualistic orientation. A human being's worth is in their labour.

Secondly, work which is about the production of something new, consisting in the unnaturalness of human existence, produces the artificial world of objects, of durable things, being attributed to the *homo faber* (Arendt, 1958). Its human condition is to belong to the world in which man creates a world of their own through the production of the artificial, characterised by culture and by estrangement to their purely material condition (Arendt, 1958). Therefore, work goes further than labour in that we engage in shaping the world we live in, creating the material means of making our lives better or more convenient; e.g. making cars or building, writing codes for apps, and designing all manners of goods for consumption. Through work we both put something in and leave something in the world; e.g. a table, a car. Thus, what we work at makes up the human reality that we all share (Stonebridge, 2020). If we make only to consume, we leave nothing in the world, and we lose that shared sense of the world (Stonebridge, 2020). As part of 'human artifice' work is more than mere nature, and we have made something that endures (Arendt, 1958:97).

According to Arendt (1958), work must be judged by its ability to maintain a world fit for human use. The goal of work is to create immortal projects that will persist across generations, giving collective meaning to what we do, by collectively creating a human reality that we all share, e.g. a table, a house, or a car (Stonebridge, 2020). Work recognises the value of being human, in that we are more than mere nature; we are capable of producing something that endures by applying divergent skills and expertise (Arendt, 1958; Stonebridge, 2020). Therefore, work refers to the kind of activity that distinguishes man according to skills; e.g. poets, architects, and mathematicians.

Men that have been liberated into the capacity of work direct the labouring masses, e.g., to build monuments. Work becomes available because of the excess resource of time, made possible by the great labouring population (Kumar, 2015; Arendt, 1958). Work is mapped with technology, for work presents all the great advances in technology (Arendt, 1958). This relates to what Arendt (1958) refers to as *poiesis*, as opposed to praxis, which is to bring novelty into existence that did not exist before (Arendt, 1958).

In this domain skilled people, through increasing varying forms, collectively create the impetus for novelty, innovation, and invention into the physical world (Arendt, 1958). The purpose of technology is to improve products and services (Muras and Hovell, 2014). The technological realm is enacted in a collaborative way. Technology enables the impulse of the economy to be accumulative, also opening up geo-social space.

Thirdly, action is the activity that is exercised directly among humans, without the mediation by object or matter, and corresponds to the human condition of plurality and occurs in a purely inter-subjective sphere (Arendt, 1958). It presents a complete break from the purely natural world (Arendt, 1958). For Arendt (1958), action is about freedom and plurality and is the specific trait that distinguishes us from other animals and objects (as cited by Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). Inter-subjective relationships are characterised by transcendence speech, which acts as a key feature of action, creating extraordinary experiences (Arendt, 1958).

The central object of human condition is viewed as the emergence of political life in an environment of plurality made possible by the exchange of rationale subjects (Arendt, 1958). It is about how you show up in the marketplace as a free person and create ideas; i.e. a creative exchange of ideas, extended to increasingly common persons (Arendt 1958). Other authors also view freedom as the ability to begin something new (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). For example, we are consciously building communities, a decision which is an expression of our freedom. However, communities can only be built in conjunction with other people. Thus, for action to be meaningful, it must exist within the context of engagement with other people. Thus, action invokes plurality or collective action (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021).

From this perspective, action is about creating redundancy, which is often seen as pejorative, whereas in the form of access capacity, it can underpin contingencies and the potential to adapt (Mitchell *et al*., 2020). Thus, action is inherently politically dependent upon recognising the other as equal to oneself. Interacting human beings are considered sources of creativity and inventiveness.

Action is mapped with geo-social space, for it is about how you show up, and communicate your identity as a unique individual in the marketplace of ideas, presenting your ‘otherness’ in the marketplace (Arendt, 1958). It improves the intangible value of groupings to which such individuals belong, or are associated with (Muras and Hovell, 2014). Geo-social space tends to distribute novelty, so that there are more identities emerging over time.

Labour, being connected to the economy, is valued above human wellbeing and is focused on satisfying primal needs. We labour by necessity. Work, being connected to technology, elevates the importance of human wellbeing, where human beings collectively improve their living space through technological advancement. We work to create human reality. Action, being connected with geo-social space, places a higher value on autonomous human beings collectively, as rational and unique subjects creating ideas for innovation and creativeness.

Thus, despite the mapping of human conditions, dimensions and factors are inter-related; all revolving around the importance of human interaction and resultant human relationships adding value to human beings. For example, a conference room and table resulting from labour and work provides a basis for action, e.g. human beings gathering and engaging to plan for action. The inter-relatedness of dimensions and factors of human conditions favour a system focused on people in dealing with their expectations and concerns (Tofling and Díaz-Gibson, 2016).

Thus, the significance of the articulations of the human condition is that it locates human activity in the context of surrounding social, economic, political and ecological factors. It effective intimately connects human activity with dynamics and complexities of socio-ecological systems. Key to the improvement of governance and service delivery is the connection to creativity, innovation and inventiveness (Godden and Ison, 2019; De Weijer, 2013; Turok, 2014). Also, it holds promise for ensuring that socio-ecological systems are stable, secure and sustainable against emergent and unexpected disturbances (Pike, Dawley and Tomaney, 2020).

In the context of socio-ecological systems, the literature refers to such relationships as interdepended eco-systemic relations, namely micro systems – intimate direct interactions e.g. with family; meso-systems – exchange with peers, e.g. at workplace; exo-systems – indirectly affected, e.g. by decision-making such as management decisions; and macro systems – influence over the overarching paradigm, e.g. ideology (Avdulaj, 2017; Ettekal and Mohoney, 2017, Bronfebbrenner, 1979; Boeren, 2019; Janssen and Van der Voort, 2019; Delgrado, Rojo, Torres-Gómez, Alfonso and Zorondo-Rodríguez, 2019; Christensen, 2016). Activities unfold according to the conditions under which they are undertaken (Jansson and Wagman, 2017). Thus ecosystemic relations present leverage points for adaptation and transformation (Abedian, 2020; Sievers-Goltzbach and Schersick, 2019; Abson *et al.*, 2017).

The figure below indicates the relationship between human activity, ecosystems, and resilience.

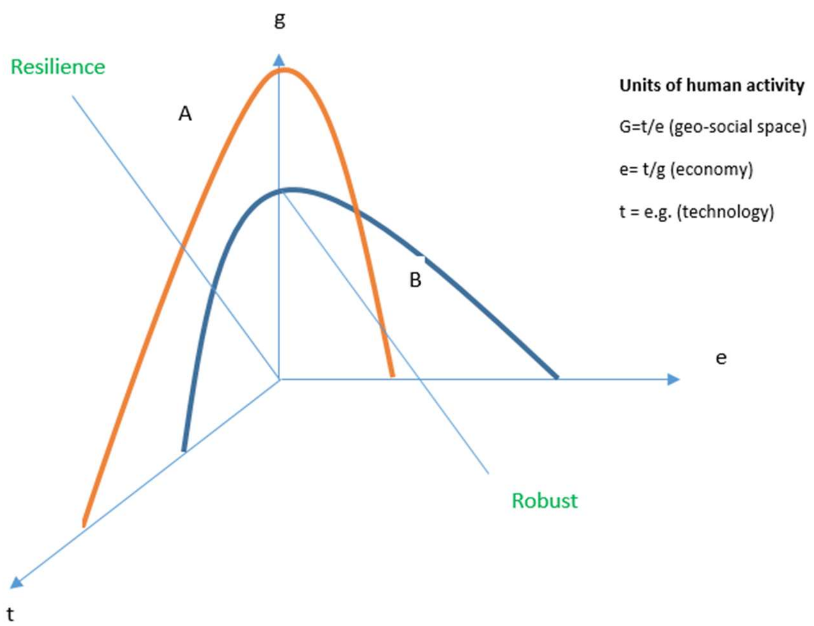


Figure 3-3: Relationship between human activity, ecosystems, and resilience

Adapted from Boeren (2019)

Societies, represented by A and B in the diagram, respond divergently to these dimensions. For example, an increase in diversity, geo social space, and technology leads to an increase in resilience, whereas less diversity and an increase in a monopolistic economy under conditions of constant technological exploration lead to a decrease in resilience. Thus, organisational resilience is increased through increased geo-social space and technology, focusing on the value of human beings in improving their living environment, and decreases through an excessive emphasis on the economy, with an emphasis on conservation and productivity. Thus ecosystemic relations may have a limiting or enhancing effect on system outputs and performances (Van Rooyen, 2018; Jarche, 2018; Farago and Scott, 2017).

Municipalities must seriously consider eco-systemic relations and their impact on stakeholders, as well as on the provision of services. The researcher proceeds to discuss a contextual governance framework, having established its roots in the multiplicity of theories as described in this section.

3.7 GOVERNANCE: A CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

As already indicated, the contextual governance framework draws on multiple theories, with the main contention that all influences flow via the key characteristics of the actors involved (Bressers, Bressers, Kuks and Larrue, 2016). The researcher postulates a contextual governance framework (CGF), encompassing the following elements; contextual setting, structures-agency interaction, and purpose.

Components and elements of the framework to be outlined should be viewed as evolving, instead of being detailed and finalised. Relationships between factors will be emphasised, as will the multi-dimensionality and multi-disciplinary character of governance (Simpson and Willer, 2015). A CGF is depicted below in Figure 3-7.

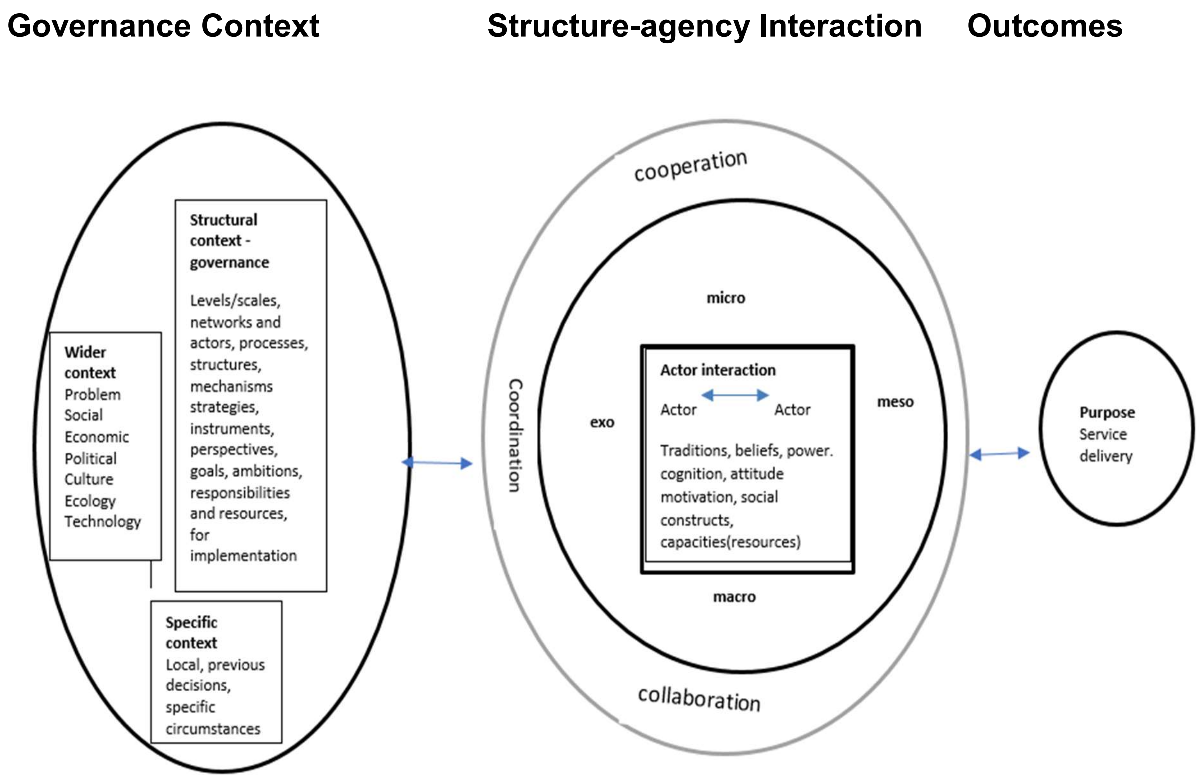


Figure 3-4: A **contextual governance framework**

Adapted from Boeren (2019)

3.7.1 Governance environment

3.7.1.1 General

These factors and dimensions of the human condition and eco-systemic relations draw attention to the structural, wider, and specific context of the governance framework, whilst the agency aspects of adaptive governance draw attention to the structure-agency interaction and purpose aspect of the governance framework. The contextual factors influence governance and service delivery in the context of a shrinking eco-space, contested socio-space, manipulated political space, and exploited economic space (Baud, Basile, Kontinen and Von Itter, 2019; McCann, 2017). These factors are intimately linked (Gollin, Jedwab and Vollrath, 2016). Thus, governance is relational and contextual in character, and this is a key aspect of the contextual governance framework.

3.7.1.2 Structural context

The structural context presents an amalgamation of the pertinent diverse aspects and traits forming a preventive, or enabling, context for action and interaction (Muthathi and Rispel, 2020; Fehr and Gintis, 2017; Bressers *et al*., 2016; Simpson and Willer, 2015). The structural context includes the rules, principles, paradigms, roles and responsibilities, thus providing for the scope and the extending of interaction.

3.7.1.3 Wider context

The wider context entails the broader external factors impacting on governance and service delivery. It involves considerations of the possible cumulative effects and consequences of economic, social, political, and ecological factors, as well as other related factors.

Governance agents have little control over some of these elements, such as natural disasters, political coups and economic collapse, which can manifest in considerable human prejudice such as impoverishment and poor health resulting from exclusion from social and economic benefits (Matlwa, 2016; Tabish, 2016; Carmody and Owusu, 2016).

3.7.1.4 Specific context

The specific context serves to ensure that governance arrangements are relevant to the local setting and having regard for aspects such as geographic location, historic orientation, previous decisions, decision-making, and framing. It does not suggest that a local setting is immune to cross-scale influences, but that local considerations are the best for considering cross-scale paradigms.

3.7.2 Structure-agency interaction

3.7.2.1 General

The structure-agency interaction component recognises that human beings interact in various eco-systemic power relations, and between and across various levels and scales informed by traditions, beliefs, motivation, social constructs, and capacities (Fehr and Gintis, 2017; Bresssers *et al*, 2016; Ariely, 2019). Stakeholder exchange is placed at the core of governance arrangements (Rhodes, 2020; Ansell *et al*., 2017; McNiell and Nienaber, 2019).

3.7.2.2 Relational exchange: Cooperation, collaboration and coordination

This component confirms that human interaction involves a relational exchange in its various forms, namely collaboration, coordination, and cooperation (Castañer and Oliveira, 2020; Zagumny, 2019). Decision-making dynamics, as essential considerations for governance, are reflected in the different modes of relational exchange in the following way; coordination, involving a high level of managerial control and decision-making, with limited follower input; collaboration, involving decentralised decision-making, but managerial sanctioning of decisions required, with controlled follower input; and cooperation, involving decision-making that is highly decentralised, with a high level of follower input (Yang, Isa and Ramayah, 2019; Jarche, 2018).

3.7.2.3 Social structures and ecosystems

Social structures refer to aspects of personal attributes, such as attitude and beliefs, that directly or indirectly shape social actions (Pineda, 2020). The discussion on structure-agency interaction portrays personal human attributes as the foundation of meaning-making through power relations. Thus, these human attributes are critical to solving societal problems, e.g. through promoting exclusivity and decreasing inclusivity (Turnhout, Metze, Wyborn, Klenk and Louder, 2019; Wang, 2019; Ndlovu, 2018; Ndlovu, 2018a).

3.7.2.4 Resources (capacities)

Resources, in the context of structure-agency interactions, refer to non-material resources that influence social progress (Muthathi and Rispel, 2020; Theron and Swart, 2018; Engler, 2017; Bressers *et al*., 2016). These capacities even enable agents to leverage material resources for the advancement of social progress (Ndlovu, 2018).

Even poor countries experience rapid income growth and enhancing the life quality of its citizens, suggesting financial resources are not a panacea for improving the quality of life of citizens (Kenny, 2020). The proven inability to exploit material resources to improve governance and service delivery opens up leveraging non-material resources as a real option.

3.7.2.5 Governance purpose: Service delivery

Service delivery is viewed as an object, a property of resilience, and thus governance (Borisoglebsky *et al*., 2019). The delivery of sustainable services is an object of local government in terms of the South African Constitution.

Among other things, the effectiveness or success of a governance system depends on its objectives; i.e. whether objectives are achieved (Carlise and Gruby, 2019). The concept of sustainability implies that governance has short-, medium- and long-term objectives.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter established a theoretical framework through the application of theoretical multiplicity, resulting in the development of a CGF, constructed in the epistemological and ontological foundations of governance theories.

Adaptive and transformative capacities were identified as critical characteristics of a resilient organisation, which are key to rendering organisations flexible. These capacities are identified as critical to enabling municipalities to operate within the complexities and dynamics associated with complex and adaptive socio-ecological systems. Adaptive and transformative capacities were explained with reference to ecosystemic power relations and relational exchange, all of which are critical to human agency (Peterson, 2020).

In the main, the researcher proposes an open system of governance that is able to navigate different disturbances and maintain system stability through continuous adaptive cycles (Pike *et al*., 2020). Several types of lock-ins, such as functional, political, and cognitive, leave a system path dependent, rendering a system inflexible, inhibiting adaptability and thus innovation and creativity (Van Aswegen, Retief and Drewes, 2020). De-locking mechanisms may involve technology, diversification, resources, and innovation (Peterson, 2020; Van Aswegen *et al*., 2020).

Governance is humanised, away from a dominant focus on the influence of government as an institution, towards a collective agency of all concerned (Pike *et al*., 2020). The dehumanisation of governance finds expression through leveraging the factors and dimensions of the human condition, eco-systemic relations, and the relational exchange in maintaining and improving system functioning. The development of the CGF laid the foundation for addressing the research methodology, appropriate for dealing with aspects raised in the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section reflects on how the research problem was investigated. The research methodology was collated in a way that incorporated a proper research design, target population and sufficient representative sample, data collection tool, as well as ethical considerations. The study embraced qualitative techniques for gathering the data to determine the governance challenges faced by the five urbanised municipalities regarding service delivery in the Northern Cape Province. The aim of the study is to help those municipalities develop an effective governance framework to improve service delivery to their communities.

The research methodology communicates the ‘strategy, plan of action, [and] procedure or techniques behind the choice and use of particular methods used in the process of inquiry linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes’ (Crotty, 2018:3). Methodology is also described as the ways of obtaining, organising, and analysing data (Polit and Hungler, 2015); the appropriate use of the technique of data collection and analysis (Prasad, 2015); and a coherent group of methods that complement one another and have the ability to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose (Henning, 2015:36).

Research methodology entails the ‘techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis’ (Crotty, 2018:3). Basically, methodology refers to the procedures, steps, and methods to be undertaken to give effect to the overall research design. The methods include sampling, measurement, and grading of the data obtained through the use of questionnaires, observations, discussions, focus groups on case studies, life history, narrative, visual ethnographical methods, data reduction analysis, theme identification, comparative analysis, explanatory methods, document analysis, content analysis, conversation analysis, etc. (Crotty, 2018). However, the current study used a qualitative research approach (Al-Ababneh, 2020).

From this perspective, the methodology should include an outline of the scope of the study, which refers to the demography the research covers; the identification and collection of data; the method of data analysis; and how the data are going to be presented, referring to the presentation of the findings and the recommendations emanating from the analysis process. Therefore, the research methodology should be understood in the broader context of the research process, consisting of four aspects; epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods that inform one another (Al-Ababneh, 2020; Crotty, 2018). The epistemology informs the understanding of theoretical perspectives. These perspectives determine the research methodology, and then the methodology guides the choice of method of research (Crotty, 2018).

4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE STUDY

4.2.1 Meta-paradigmatic worldview: interpretivism, constructivism and phenomenology

This section presents the meta-paradigmatic worldview philosophical underpinnings of the study in chapter 4.2 and 4.3 constituting interpretivism, constructivism and phenomenology hence and meta-theoretical framework in Chapter 3 as a paradigmatic triangulation that assisted with discovering, presenting and interpreting the findings contextual to the study problem statement and objectives.

The study applies a constructivism, interpretivism and phenomenology, a meta-paradigmatic philosophy, paradigmatic triangulation. In essence this approach manifest in interviewing participants in their employment setting, recording their responses, observing their demeanour while responding, interpreting and analysing their responses from the perspective of the participants and in the context of their settings and demeanour, and describing their responses in the form of findings and recommendations. The discussion of these paradigms should be viewed in this context. However, for the sake of easier presentation, the section will explain epistemology, interpretivism, constructivism and phenomenology through different sub-headings. This is described as follows:

4.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to assumptions about knowledge; what constitute acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge; and how one can communicate knowledge to others (Burrell and Morgan, 2016). For example, the multidisciplinary context of governance and service delivery renders different types of knowledge legitimate, e.g. numerical data, textual data, facts, and opinions. Thus, a range of epistemological options are available to researchers, providing a large choice of methods. However, particular epistemological assumptions favour certain types of research methods, as explained below, in relation to the epistemological research paradigm.

The researcher adopted an interpretivist and constructivist epistemological paradigm for this research because it is a qualitative study. The primary focus of research undertaken in the interpretive paradigm is the way human beings attempt to make sense of the world around them to understand the fundamental meanings attached to organisational life (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Meaning comes into existence with human encounters with the experiences of the world, as no truth is waiting to be discovered (Al-Ababneh, 2020).

The constructivist aims to understand and interpret behaviour, as well as understand a specific context, rather than predict cause and effect. Constructivism may be more concerned with the empathic or subjective understanding of human action, rather than the forces that are deemed to act upon it. Subjectivism refers to the perception that comes from anything but the object to which it is ascribed; meaning that the object itself makes no contribution, thus there is no underlying true meaning that is imposed as the object exists independent of perception (Crotty, 2018).

Interpretivists believe that reality is relative and multiple. Far from emphasising rationality, the focus is on discovering multiple subjectivities (Saunders *et al*., 2019). Therefore, there can be more than one reality and more than one single structured way to access such realities. Constructivism takes any person's account as true, and as valid as any other people's account, so long as it makes sense according to the context in which that person finds him or herself (Dixon, 2013). The interpretive paradigm seeks to explain the stability of behaviour from the individual's viewpoint

(Wright, 2015). The constructivist assumes that one cannot separate one's self from what one knows.

Further, the researcher and the matter that is studied are linked in such a way that who we are, and how we understand the world, are central parts of how we understand ourselves, others, and the world around us. Our knowledge does not present the world, but is indicative of how we, as subjects, have revolved to fit into the world according to our experiences (Wright, 2015). The constructivist presents an epistemological view of knowledge as being acquired through construction thereof, rather than being transmitted.

Thus, a qualitative research approach is used in relation to societal issues that are complex in nature and open to multiple interpretations. This is despite any prior knowledge that the researcher might have about a matter under enquiry. The nature of interpretivism renders it appropriate for issues that are complex, multiple, and unpredictable in relation to what is predicted as 'reality'. Further, the researcher ensured that the data collected were capable of dealing with the research problem and consequently could explain the issue studied.

4.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY: PHENOMENOLOGY

The research philosophy provides the overall approach and rationale for the research and must be ontologically and epistemologically linked to the problem. Stated differently, the research philosophy must give credence to the researcher's subjective views that inform the research, as well as the knowledge lens through which the researcher aims to understand the matter being researched (Saunders *et al*., 2016). The researcher adopted phenomenology as an approach to conduct this study, focusing on the interviewees' recollections and interpretations of their life experiences. The aim was to enter the social world of research interviewees and understand that world from their point of view (Saunders *et al*., 2019).

The research philosophy creates the foundation for the entire research, providing a blueprint for undertaking the research, and must respond to the problem the research aims to address (Babbie and Mouton, 2018). Various research philosophies exist, such as pragmatism, positivism, realism, etc.; however, this research study adopted a phenomenological approach.

According to Spiegelberg (2020:1), phenomenology 'is the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness', a movement that started in the 20th century. The main objective of phenomenology 'is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions' (Spiegelberg, 2020:1). Phenomenology aims to explore and describe experiences which can only be done by collecting data from individuals who have lived through those experiences (Starks and Trinidad, 2017).

A phenomenological study refers to a study whereby the attention is on exploring what people experience in their context (Corbetta, 2013). Phenomenology enables data to be gathered in a natural rather than artificial way, and aids in the establishment of new theories. However, the main disadvantage is that policy makers sometimes give poor credibility to a phenomenological study (Robson, 2002). Thus, this study used a phenomenology approach as it was appropriate for the research questions.

4.3.1 Characteristics of phenomenological study design

The four main characteristics of phenomenology are; reduction, descriptive, intentionality, and essence (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). These characteristics focus on investigating a phenomenon as it occurs, and it critiques human behaviour regarding what people say, think, and do contextual to their interpretation of the world (Pandey and Pandey, 2015:20). Also, the study used phenomenology because through it, the researcher could understand deeply the structure of the consciousness of the participants within the study case with the aim of understanding their actions and motives (Robson, 2002). Therefore, the characteristics of phenomenology are the following:

1 Description: The focus of phenomenology lies in the description of the phenomenon, and not an explanation of the phenomenon (Crotty, 2018). Phenomenology means describing the thing itself. Supposition becomes

unnecessary since the objective is to investigate it as it happens.

2 Reduction: Reduction is as a process in which the assumptions and prejudices about the phenomenon are delayed ensuring that bias does not pollute the description of the observations, and to ensure that the form of the description is the things themselves (Corbetta, 2013).

3 Essence: The essence is the core meaning of individual experiences in certain phenomena. The essence comprises the essential themes or relationships in the phenomenon, which is concerned with the essence of observed social phenomenon involving investigation, using one's imagination, and intuition to reflect whether or not a particular characteristic is an essential essence. For example, in the case of the essence of learning, a phenomenologist would consider whether any changes and progress are essential essences of the learning process.

4 Intentionality: Phenomenology uses two concepts, noesis and noema to express intentionality. Intentionality refers to as the correlation between noema and noesis that direct the interpretation of the experience. Noema is an objective statement of behaviour or experience as a reality, while noesis is a subjective reflection (consciousness) of the objective statement. In view of this, that reality is what it is, we do not any idea of reality (objective statements) (Crotty, 2018). Interrelations between consciousness to that reality are called 'intentionality' (Kumar, 2020).

4.3.2 Descriptive phenomenology

Descriptive phenomenology is a study design methodology, three key steps are outlined, namely intuit, analyse and describe.

1 Step one, to intuit: To understand the subjective phenomenon, researchers avoid assumptions, criticism, evaluation, or opinions on matters given by participants, seeking insight into action and motivation, emphasising the phenomenon studied so that a picture emerges. The researcher is an instrument in the interview

process.

2 Step two, to analyse: At this point the researcher has shown the meaning of the phenomenon exploring the relationships and links between the data of existing phenomenon to show themes or relations on the perception of phenomena. Careful analysis of data ensures a clear and powerful image.

3 Step three, to describe: The researchers' findings are communicated, and a written description of the critical elements or themes is organised, based on the classification and grouping of the phenomena. This step communicates the explicit import and significance of the experience in the actual context as lived by individuals.

Schutz (1967) argues that the daily social world is inter-subjective and is full of meaning. The phenomenological event perceived and experienced by an individual is of a transcendental nature, the association and understanding between a person and the world. According to Collins and Ison (2006), phenomenology tries to understand the informants' understanding of phenomena which appear in their consciousness and that they consider an entity in their world.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE

A research design is referred to as a plan or framework for the study that is used as a guide in collecting and analysing data; a blueprint that is followed to complete a study; and a blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Pandey and Pandey, 2015:18). A research design is also defined as a procedure to respond to the research questions and research problem validly, objectively, accurately, and economically (Kumar, 2020).

The research design aims to avoid a situation where the collected data or evidence does not address the research questions and research problem. A good research design is said to minimise bias and maximise the reliability of data collected and analysed (Pandey and Pandey, 2015:20). Measures for collecting and analysing data should combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure

(Kumar, 2020). According to Maree (2020), a research design is a plan or strategy, noting the underlining philosophical assumptions that specify the selection of interviewees, gathering of data, and data analysis.

In general, two broad research designs are accepted and used in the research process; qualitative research and quantitative research (Saunders *et al.,* 2016: 2019; Al-Ababneh, 2020). According to Saunders *et al.* (2016, 2019) and Molnikovas (2018), qualitative research is conducted in a naturalistic setting and encompasses generating a multifaceted and holistic picture of the phenomenon of interest through observation and induction. Quantitative research, by contrast, is an inquiry into an identified issue based on testing a theory, measured with numbers, and induced through statistical controls (Saunders *et al*., 2016).

This research design is explanatory, and therefore based on a qualitative approach. Qualitative research generates new knowledge by investigating phenomena using cause and effect analysis (Corbetta, 2013; Al-Ababneh, 2020). Al-Ababneh (2020) continues that qualitative research improves our comprehension of why things are, through meaning and interpretation, of the prevailing condition existing at a particular time in the social world, as well as gaining insight into why people act the way they do through a perception of others' viewpoint.

4.4.1 Explanatory research

There are four types of research approaches in qualitative research; exploratory, descriptive, explanatory (Saunders *et al*., 2019), and emancipatory (Robson, 2002). A research approach shapes the selection of research tools, providing the basis for the selection of methods and the specific format wherein the processes are used (Robson, 2002). The research approach is the central part of any research as it relates to turning research questions into a hypothesis (Kumar, 2020). This research study used the explanatory approach.

An exploratory study focuses on considering what is happening, questioning, seeking fresh perspectives, appraising phenomena from a different perspective, as well as producing ideas and hypotheses for future research. According to Robson (2002), an exploratory study is characterised by a flexible design. From the outset there is little or no information regarding a phenomenon, thus an exploratory study seeks a deeper understanding of the nature of things researched given a dearth of studies in the same space.

An explanatory study seeks clarification of the state of affairs, or questions being considered, and it does not necessarily follow a cause-effect relationship and explains paradigms relative to the examined phenomenon. An explanatory study interrogates the association between varying phenomenon in order to establish an underlying relationship between variables (Robson, 2002; Saunders *et al*., 2019). Based on the above explanation of an exploratory and explanatory research method, the researcher adopted an explanatory stance.

4.4.2 Rationale for developing a research design

The researcher deems it necessary to explain why he had to develop a research design before commencing with the study. The rationale for the research design is intimately related to the questions of data integrity and ethical considerations of the research, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The research design is an overarching plan to address the research question(s) which entails clarifying the objectives of the research, specifying the sources of collection of information, and considerations of the limitations of the research (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Strategies used in the study included interviews, case study and grounded theory (Saunders *et al.,* 2015; 2019). Selecting a research design is based on the research question(s) and objective(s), the research philosophy, and the extent of existing knowledge. The advantages of a research design are as follows:

4.4.2.1 Minimising expenditure

Research involves collecting much information, which can be costly. Therefore, the researcher strived to make the research effective by obtaining maximum information with as little cost as possible, including effort and time (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). In this regard, the researcher aimed to limit expenses by placing the emphasis on collecting only information that was relevant and that contributed to the research objectives, problem statement, and questions. The data collected were stored on a hard drive to avoid loss, thereby avoiding incurring costs for lost data.

4.4.2.2 Facilitate smooth scaling

Various research operations are smoothly scaled to make the research more efficient in relation to effort, time and money (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). The research activities were limited to only those necessary for conducting the research. Operations were planned to avoid delays, overspending, and repetition. All these steps were followed in this study to ensure that the research process was smooth and efficient, and hence the study was completed on time.

4.4.2.3 Collecting the relevant data and technique

The method of collecting the data to analyse was determined in advance so as to ensure consistency in dealing with data (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). The researcher ensured that the data collection methods and data analysis techniques were suitable for pursuing the objectives of the research by only collecting data relevant to the research. It enhanced the reliability of the findings and the conclusions.

4.4.2.4 Provide blueprint for plans

As a blueprint for undertaking the research, the research design provides for the smooth flow of operations of the research. Importantly, it allows that even third parties will be able to track the findings and conclusions of the research back through the process of collecting data, down to the research problem. In this regard, the data collection and analysis processes and methods were clearly outlined.

4.4.2.5 Provide an overview to other experts

In providing an overview of the research process, the research design provided access to the views of other experts in the field of study (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). In this way knowledge and understanding of the research were enhanced, allowing for a better understanding of the eventual research outcomes and solutions. In this regard the researcher outlined all processes and methods that were followed in the research.

4.4.2.6 Provide direction

The research design provided direction for anyone who in one way became involved in the research. In this way, the research design provided guidance for the research in relation to the research path followed, further allowing for tracking of findings back to the collected data.

4.4.2.7 Components of the research design

The research design provided an overall outline of the key components of the overall research, therefore enabling tracking throughout the research, from the planning to the recommendation phase. Core components of the research covered by the research design were type of research, research paradigm, research philosophy, theoretical frameworks, acquisition of meaningful data, analysis and evaluation of data, explanation of the phenomenon, data integrity, and ethical considerations.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY

Having established that the research philosophy is phenomenology (suited to the researcher's epistemology and ontology), the research design is qualitative, and the research approach is explanatory in nature, this section provides the justification for the data collection methodology used in this research study; i.e., the case study.

A case study refers to a research methodology that provides a deeper, multi-faceted understanding of difficult issues or problems within their real-life context (Kumar, 2020). Moreover, a case study is a well-established research methodology that is used extensively in numerous disciplines, specifically the social sciences (Crotty, 2018).

As a result, a case study is used mostly in qualitative research that emphasises the importance of gaining insight and understanding concerning an individual's perception of circumstances and events (Al-Ababneh, 2020).

A case study can focus on group of people, one person, or even or organisation, and it enables the researcher to comprehend complex, real-life challenges (Crotty, 2018). This research study is a case study of five urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province. This type was chosen as the best methodology in this study because a phenomenological philosophy, using qualitative research (as explained previously) aims to explore and describe experiences which can only be done by collecting data from individuals who have lived through the experiences in the context of five municipalities regarding their governance challenges (Starks and Trinidad, 2017).

Furthermore, the case study is a flexible methodology to gather data, as it enables the researcher to determine the relationship between people, phenomenon, and context. However, the case study challenges are that it is prone to researcher's bias since their preferences or opinions might bear influence, and it is hard to generalise the findings from one case study to another context (Robson, 2002).

4.5.1 Characteristics of case study

The case study has the following characteristics:

1. Well defined study participants, timeframe, activity, and space.
2. Context-oriented research concerning the study phenomenon, instead of research based on modelling or in a laboratory.
3. In-depth analysis of data.
4. Numerous evidence sources.
5. A research question that usually cannot be addressed by applying arithmetical data only.

4.5.1.1 Case study design

There are numerous standard steps that are used to conduct a case study design such as:

1 Determine the study case.

2 Express the research question.

3 Gather the study data.

4 Address the ethical issues of the research.

5 Analyse and interpret the obtained data.

6 Write up the research findings.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection methods must produce data that will enable the researcher to answer the research questions and ultimately contribute to providing a solution to the research problem. Furthermore, it is crucial to integrate data from a variety of sources (Maxwell, 2018). Both primary and secondary data were collected.

Secondary data, which had been produced without the researcher's involvement in the form of documents to gain insight into the context of the research question and problem, as well as to gain an understanding of the current theories and ideas relevant to the enquiry (Kelly, 2016) were collected by accessing library documents and searching the internet. Written secondary data sources included government reports; publications such as handbooks, journals, government publications; survey data such as economic data and government census of the population; manuals; data sheets; and official publications from national government. These are detailed in Chapter 2, the literature review.

Thus the researcher adopted an open stance to data collection, but engaged in content analysis and conducted interviews to gather primary data. The researcher is of the view that this approach to dealing with data corresponds with the open-ended and flexible approach associated with a qualitative research design that recognises that there are multiple solutions to a problem (Mason, 2002). Furthermore, engaging in a variety of collection methods increases the likelihood of producing multiple solutions to the problem.

Case study research is usually used to address research questions that start with the word ‘how’ or 'why', and that cannot be answered using mathematical data. The research question here is:

> *How and why does poor governance affect service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape?*

This study used interviews to determine the governance challenges faced by five urbanised municipalities regarding service delivery in the Northern Cape Province. This will help those municipalities to develop an effective governance framework to improve service delivery in their communities. The selection criteria for these municipalities were based on the fact that they were all urbanised and located within the Northern Cape Province, and that they had experienced governance and service delivery challenges. The data collected, once analysed, provided a rich description of the interviewees’ experiences (Starks and Trinidad, 2017). There was a high degree of interaction between the researcher and the interviewee.

The questions on the data gathering tool (the interview) were sharpened to wholly the address the study objectives. The researcher selected face-to-face and telephonic, semi-structured interview as the data collection tool, comprising questions covering the whole spectrum of the theoretical framework in an attempt to address the research aims and objectives (Cooper and Schindler, 2016). The amount of time that each interview lasted was an average of 60 minutes. Potential interviewees were contacted telephonically, as well as in writing, to request their consent to participate in the study. Written consent was obtained from all the interviewees.

4.6.1 Target population

A population is viewed as a complete universal array of foci or matters of concern from which a model is chosen (Williams, Unrau and Grinnell, 2016). Casteel and Bridier (2021) and Shargie and Lindtjørn (2007) note that the target population is the overall set from which a reasonable sample of elements are selected for use in a study). The study target population comprised all 50 interviewees per municipalities consisting of senior managers, middle managers, public representaives and policy experts from each of the five municipalities in the Northern Cape Province (Sol Plaatje, Ga Segonyana, Dawid Kruiper, Nama Khoi and Emthajeni). Bergmann, Kneip, De Luca and Scherpenzeel (2019) indicate that the target population interviewees ought to have the knowledge applicable to the field of study.

4.6.2 Research sample

A sample refers to a group, representatives, or interviewees participating in the interview processes (Neuman, 2020). This research sample population originally comprised 100 interviewees; i.e. 20 interviewees from each municipality under study, including the municipal manager, senior managers and middle managers. Thus, a population of 20 participants from each selected municipality.

Interviewees were selected based on the rationale that all interviewees were from urbanised municipalities are affected by governance and service delivery challenges within Northern Cape Province. Moreso, those interviewees were selected based on the fact that they could respond to interview questions and were able to be interviewed personally or telephonically since the interviewees were conducted during the Covid 19 pandemic and all the interviews had to be in line with Covid-19 pandemic social distancing guidelines.

In the end, there were 50 interviewees from each of the five urbanised municipalities in line with the study objectives; hence a total of 250 participants. A purposive sampling procedure was employed to select study interviewees, ensuring no distortions and enhanced originality in the form of information gathered from them (Kelly, 2016; Etikan *et al*., 2016).

The purposive sampling technique was appropriate for the study because it ensured that the selected interviewees were specifically from those municipalities affected by governance and service delivery issues. The interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy (Rutakumwa *et al*., 2019).

4.6.3 Data collection tool

As part of this study, research tools were developed for the collection of data from targeted interviewees. The systemic collection of data ensured that all interviewees were asked the same question in the same order (Saunders *et al*., 2015).

The study used semi-structured, face-to-face and telephonic interviews to collect data from the interviewees (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2015). Interviews were conducted with senior managers, middle managers, and other relevant interviewees within the municipalities. These persons were selected based on their extensive knowledge and experience in the fields of public administration and governance. The interview questions were in line with study objectives, problem statement, and theoretical framework of the study (Myers, 2019). The researcher used prepared questions, supported by sub-questions during the interviews.

An interview allows for a full description of information so that the interviewer can get the full range and depth of information. However, it can be time consuming, costly, and hard to analyse and compare. Therefore, the study's interviews were well planned for, and sufficient time was allocated for activities relating to the interviews. Particular attention was given to securing a suitable venue where the interviewees felt secure at their work place, keep interviews as short as possible, explaining the purpose of the interview, and providing assurance that the identity of the interviewee was protected.

The researcher commenced the interviews with factual questions and did not give his opinion and avoided leading questions to ensure that the information came from the interviewees. The interview questionnaire comprised open-ended questions so as to obtain rich detail (Koshy, 2020). The researcher visited the institutions where the interviewees worked or perform their daily. The possibility of conducting interviews through audio-visual media like Skype was not excluded when the situation demanded it; however, personal visits were the preferred method. However, all interviews were conducted face-to-face and telephonic.

Alongside making observational notes, an accurate data collection was ensured by making audio recordings throughout the interviews. The researcher was actively involved in the collection process by interviewing, observing, reflecting, and transcribing information collected throughout the interviews. The data were kept in a secure setting under lock and key.

Assurance was given about the protection of the identity of the interviewee, in order to ensure that ethical considerations were adhered to, in that the real names of the interviewees in question were removed for anonymity purposes.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative research design requires the final result of the data analysis phase delivers findings that reflect the research aims and objectives. Through the data analysis, the research problem should be addressed. True to the nature of explanatory qualitative research, data were collected simultaneously with the data analysis, which took the form of coding as a categorisation strategy.

Coding involves fracturing the collected data, and arranging data into categories (Maxwell, 2012). The researcher tried not to collect more information than was required for the research. However, data collection is not merely about where to find data that is already in a collectable state but is also about how best you can generate data from a chosen data resource (Mason, 2002). This is mainly because the method of data collection is more than just a practical technique or procedure for obtaining data. It stems from the fact that the data generating process involves activities that are analytic, interpretive, and intellectual.

Thereafter, the researcher followed a process of transcribing, allowing for the emergence of themes (Bryman and Bell 2014). Verbatim transcriptions were chosen as these allow for the in-depth analysis of content (Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi, 2020).

The researcher engaged in content analysis, which involves the interpretation and analysis of documents, as well as the transcripts of the interviews, to explain the true meaning of the data (Walliman, 2020; Kelly, 2016). A theory was developed from the patterns, trends, and common themes emanating from examining, interpreting, and categorising the collected data (Walliman, 2020; Kelly, 2016). Statements made by the interviewees were reviewed to categorise them into themes (Wagner, 2021).

In analysing and interpreting the data, the researcher did not include external factors outside the study’s scope, and also ensured that there was no over-interpreting of the expected results. Hence the findings were supported by the data. He did not exercise any defence mechanisms in interpreting the results; i.e. providing an excuse where the research did not support a pre-adopted view of the research outcomes (Pandey and Pandey, 2015).

Regarding these factors, the researcher ensured that he kept track of those factors that did not apply to the study rationale and related to a broader understanding of the matter under enquiry. Furthermore, the research findings were supported exclusively by the collected data and not based on views unrelated to the data. This was achieved by ensuring that the analysis adhered to the following defining characteristics; objectivity, by being based on clear guidelines for gathering and categorising data; systematic, in that as much as possible data was assigned to clearly identified categories in accordance with established guidelines; and generality, by ensuring that the findings fitted into the broader theoretical context of the research (Bordens and Abbot, 2020:247).

The researcher adopted the approach that concepts and definitions remained open to revision and refinement in the process of data collection and analysis, consistent with the approach of qualitative research that concepts should emerge from the data collected (Kelly, 2016).

The qualitative analysis process involves a de-contextualisation of the data into categories of analysis, and a re-contextualisation of data into a new whole that allows for new insight and interpretation (Wagner, 2021). In the main, data analysis involves editing of data, categorisation of data, and translating themes and concepts into theories that explain the results of the enquiry. Inductive thinking is applied in this process (Kelly, 2016).

4.7.1 Data editing

The data preparation stage consisted of writing up the transcripts from the audio recordings. The researcher edited the collected data ensuring that the data were relevant to a specific aspect of research, as well as being representative of the body of knowledge relevant to the area of research. The aim was to ensure that the data were free of inconsistencies and incompleteness by identifying and minimising, as far as possible, errors, misclassifications, and gaps in the information (Kumar, 2020).

Furthermore, the researcher extensively perused the data to ascertain whether it made sense. The analysis was a continuous process whereby notes and transcripts were coherently reviewed, leading to a detailed understanding of the data. Additionally, other literature sources (i.e. the secondary data) were considered whilst completing the set objectives.

4.7.2 Data coding

It is part of the interpretive process of moving ‘from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea’ (Richards and Morse, 2007:56). A fundamental part of the analytics and breakdown of data in qualitative research is coding and reconfiguring the data into something new (Elliot, 2018).

In order to establish a framework of thematic ideas, coding is used to index or categorise the text (Gibbs, 2017). Coding is primarily a hermeneutic (or interpretive) act that represents the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis (Saldana, 2016). Data coding is just one way of analysing qualitative data, not the only way (Saldaňa, 2016).

Coding is the process of analysing qualitative texts data ‘by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way’ (Creswell, 2015:156). Coding in qualitative research is all about ‘your definition of the data analysis’ (Gibbs, 2017:97). Emerging patterns of codes may be an indication of a trend in the data giving rise to categories, as coding not only labels data but links data to an idea.

Coding is cyclical, through incorporating more cycles into the coding process, richer meanings can be derived, and categories, themes, and concepts can be generated from the data (Saldaña, 2014). Coding is not just labelling data, it is linking the data to an idea and connecting the idea back to other data for structured analysis of the relationships between codes.

In order to conform with validity and reliability standards associated with qualitative research, coding procedures are well defined, rigorous, and applied consistently (Williams and Moser, 2019). The first level coding, e.g. open coding, uses descriptive, low inference codes which are useful in summarising segments of data and provide the basis for later, higher order coding. Second level codes, e.g. axial and selective codes, may be more interpretive, requiring some degree of inference beyond the data (Elliot, 2018). The researcher applied a manual, inductive system of coding the data. Open coding, or inductive coding, begins with nothing, creating codes based on the qualitative data, thus codes arises directly from interview responses.

Qualitative data coded manually could be influenced by the cognitive biases of the coder. In order to keep the coding dependable, consistent, and accurate, the researcher ensured tracking from the raw data to the developed theory and backwards. Records were kept of the coding process, including memos and notes. The researcher was mindful of definitional drift, which occurs at the outset when the data set are coded differently to material coded at a later state. Notes and descriptions were kept on variations in coding across results.

The coding process broadly involves breaking the qualitative dataset into smaller blocks, reading the data sample, and creating codes covering the sample. The sample is re-read, and the codes created for the first sample are applied. Codes based upon the second sample were created, and all responses and recoding were repeated until all data were coded.

Inductive coding is an interactive process, but gives a complete, impartial view of the themes throughout the data (Wagner, 2021). Any addition of new codes, or a change in existing codes, was reviewed in relation to how they affected the coding of all the responses. This was done to avoid the same responses at different points in the coding process, as one could end up with different codes. The coding process will be explained in more detail below.

In order to ensure the consistency, accuracy, and reliability of the coding, the following guidelines were adopted; codes were informed by the literature review and the theoretical framework codes adopted meanings that captured the essence of what the data revealed.

In the event that the data presented with irreconcilable codes, the representative code selected was the one which had the more profound impact on the ability to deliver services; e.g. narrow-mindedness and customer perspectives as axial codes, which are paradoxical, were condensed into just narrow-mindedness as it impacted upon how a municipality needed to deal with customer-related issues.

Care was taken to ensure that meanings were captured from the point of view of the interviewee, i.e. disregarding the subjective perceptions of the researcher, and the coding process was repeated until the meanings of concepts, categories, and themes were exhausted. The process was repeated five times, besides the continuous and ongoing considerations.

There were three levels of analysis: (a) open coding, (b) selective coding, and (c) theoretical coding (Saldaňa, 2016). At each level of analysis, constant comparison was used to distil the data until themes emerged from the data. Open coding, the first stage in the coding process, is an emergent coding technique, through which grounded theory is created, drawn from grounded theory methodology (Tshishonga and Mafema, 2010; Blair, 2015; Strauss and Corbin, 2018). As implied, open coding opens the coder as the researcher engages with the data as new theoretical possibilities are revealed.

Opening codes and categories were exploratory and subject to modification as the analysis process progressed (Theron, 2015). In open coding, the researcher found distinct concepts and themes for categorisation (Williams and Moser, 2019). The first level of evidence was organised by creating initial broad thematic domains for data grouping (Williams and Moser, 2019). Units classifying expressions (i.e. single words, short sequences of words) were created to attach annotations and/or 'concepts' (Flick, 2019:307). In open coding, this is known as the 'concept-indicator' model. Briefly, the concept-indicator model continually evaluates textual indicators focusing on comparing frequently arising written data.

The ongoing coding of themes was adjunct to weighing them to previous indicators coded in the same way (Saldafia, 2019). In practice, the researcher needs to sift through responses and organise similar words and phrases and concept-indicators into broad initial thematic domains (Williams and Moser, 2019). In this first step of open coding, the data are broken up into smaller parts that are deeply analysed. The aim of this analysis is to grasp the core idea of each part and to develop a code to describe it (Saldafia, 2019; Vollstedt, 2019).

In the second step, the similarities and differences of these small analytical components were weighed against each other, and those which were similar were accordingly labelled (Vollstedt, 2019). The overall goal of open coding is to develop a wealth of codes with which to describe the data (Saldafia, 2019; Vollstedt, 2019). Codes that are applied during open coding are not *a priori* codes, and the researcher tried not to impose their own codes (Blair, 2015). Each block of data was interpreted and considered, centered on the properties of the data. Further, the researcher ensured that data related to the same subject were labelled with the same codes.

The second and third steps in discovering grounded theory involves axial and selective coding. Axial coding is required to interrogate the associations between concepts and categories developed during the open coding process (Volstedt, 2019). With axial coding, the researcher began to draw connections between the codes, with the goal of strategically reassembling data that had been split during the initial coding (Theron, 2015). In the process of crossing out synonyms and redundant codes, the dominant codes become apparent.

Codes separated during the open coding process were then combined in a different manner in the process of axial coding, and links were established between categories and their sub-categories (Vollstedt, 2019). The properties and dimensions of a category were then specified (Saldaña, 2016).

Categories were informed by underlying terms indicating the phenomenon with respect to incidents or occurrences resulting in the manifestation or advancement of a phenomenon; a specific set of characteristics in which the phenomenon is rooted. These perspectives assist in detecting relations between context, which is the specific set of characteristics in which the phenomenon is embedded; intervening strategies, which are the wide and overall circumstances that impact action/interaction strategies; action or interaction strategies that are directed towards the phenomenon; and action and interaction that are performed, or not performed, as an answer to, or to overcome, a phenomenon, which then lead to results and consequences (Vollstedt, 2019).

Core categories illustrate the key characteristics of the phenomenon, and causal categories capture the situations that form the configuration of the phenomenon being studied. The phenomenon strategies describe the actions or interactions of people, and consequential categories represent the outcomes of the actions or interactions (Theron, 2015). Accordingly, by means of axial coding, the researcher was able to answer the when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences questions (Saldaña, 2016). Broader categories were determined that made connections between the codes.

During axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations (Strauss and Corbin, 2018). Axial coding further refined, aligned, and categorised the themes. The collected data were sorted, distilled, and categorised with the aim of establishing unique topical categories in preparation for selective coding (Saldafia, 2019). Axial coding recognises relationships between open codes for the purpose of developing core codes. Major (core) codes emerged as collections of the most closely inter-related (or overlapping) open codes for which there was strong supporting evidence (Strauss, 2018).

According to Vollstedt (2019), the last step in formulating a grounded theory, and the goal of selective coding, is the integration of the distinct categories that were developed, elaborated upon, and mutually dependent during axial coding. All categories were connected around one core category (Theron, 2015). To reach this goal, the results from axial coding were further elaborated, integrated, and validated (Saldafia, 2019). The umbrella process theoretical code, or core category, encompassed all codes and categories. It addressed the how and why questions to explain the phenomena (Theron, 2015). Selective coding is quite like axial coding but conducted on a more conceptual level.

The categories were theoretically incorporated into a cohesive, overarching theory included under a core category linked to all other categories established during the axial coding phase (Theron, 2015). It raised issues pertaining to what the research is all about and what the data revealed (Vollstedt, 2019). The core category described the central phenomenon around which all the other categories were integrated (Saldafia, 2019). Thus, selective coding was the process of choosing the core category and relating it with the other categories from the axial coding phase (Vollstedt, 2019). The core category developed in selective coding could come from advancing one of the categories from the axial coding stage, or it might be a new category that derived based on another category (Saldafia, 2019).

According to Theron (2015), selective coding is the culmination of the grounded theory process. Its purpose is to outline a new theory or modify an existing theory based upon the research. The core category represents the pivot of the research ideally; the researcher should be able to elucidate such theory simply in one's research report in few words.

All the interviews were coded manually during open coding. They were analysed in batches of five, allowing for analysis before moving on to additional interviewees. The researcher coded each batch and analysed for categories or themes. The entire analysis was conducted manually. In the next analysis phase, selective coding, the researcher searched to find categories emerging from the similarities in the open codes. Theoretical coding resulted from the relationships both within and across the open codes and selective codes. Adhering to grounded theory methodology, questions were asked of some interviewees but not of others. Constant comparison was exercised to ensure that additional weight was not added on a per code basis only.

4.8 DATA INTEGRITY PROCESS

The integrity of data pertains to the manner data are being dealt with throughout the research and refers to the rigour of qualitative research for which criteria are set (Le Roux, 2017). Rigorous research is said to require the application of research tools that are appropriate to meeting research objectives, which ought to be aligned with the ontology and epistemology of the research (Le Roux, 2017).

In the main, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability need to be assured (Le Roux, 2017). There is also reference to trustworthiness, credibility, applicability, and consistency (Hammarberg, Kirkman and De Lackey, 2016). The suitability of the data was ensured by examining whether or not the data were appropriate for the research, sufficient for conducting the research, all variables were covered, that there were greater benefits than costs, and that the data were accessible (Walliman, 2020).

The storage of data is an important aspect of maintaining integrity of the data, ensuring that information that is not for the public domain remains protected. Data may contain confidential information about people or organisations, and therefore, it was important to devise a storage system that was safe and only accessible to the researcher. The transmission of data occurred in a secure way and was not open to unauthorised access. A draft of the research will only be made available to colleagues or the supervisor for comments on proviso that information be kept confidential (Walliman, 2020).

The researcher maintained the relevance and integrity of his activities aimed at providing a solution to the research problem. Distorting the data is a serious lapse of honesty as it would present a distorted view of the matter researched. Bias is an aspect of the research that was avoided, and any possibility of bias was clarified and explained. In order to achieve that, the data analysis and research results uphold various qualities that ensured the integrity of the overall research. These integrity features are discussed next.

4.8.1 Authenticity and credibility

Credibility concerns the genuine value and validity of the research, which relates to the capacity of the researcher to consider the difficulties involved in the study and the ability to grapple with themes and categories that are not easy to describe (Mills, 2020:85). It requires that results be recognisable to people who share the experience and those who care for, or treat, them (Hammarberg *et al*., 2016).

Credibility is reflected in substantial descriptions of the interpretation process, as well as verbatim quotations from the data to support their interpretation (Hammarberg *et al*., 2016). In relation to transcribing recorded or audio-visual information obtained though the interview process, care was taken that transcripts reflected the views of the interviewee, and not that of the researcher. There was thus congruence between the data and their interpretation. All evidence relevant to the research problem and solutions was given, instead of just providing a bare statement of findings.

4.8.2 Validity or trustworthiness

Validity refers to the authenticity and consistence of the data collected and is intimately related to bias, which refers to ways in which data collection and analysis could be distorted by the researcher’s theories, values, or preconceptions (Maxwell, 2018).

In dealing with these, one needs to understand how it influences the conclusions of the study (Maxwell, 2018). Impartiality and neutrality need to be confirmed. From this perspective one needs to ascertain whether the researcher explains what he claims to explain. It concerns conceptual and ontological clarity, and how one has been able to translate it into a meaningful and relevant epistemology (Maxwell, 2018).

In relation to the interpretation of data, the researcher took care not to replace the views of the interviewees with his own interpretation. Information obtained from the interviewees reflected the views of the interviewee. Care was taken to ensure that the data collected related to the concepts under investigation, and that the data evidence reflected particular conclusions. Relational measures thus enabled the researcher to produce valid findings and to provide a true reflection of reality.

Validity holds that the outcome of the research is appropriate and fully justifiable, as well as properly based on the data (Drobot, 2015). A valid outcome is one that is 'well founded and applicable, sound and to the point, against which no objection can fairly be brought' (Binu *et al.*, 2015:237). The researcher exercised self-reflexivity by being conscious of, and understanding, his role in the research, with particular reference to capabilities, knowledge, experience, values, hopes and fears, as well as his epistemological and ontological stance (Woods, Macklin and Lewis, 2016).

To ensure that the data were appropriately handled and that the research questions were fully and responsibly addressed, the researcher ensured that the questions and methodology correlated. This was done by ensuring that the findings were based on supporting evidence, including the analysis of cases that did not fit within the conclusions, and including enough context for the reader to examine the interpretation. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that he properly accounted for each step in the analysis process. Differently stated, the researcher ensured that he accounted for the outcome of the research by logging each crucial decision and the interpretation of each discovery. This was done continuously as the study progressed.

In this way, the researcher enabled a reviewer to follow the progression of events and decisions, and understand their logic, requiring that adequate description, explanation and justification of methodology and methods be provided (Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016).

Data were organised and kept safe, and a diligent literature and documentary control was exercised.

The researcher made use of the following model to ensure the validity of the data collection methods and analysis (Creswell, 2016:252). Firstly, the researcher examined the validity of data generation methods, considered what data generation methods and sources could potentially produce, and how well they could do this (Creswell, 2016). The researcher clearly indicated how he pursued an explanation of what he wanted to explain and how he intended explaining it; distinct from what the content of the explanation was (Creswell, 2016).

The researcher showed how he reached decisions on methodology, the kind of explanations, and the process of data analysis, as well as the logic behind connecting the chosen method with the intellectual problem and research questions (Creswell, 2016). Secondly, the researcher showed how particular methods, and aspects of methods or data sources, demonstrated how and why the methodological strategy was a valid way to pursue the research questions (Creswell, 2016). Thirdly, the researcher ensured that the data analysis method ensured a valid interpretation, which involved asking how valid one's data analysis was, and the interpretation on which it was based (Creswell, 2016). The researcher also explained how the data were integrated (Creswell, 2016).

4.8.3 Applicability or transferability

Applicability, or transferability, concerns external validity (Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016). This requires that the findings of the study be capable of fitting into a context outside the study situation, and that a comprehensive explanation of the context be provided in order for the researcher to base a critique within different contexts feasible (Mills, 2017:86).

This involves verifying the relevance of the findings. The qualitative researcher attempts to yield results that are transferable to other contexts, so that people benefit from the results of the study when an analogous situation occurs. The research was conducted considering the view that the results could be generalised to the larger population. The researcher enhanced applicability by avoiding data saturation, so as to avoid a repetition of data, or data that did not offer new directions or raise new questions (Hammarberg *et al.*, 2016). This was done by collecting only relevant and sufficiently adequate data for the research.

4.8.4 Dependability

Dependability refers to the 'stability' of the research information (Mills 2017:86). It measures trustworthiness in qualitative research and is met through securing consistency in the findings (Holloway, 2016; Streubert, Speziale and Carpenter, 2015). It is obtained through credibility, without which it cannot be attained (Streubert *et al.*, 2015).

The findings should be supported by data, which should be collected, analysed, and interpreted in a manner consistent with the requirements of a qualitative study. Further, the findings should be able to be verified independently by following the selected methods of collection, analysis, and interpretation. The researcher ensured that the chosen methods were followed and that the research supervisor examined the data, interpretation, analysis, findings and recommendations of the research. Particularly, the researcher ensured that the questions, data, and methods were appropriate, and that he could account for each step in the analysis process (Richards, 2016).

4.8.5 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the fairness and impartiality of data (Mills, 2017). Confirmability is a criterion for measuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research, evaluating data quality, and the neutrality or objectivity of the data (Polit and Hungler, 2015:435). It ensures that the findings are free from bias. It should be demonstrated that findings and recommendations can be traced back to the data and thought processes. In this study, the supervisor examined whether the findings corresponded with the collected data. In the instance of interviews, the data obtained from experts serves as a source of verification of the data in that the researcher ascertained the extent to which primary data confirmed or rejected the secondary data, and vice versa. The researcher continuously checked whether the findings emanated from the collected data.

Any possibility of bias was acknowledged and explained by deliberately disclosing essential inferences or prejudices that required certain questions and results to be put in a certain way (Mills, 2017). In the context of the concern with overall questions of accuracy in the research methods and practices, the researcher ensured and demonstrated that the data generation and analysis were appropriate for the research questions, and also was honest, careful, and accurate. In this way the researcher demonstrated and indicated that he had not invented or misrepresented any data or had been careless in the analysis of the data.

4.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The protection of human subjects through the application of appropriate ethical principles is important in any research study (Arifin, 2018). In a qualitative study, ethical considerations have a particular resonance due to the in-depth nature of the study process. Throughout the entire research process, from selecting a topic of research through the collection and analysis of data and final dissemination of study results ethics underpins the research study (Mustajoki *et al*., 2017).

When collecting data from interviewees, distinctive from instrumentation and procedural concerns, ethical concerns need to be respected and treated diplomatically and with sensitivity. The researcher should consider the interviewees' privacy, respect interviewees as personages and avoid subjecting interviewees unnecessary to research (Saunders *et al*., 2015).

In any research study, where people are involved as important participants, the researcher should detail how the human and civil rights of the interviewees' will be protected, such as reference to voluntary informed consent, ensuring privacy, legal rights and cognitive capability (Sekaran, 2015).

In this light, taking ethical considerations into account, consent was obtained from all interviewees prior to commencing with the interviews. Targeted interviewees were clearly briefed as to the purpose of the research prior to gathering data in such a manner so as not to unduly influence interviewees ensuring the reliability of the data collected and enhancing the reporting in an honest and truthful manner. Overall, the following ethical issues were observed during the data collection process (refer to the Appendices):

4.9.1.1 Right to privacy

The interviewees were informed that they could choose whether or not they wished to take part in the study and could elicit their right not to do so.

4.9.1.2 Right to anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality are crucial and should be maintained throughout the research process; from the planning phase to the submission phase (Arifin, 2018). The principle of autonomy is central to research ethics. Autonomy refers to a study participant's right to self-governance, liberty, privacy, individual choice, and freedom of will (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019). People have the right to freedom and self-control, to make decisions and act on them, without coercion from external forces (Mustajoki and Mustajoki, 2017).

According to Arifin (2018), informed consent upholds the study subject's independent decision-making. The informed consent process respects an individual's right to determine for themselves whether or not taking part in the research will be in harmony with their values, beliefs, and interests (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019; Kalema, 2017).

Arifin (2018), in explaining the notion of informed consent, has stressed that only if the potential interviewee is accurately informed, has the capacity to understand given information, and is able to voluntarily decide about participating, can valid informed consent be obtained. The informed consent process lasts through the entire research process.

Consequently, no identifying information about the individual was revealed in written or other communication. Study informants remained anonymous, and the responses of all interviewees were kept confidential. Codes were used instead of interviewees' names and surnames (Mouton, 2015). To ensure safety and confidentiality, all collected information was handled and stored privately in a lockable cabinet (Mouton, 2015).

4.9.1.3 Right to full disclosure and informed consent

Interviewees were given an informed consent form explaining the details of the study after adequate, truthful, and accurate information about the study had been provided (Mouton, 2015).

4.9.1.4 Right to fair/equitable treatment and justice

The concept of distributive justice applies to interviewees in the research (Pérez, Rapiman, Orellana and Castro, 2020). The principle of justice asserts that all people should be treated with fairness and equality (Beaucamp and Childress, 2019). All the interviewees should receive the same benefits.

All the interviewees were treated fairly without discrimination, and the researcher was accountable for upholding the interviewees' rights (Burns and Grove 2016). For example, in relation to selection, relevant population participants were provided an impartial opportunity to participate in the research, given the freedom of choice to participate or not.

Another important aspect was that there were no incentives to encourage participation (Pérez *et al*., 2020). There were no favoured or non-favoured groups.

4.9.1.5 Beneficence and non-maleficence

Considering the ethical values of all concerned, the researcher's obligation to promote the wellbeing of the study subjects and society beneficence and non-maleficence are emphasised by Beaucamp and Childress (2019), while avoiding harming study subjects and society was obligatory. The researcher is responsible for maximising potential benefits and minimising detrimental effects.

Qualitative research methods involve human beings, interviewees, while not physically harming interviewees, human beings can experience psychological, emotional, and social harm; such as fear, painful memories, shame, grief, or embarrassment. To preclude any manipulation of the study interviewees, any hurt to which interviewees may be revealed, the anticipated benefits and social value of the study must be within reason.

Other aspects that are essential to safeguarding study interviewees from harm embrace valid and scientific planning of the study as well as ensuring that the researcher was mature to conduct ethical research (Pietilä, Nurmi, Halkoaho and Kyngäs, 2020). Additionally, researchers are obliged on an ongoing basis to monitor and assess potential risk during the research process to interviewees (Mouton, 2015). The researcher was sensitive to the ethical considerations as outlined above and applied these principles during the research process.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to provide an oversight to, and understanding of, the approach the researcher adopted when addressing this research study into the challenges of governance in five urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province. The chapter also explained the qualitative research techniques. These included, but were not limited to, the research design, sampling design, data collection, validity, reliability, and analytical procedures. The methodological approach discussed in this chapter was intended to yield honest and reliable outcomes in respect of the findings of the study. The following chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Paradoxically, the data portrays two overarching forces at play in the governance service delivery arena; namely a general operational and compliance-oriented approach, pruned on conservation of the known; and an approach based on awareness of the effects of conservation strategies on human advancement. Further, the data lays the foundation for an alternative approach to those that preserve the status quo. The discussion below unpacks the emergent themes from the data, intending to uncover the building blocks of a theory that underpin such an alternative approach.

In Chapter 4, the methodology of the study was discussed to show how the study was conducted in terms of data collection, data analysis, and presentation. This chapter presents the practical analysis of results gathered from the fieldwork concerning the governance framework used in five urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province. This chapter also discusses the interviewees' comprehension of the term 'governance'. How governance influences service delivery, and the significance and efficiency of the current governance framework used within these five urbanised municipalities. The results are mainly presented in relation to responses to research questions. Main themes relating to each question are discussed and interpreted in the context of categories identified for each question. Explanations are supported by appropriate figures to facilitate and enhance understanding of themes and categories.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The demographic information provided of senior managers accountable for implementing governance and service delivery arrangement is presented. It relates to their gender, distribution, age, and academic qualifications. There were more male than female senior managers. Most male senior were below 40 years of age. Two municipalities have senior managers with a degree or diploma in Public Policy Management and Governance, whilst senior managers in three of the municipalities have an educational background in governance and public policy.

5.2.1 Gender distribution

There were both male and female senior managers in the urbanised municipalities. Thus, the senior management demographics are patriarchal in nature; i.e., male dominated.

5.2.2 Work experience (number of years)

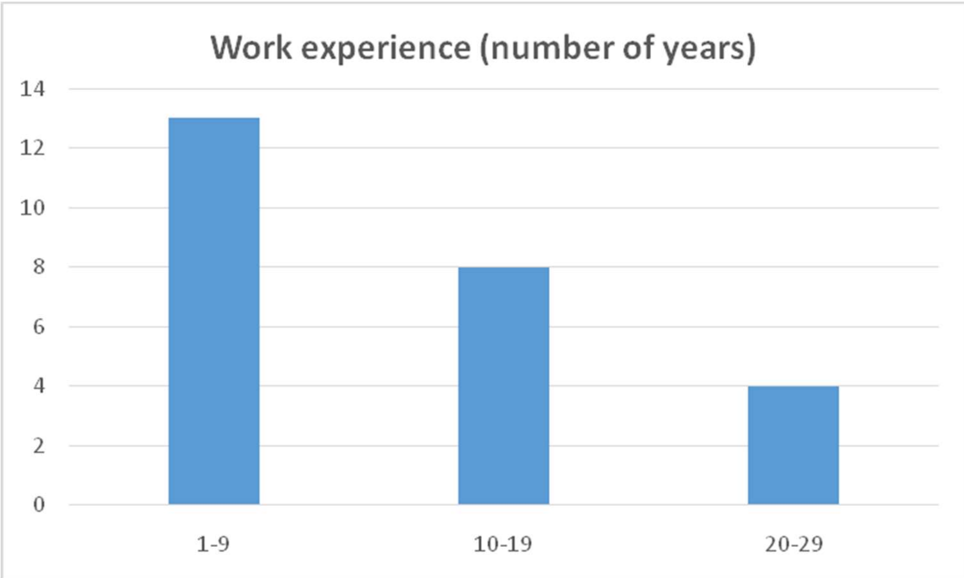


Figure 5-1: Work experience (number of years)

The figure above indicates that the senior management conforms to the formal level of experience required in municipalities, which is five years or more. Moreover, it shows that there are 13 people who have 1-9 years' work experience, followed 8 people who have 10-19 years' work experience, and 4 people who have 20-29 years' work experience.

Therefore, the level of experience bears relevance in the context of the prevailing system of governance and service delivery experience of citizens. Experience infers an innate knowledge and understanding of one's sector, operations, and the people and things in it.

5.2.3 Age distribution of senior managers

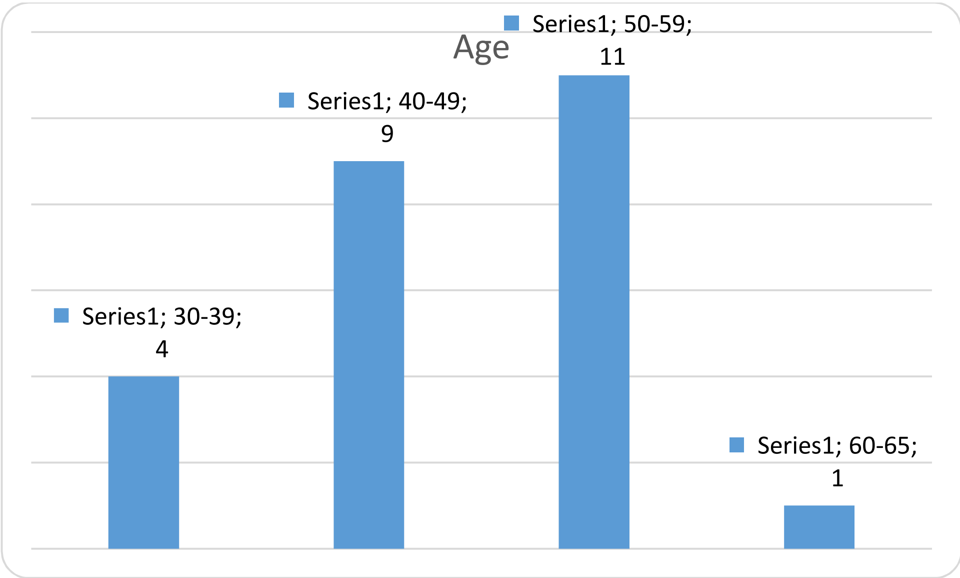


Figure 5-2: Age distribution of senior managers

The figure above indicates that 12 of the senior managers are approaching retirement age, nine are senior managers in middle-age, and a mere four are youths. The significance of age lies in the possibility of infusing senior management with fresh ideas, as well as the likelihood of introducing municipalities with adaptive capacities and futuristic thinking. These concepts will be elucidated in the discussion of the findings in the next chapter.

5.3 CATEGORIES EMERGED FROM CODING AND HOW THESE CATEGORIES ARE TRACEABLE TO THEMES

Content analysis is employed to validate that findings and conclusion emerged from the data. Axial codes emerged as categories from core ideas relating specific open codes. Qualitative content analysis through continuous tracking and navigation of the data led to the discovery by the researcher that interviewees' responses in relation to questions, reflected reference to the following aspects in relation to axial codes: key characteristics of a phenomenon, e.g. governance as operational; causal factors, e.g. singular view of governance challenges as finance challenges; consequential factors, singular views resulting in ill-conceived interventions and strategies; e.g. governance as involving finance oriented performance indicators. Thus categories are denoted under these headings.

Theoretical or selective codes emerged from axial codes, e.g. participation and cooperation as representative of participation, consultation, cooperative governance and maximise input. By implication theoretical codes have causal, strategic and consequential foundations and can be explained in relation to these.

5.3.1 Introduction

The following themes associated with governance and service delivery challenges in urbanised municipalities that emerged from the data are open-mindedness, closed or narrow-mindedness, development, leadership, capacitation and learning, cooperation, service orientation, strategy, purposefulness, and flexibility to mention but a few.

The researcher also considered other themes, such as purposefulness into strategy, inflexibility into contextualisation and diverse perspectives into mindedness, inter-relationships and inter-connectedness into cooperation, and principle-orientation and ethical considerations into leadership.

In short, the researcher identified seven main themes; leadership, mindedness, learning and capacitation, strategy, service orientation, cooperation, and development. The relationship between the mentioned themes was covered when answering the research questions. Theoretical codes, or themes, emerged from central, causal, strategic, and consequential categories, and the discussion of the themes reflect these categories. The themes form the basis for the discussion of the research results in Chapter 6.

5.3.2 What do you understand by the term 'governance'?

Based on the categories emergent from the data, the following themes became apparent: development, open-mindedness, service orientation, strategy, closed-mindedness, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership; functional arrangements; structural perspectives; management systems; managerial decision-making; structural responsibility poor internal relations

The term ‘governance’ has been discussed as pertaining to contextual factors, agency, and purpose. The main conceptions of governance centre around a focus on operations, principle orientation, and service centeredness. Governance concerns itself with the entity and management for decision-making, answerability, and checks and balances leading an entity. Setting and achieving objectives within an entity are shaped by governance. Governance is not a single activity but a system and process, and the successful implementation of a strategic approach to good governance requires an approach incorporating strategic planning, risk and performance management.

Governance influences how an organisation’s objectives are set and achieved, how risk is monitored and addressed, and how performance is optimised. Governance is a system and a process; not a single activity. Therefore, successful implementation of good governance strategy requires a systematic approach incorporating strategic planning, risk, and performance management. Governance synonymous with the idea of culture is a crucial element unique to a successful entity.

The literature indicates that providing a governance framework in a municipality is extremely important because it offers a foundation for the municipality to achieve its goals sustainably through input and co-operation from all levels within the entity. The municipal performance management system provides the framework for planning, implementation, and monitoring of performance. Without this foundation upon which high performance can be based, achieving goals sustainably becomes problematic. Achieving the best performance and results within existing capacity and capability should be the municipalities’ on-going objective. Bergek (2018) asserts that good governance must reinforce management and staff to be ‘the best they can be’.

5.3.3 What do you understand by the term ‘service delivery’?

Based on the categories that emerged from the data, the following themes emerged from responses; development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, and mindedness (closed and open); utilitarian practices; multi-dimensional delivery;

collective service responsibility; non-reflexive authorities. The main conceptions of service delivery as enunciated by the interviewees are operational focus, sense of service, prescribed services, and capacity constraints. An operational focus and prescribed services are backed by reference to rigidity, which reflects an organisation characterised by resistance to change.

In a South African context, a familiar phrase is ‘service delivery’, meaning the distribution of resources such as water, electricity, sanitation, housing and land to its citizens. The South African government, however, fails to maintain infrastructure while the delivery of resources is unreliable and sporadic, thus greatly inconveniencing or endangering entire communities. Accordingly, increased service delivery protests in recent years gave rise to the catch-all media term ‘service delivery protest’ covering a spectrum of protests.

5.3.4 How important is good service delivery

The majority of the interviewees indicated that the provision of good service delivery was especially important in a municipality, while others specified that good service delivery was extremely important. This supports the literature which indicates that a good governance framework results in an improved service delivery in municipalities (Nelson, 2019).

5.3.5 What is the prevailing framework or practice in your municipality relating to the governance-service delivery nexus?

Contingent with the response categories emergent from the data, the following themes emerged from responses; development, service orientation, strategy, closed, capacitation and learning; cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (open and closed); innovation and inventiveness; impractical framework; poor adaptability; strategic operations. Conceptions about the framework as indicated by interviews are: operational-oriented, principle-oriented, narrow in focus, and service is the essence.

In the main, an operational-orientation focuses on the day-to-day activities of the municipality, which presents a short-term focus. An operational-orientation presents a narrow focus in the sense of lacking a long-term compelling vision, and this is confirmed by the data in that two of the interviewees view the municipality as forward-looking. Also, approaching services from an operational point of view explains the reason for two of the interviewees considering the framework as empowering and as involving sustainability. The operational, or non-strategic, orientation of the framework will be further expounded on in the discussion of the key themes that emerged from the data. The majority of the interviewees argued that the prevailing governance and service delivery framework in their municipality was effectual, while others argued against 'service delivery' as being ineffective.

5.3.6 How is governance measured in your municipality?

The following themes emerged development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open); toxic workplace; managerial-leadership attributes; strategic management; municipal-community relations

The data reveals that the approach to measurement is dominated by an operational focus, suggesting that the focus is on everyday short-term measures, which is a narrow approach. Operational matters, such as compliance and control, are viewed as more important than customers.

5.3.7 How is service delivery measured in your municipality?

Premised on the categories which became apparent from the data, the following themes emerged; development, strategy, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open); community-municipal relations; toxic workplace; adaptability; management practices co-ordination.

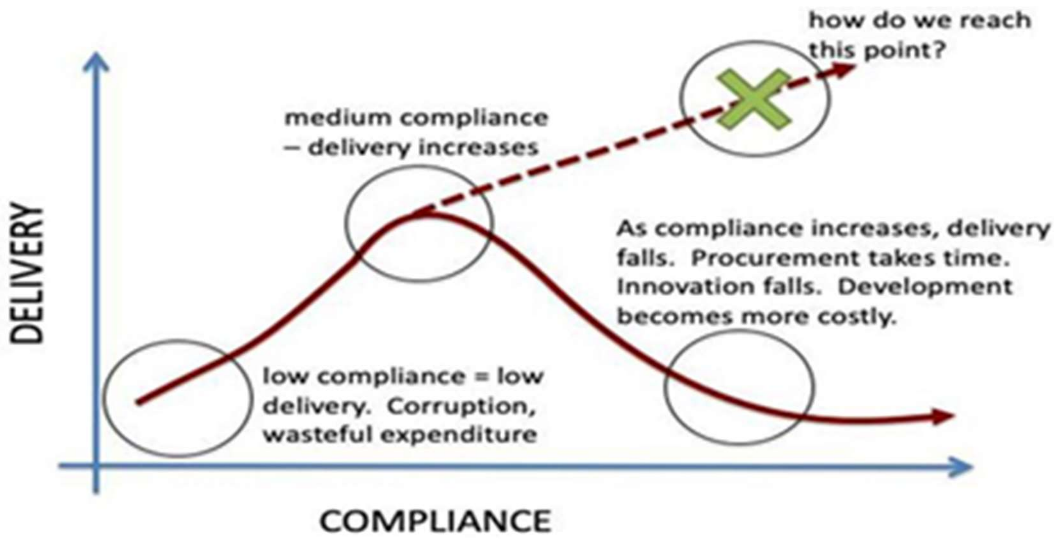
The five municipalities interviewed showed that they have different models of measuring the quality-of-service delivery in their municipalities. One municipality uses the Nordic model, indicating what services consumers achieved and how consumers receives services (Grönroos, 1984). Other municipalities use the RATER model, indicating to reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility and assurance (Parasuraman *et al.,* 1988)

5.3.8 What effects of governance and service delivery have you been experiencing in your municipality?

Based upon the categories established on the data, the following themes emerged: development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership and mindedness (closed and open); receptiveness; poor community relations; internal organisational incapacities; and responsibility deficit. The data indicates a connection between capacity to serve on the one side, and impoverishment, discrimination, benign neglect, high service demand, and provision of unequal services on the other.

From a customer perspective, dynamism of the service delivery environment possesses a challenge, demonstrated through conflicting service demands, differential service experience, poor awareness, and communication, cooperation, responsiveness, and insensitivity to inputs. Dynamism of the service delivery environment is further complicated by an operational focus, marked by inflexibility and a centralisation of responsibility.

Moreover, the interviewees argued that there was too much compliance with Treasury regulations rather than the main function of the municipality; hence they end up focusing on one aspect of governance at the expense of service delivery under-spending or other functions of the municipality, as shown in the figure next.



(Source: LGSETA Report ,2020)

Figure 5-3: Challenges when compliance dominates the need for delivery of development

This over-compliance is, to a certain extent, evidenced in the fact that under-spending on municipal capital budgets in the study municipalities has doubled from the 2018/2019 to 2020/21 financial years respectively. Whilst access improved, many issues around repairs and maintenance were raised. Municipalities may have performed well in allocating and spending capital budgets, but often without the necessary maintenance budgets to accompany this demand.

5.3.9 What factors affect the ability to provide governance?

There are a range of factors that constrain the capacity of local governments to render good governance. This section reviews some of the main factors raised by the five municipalities under study, including poverty, unemployment, and inequality. These are systemic constraints facing local government and constraints due to the representation system.

The data, backed up by the annual reports for the 2019/2020 financial year, reflects that there are numerous challenges faced by the municipalities regarding governance and service delivery expectations, such as aging infrastructure, insufficient rain, a lack of adequate financial resources, archaic indigent policy and registers, progressively increasing informal and scattered settlements, physiography of the area, and a considerable delay of water provision.

The majority of the interviewees revealed that governance and service delivery in their municipalities is fairly important, while others argue that it is extremely important. It has been shown in the literature that some of these municipalities were not implementing effective and responsive governance and service delivery initiatives (Ndulu, 2020; Ngumbela, 2021: 2021; Chigwata *et al*., 2021).

5.3.10 How are decisions relating to governance and service delivery taken in your municipality?

In accordance with the categories that clearly emerged from the data, the following themes were revealed; strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed), managerial decision making, toxic workplace, adaptability, managerial leadership practices and strategy. The data reveal that operational focus is characterised by a hierarchical and managerial focus, performance orientation, inflexibility, as well as compliance and process orientation. Poor consultation indicates non-authentic engagement, and non-receptivity relates to diverse stakeholder input in all decisions, thus negatively impacting on the quality of decisions.

This explains why the stakeholders have a negative disposition towards municipalities, and as such to service delivery. Involvement in decision-making and decision-making processes is critical for soliciting buy-in and involvement in the implementation of such decisions. The data reveals that although the principles of accountability and transparency are projected as fundamental to the success of local government projects, these principles are not seriously concretised and operationalised in the practical implementation environment. Thus, the actions of stakeholders are not genuinely guided by, and measured against, these principles.

5.3.11 How are stakeholders, internal and external, engaged or involved in

matters of governance and service delivery?

In reference to the categories that arising from the data, the following themes emerged; development, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open), engagement structures, poor stakeholder relations, receptivity and adaptability, influence and engagement and meaningful engagement.

Community participation and cooperative governance relate to engagement with stakeholders. The data reflects on engagement as follows: poor awareness, poor consultation and poor community participation. The inadequate quality of engagement is reflected in the data in relation to stakeholder capacity, which is reflected as poor awareness, empowerment, leadership, solution-seeking, limited economic opportunity, and adaptability.

Thus, interviewees indicated that poor engagement with stakeholders is vested in the structure, as well as people in municipalities, with particular reference to empowerment, leadership, non-responsiveness, authenticity, and inclusivity In this regard, the data concurs with the literature pointing to five major limitations to citizen participation in local governance; lack of political commitment or leadership on the part of local elites with regard to the new participatory spaces, lack of political mobilisation of the poor, inadequate financial resources to guarantee the sustainability of participatory experiences, lack of institutionalisation of participatory spaces and mechanisms, lack of technical and managerial capacity, as well as inequalities of information (Ngamlana and Poswayo, 2019; Robins *et al*., 2018).

Operational focus is indicative of an organisation that does not engage stakeholders in matters of governance and service delivery. More particularly, in spite of a strong focus on participation and recognition of participation as a cornerstone of good governance, some interviewees suggest that participation is meaningful, in that stakeholders are not capacitated to meaningfully add value to the governance and the service delivery value chain.

Stakeholders are not viewed and treated as a necessary value-adding proposition in developing policy and partaking in decision-making, or at the very least genuine influencing decision-making. In fact, the data indicates that participation in some instances may be a manifestation of discrimination, in that decision-making may be manipulated by the dominant interest groups at the expense of the vulnerable and destitute majority (Hirst, 2020).

As noted in the literature review (Chapter 2), the most fundamental principle of good governance is participation, which is of great consequence in the decision-making process and a characteristic of democracy. Draai and Taylor (2019), assert that participatory governance brings in the voice between communities, the end users and the government to effect development. Municipalities are legitimately required to involve communities in all stages of development (Draai and Taylor, 2019).

According to Masango (2002), public participation plays a pivotal role in a democratic system because the people drive it. In the South African context, good governance is an outcome of democracy. As further defined by Masango (2002), public participation is the process through which community members directly engage in government activities. In addition, Phago (2018) hypothesises that public participation engages communities in decision-making to give an opportunity to contribute, albeit the councils' responsibility to govern the municipality.

Public participation should set a precedent for service delivery, legitimately informed by the community, and supported at all levels of local government. Nzimakwe and Reddy (2015) support that a community participates in local government activities as working citizens, clientele or consumers, proprietors or investors, decision-makers and innovators.

5.3.12 Do you think that the prevailing governance framework is appropriate to bring about desired service delivery outcomes?

Founded on the categories that emanated from the data, the following themes emerged; development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open), singular service perspective, strategy, adaptability, impractical framework, innovation, and toxic workplace. The main concepts indicated by interviewees are: operational orientation, narrow-mindedness, and capacity to implement.

The data indicate that operational orientation is reflected in role clarification, rigidity, functional approach, and implementability. Narrow mindedness is typical of an organisation focused on operations, where it is reflected in reference to universalism and framework poor conception. Further, the capacity to implement is influenced by the mode of decision-making.

Thus, the data confirm that the framework is inappropriate to successfully address governance and service delivery challenges. Some of the reasons forwarded for the inappropriateness of the framework are; the framework is unilaterally imposed, framework is not promoting feedback, framework sets universal standards and ignores context, framework implementation is poorly financed, and implementers lack capacity to implement.

5.3.13 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the governance and service delivery framework or practice?

Based on the categories that emerged from the data, the following themes emerged; development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed), internal organisational arrangements, poor stakeholder relations, benign-neglect, management systems, responsibility-deficit, adaptability, robust work culture and toxic workplace. The majority of interviewees indicated that weaknesses far outweigh the strengths, with specific reference to operational orientation, capacity constraints, and role clarification. Operational orientation is reflected in reference to rigidity, systemic labour disorder, and narrow-mindedness.

Inflexibility and narrow-mindedness render an organisation non-receptive to innovative ideas and creativity, as well as leading to lack of long-term perspective. The data also indicate to capacity constraints, reflected in negatively-dispositioned stakeholders, non-responsiveness, leadership-deficit, and empowerment challenges.

Interviewees indicated that capacity constraints are exacerbated by the challenges of role clarification due to divergent influences and poor stakeholder relations. Role clarification refers to undue political influence on the administration, causing a strain on relations, and the general execution of municipal responsibilities. This matter was raised by all the interviewees as seriously impacting on their ability to serve and govern. There is no doubt that where there is political instability, whether as a result of an individual party being factionalised or where there are unstable coalitions in place, the end result is that municipal performance suffers and results in a weak governance framework (Stats SA, 2021).

Whilst the Municipal Structures Act (MSA), the Municipal Systems Act (MSA), and Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) clearly delineate powers and functions for local governance, including roles and responsibilities for its various role players and stakeholders, the implementation of these laws does result in the political-administrative interface becoming blurred.

What should normally be regarded as politicians intervening in the execution of municipal decisions becomes seen as Mayors/Speakers simply acting as 'executives'. As De Visser (2010:45) argues, 'the consequences of this blurring of the lines of accountability are disastrous'. In cases where there is political instability or a blurring of lines between politicians and administrators, one finds a greater degree of vacancies and a high turnover in senior administrative and political leaders. This was recognised informally by officials as one of the major challenges facing municipal governance, even though it is not something that can easily be dealt with, given the fear of retribution or having contracts not being renewed.

From the above weaknesses in the framework are grounded in the structure of the organisation, as well as human capital. The organisation should be realigned towards a long-term future vision, whilst equipping people to be able to pursue the vision.

5.3.14 What recommendations do you have that will improve governance and service delivery in your municipality?

Based on the categories that emerged from the data, the following themes emerged:

development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open), collective responsibility, innovation and inventiveness, personalised human attributes, adaptability, management systems and managerial-leadership practices.

The main concepts indicated by interviewees are: operational orientation, improved capacity, and stakeholder engagement. Operational orientation relates to challenges viewed financially. Improving capacity relates to community responsibility, creativity/inventiveness, and open-mindedness. Stakeholder engagement relates to inclusive development, improved cooperation, and intergovernmental relations.

The data suggest that municipalities should be aligned towards a strategic orientation, away from a mere focus on operations, as reflected through control, risk-aversion, compliance, and prescription. To achieve this, stakeholders should be capacitated to engage in an open-ended, strategic environment. This will allow for increased stakeholder responsibility and creativity, as well as improved stakeholder relations in general.

As noted in the literature review, Fourie (2001) suggests that public participation challenges can be counteracted by using the following mechanisms for process improvement in the insular sphere of government; advancing civic education, developing administrative capability through schooling bureaucrats, fostering closeness to citizens through the provision of valued service, fostering relationship and trust building initiatives with citizens, retaining citizen's keenness to participate, and public participation facilitation.

These mechanisms correlate with Pagatpatam and Ward (2017) referring to factors that make public participation effective; political commitment, partnership synergy, inclusiveness, and deliberativeness these mechanisms foster public participation at the local level of government. Community responses are imperative to strengthening the decision-making process. The government is not the only stakeholder in this process. The government acts as a catalyst for public participation.

In the South African context, reflecting on the above participatory governance discussion, it can be argued that democratic government established frameworks to advance and bolster participation. Quintessentially, public participation aims to involve citizens and communities, giving them the right to contribute to the decision-making process on local issues, thereby ensuring peoples demands considered. People know what is required to improve the quality of life in their communities and environments.

Additionally, public participation should promote timely responsiveness to public service delivery and ensure inclusivity to bring services to all community demands. It could be inferred that community participation is significant to municipal development plans. Public participation could bring transparency to avoid under-utilised projects.

In addressing the research questions an aspect mentioned by, one of the interviewees relates to the superfluity of local government legislation. As asserted by Cameron (2014), fears exist regarding everyday implications such as disempowering legislation on inter-governmental interactions. Steytler (2018) also argues that the existing plethora of national and provincial legislation may be inhibiting local government, preventing it from delivering on its constitutional, developmental mandate.

5.3.15 What are your views regarding service delivery challenges?

Subject to the categories that became known from the data, the following themes emerged: development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open). Interviewees indicated to the challenges as: demotivated officials, self-worth, not appreciating responsibility, and capacity.

Demotivated officials relate to lack of direction, dispositioned employees, and fear and/or uncertainty. Self-worth relates to the personal perspective. Appreciating responsibility relates to a sense of service and benign neglect. Capacity relates to intolerance for diversity and lack of insight.

The data indicate that service delivery challenges are influenced by internal factors. These confirm that the human condition is at the heart of improving governance and service delivery, as noted in Chapter 2, the literature review. Thus, how human beings experience and view the governance and serviced delivery environment is critical to improving governance and service delivery; i.e., what human beings think and do.

The data reveal that increasing, a human being's value proposition in the organisation is critical. In this regard, improving self-worth and installing a sense of drive and purpose may increase a sense of responsibility and a sense of service. The understanding is that a better capacitated individual is better equipped to deal with the influences of external factors on the organisation and the individual, founded on an appreciation of diversity in many respects, as well as improved foresight.

Both internal and external factors impact on the governance and service delivery environment, but internal factors determine the extent of influence of external factors. Sunter and Ilbury (2021) suggest understanding the influence of internal and external factors on the delivery and governance environment, in that we must understand which factors we can control and which not. It is crucial to informing our responses to emerging risks.

This may be illustrated as follows:

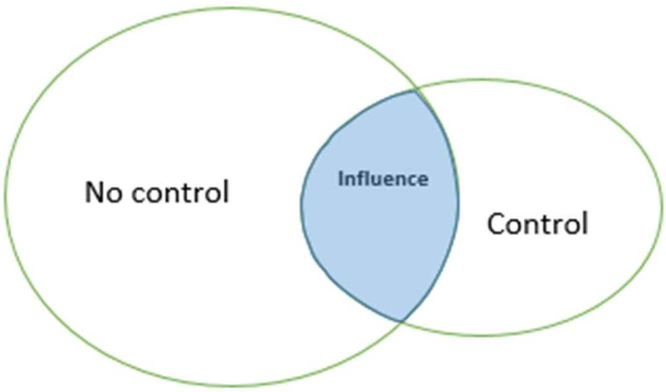


Figure 5-4: Factors influencing governance in municipalities

Sunter and Ilbury (2021)

The diagram above illustrates that factors over which we have no control are significantly larger than those over which we do have control, and include things such as the weather, economy, politics, what other people think, say and do, but most of the interactions we have are with the environment around us (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). Every aspect of the external factors is beyond our influence. However, we are in control of our judgement, which subsumes what we have control over and provides leverage on how we deal with what we do not have control over. For example, we can decide how we respond to a traffic jam or a colleague's verbal innuendo; i.e., be infuriated or calm.

There is also an overlap area between the controlled and un-controlled areas, over which we do not have complete control, but where we have influence (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). It presents the area where our judgements inform our actions, which in turn can shape, to a limited extent, what is external to us (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021).

Practically, we could respond to political interference or a poor economic policy by abdicating, thereby possibly worsening the situation. Applying judgement may create the realisation that we cannot sort the situation by ourselves, not immediately, but we can solicit the assistance of experts or consultants to devise an appropriate response to these challenges. It is about balancing what is outside and within our control and considering different scenarios. This confirms internal factors to be pivotal in dealing with governance and service delivery challenges.

The Corona pandemic illustrates the effects of an external factor on our ability to deliver services, as well as our inability to effectively deliver services. The researcher argues that it is indicative of insufficient attention given to our internal factors, which relates to the human element of dealing with governance and service delivery challenges. This aspect will be illuminated in the consequent chapters.

5.3.16 What are your views regarding governance interventions in the past that did not have the desired outcomes?

Based on the categories that emerged from the data, the following themes emerged: development, service orientation, strategy, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open), receptiveness; adaptability, poor stakeholder relations, poor intergovernmental relations, personalised human attributes, non-responsiveness and impractical framework. The main conceptions indicated by interviewees are: operational focus, poor communication, ill-conceived interventions, sense of dependency, and motivation. Operational orientation relates to rigidity, guidance about purpose, and non-learning culture. Poor communication relates to poor cooperation. Ill-conceived interventions relate to scepticism and ill-conceived service demands. A sense of dependency relates to competence, employee worth, and incapacity. Motivation relates to employee worth.

The data confirm challenges with the implementation of interventions, which can be outlined as lack of strategic orientation and long-term visioning, clouded by a focus on compliance and processes, poor or inadequate engagement of stakeholders resulting in a lack of drive and non-authentic interventions, a non-learning culture and scepticism, and lack of creativity and foresight fuelled by a low awareness of competency and employee worth.

These result in a sense of dependency due to the inability to creatively deal with challenges, and these are due to an overly finance-orientation of these interventions. Thus, the key issues with interventions are their short-term orientation and a poor focus on engagement with stakeholders.

5.3.17 What are your views on governance and service delivery challenges linked to being governed by the market, as opposed to social norms?

Based upon the categories that came forth from the data, the following themes emerged: development, service orientation, strategy, leadership, and mindedness (closed and open), contextual and balanced approach, non-responsiveness and poor stakeholder relations. The main concepts indicated by interviewees are: broad-mindedness, market and social forces interplay and awareness of service. Broad-mindedness relates to awareness of service, social receptivity, and inclusivity. The interplay of market and social forces relates to paradigmatic influences, inequality, norms being realistic, and a capitalist perspective. Awareness of services relates to a responsibility-deficit, empowerment, and uninformed service demands.

The data suggest that governance and service delivery involve considerations broader than mere commoditisation. They involve the relational aspects of how people relate to each other; social receptivity, responsibility, and awareness of service, as well as aspects of empowerment such as inclusivity and inequality. They also suggest that norms are influenced by paradigms such a system of beliefs or knowledge, traditions, and power.

The notion of market and social norms being balanced corresponds with the notion of governance and service delivery being impacted by both internal and external factors. The researcher suggests that a predominant market or finance orientation of governance, as discussed in the literature review, is misplaced in view of the insights drawn from the data, as well as the non-commercial nature of governance as discussed in the theoretical framework.

Market norms are ordinarily linked with extrinsic rewards, like hit-the-goal-get-a-bonus. The literature suggests a preference for intrinsic, as opposed to extrinsic, rewards, of which research has shown do not add up to a greater inner drive (Sinek, 2019). Extrinsic rewards are said to provide a short-term lift (Sinek, 2019a).

The researcher has indicated in the theoretical framework that improving governance and service delivery requires building municipalities with resilience, as this is a hallmark of building to be adaptable and transformative. These are long-term projects requiring long-term norms and reward systems; it is not only about surviving, but also about striving. From this perspective, norms associated with long-term fulfilment are preferred above a quest for short-term gratification, not discarding the realities of the day-to-day survival of the municipalities. It is not about compliance with finance-orientated norms, but about being of service to the citizens in the municipalities; real, living, human beings. This invokes an element of personal attachment.

5.3.18 What are your views about the manner in which relational exchanges happen in an organisation that are crucial to decision-making? What should be the preferred manner through which ideas flow?

Based upon the categories crystallised from the data, the following themes became known from the responses: service orientation; strategy; capacitation and learning; cooperation and participation; leadership; and mindedness (closed and open). The main conceptions indicated by interviewees are: value-adding engagement, and awareness about service. Value-adding engagement relates to inclusive engagement, consensus-seeking, ideation, communication, consultation, competence enhance engagement, purposeful engagement, and truthful engagement. Awareness of service relates to a sense of service.

The data suggest that a relational exchange resorts around exchange being a value-adding exercise, aimed at the delivery of services. Value-adding refers to human beings, as well as the exchange *per se*. It involves inclusive, authentic, and purposeful engagement by competent stakeholders. It implies active and meaningful participation by stakeholders in the decision-making process. Thus, the data suggest that engagement involves a strong element of capacitation, truthful sharing of information, with service provision as an essential focus.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the findings of the questionnaire and analysed the data concerning governance and service delivery implementation in the stated municipalities. Central concepts emerging from the data are operational orientation, sense of service, narrow-mindedness, community perspective, capacity to serve, participation and engagement, and sense of direction.

In the main, operational orientation indicates adopting a narrow perspective on the delivery of services and governance. A short-term operational perspective is indicative of an organisation that lacks a long-term vision and foresight. Such an organisation is content with survival and conservation strategies, attending to day-to-day activities. Further, such an organisation lacks the key characteristics of adaptability and transformability. The chapter noted numerous factors that affect the municipalities' ability to execute governance and service delivery. The next chapter will further analyse the findings.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter further evaluates and interprets the study's findings in line with the study objectives, theoretical framework, and literature review. The chapter discusses the current circumstances in which the five municipalities in Northern Cape function. Bryman asserts that the interpretation of the findings is a key component of any research and assists in drawing inferences and generalisations (Bryan, 2021).

The findings presented in the previous chapter are summarised in this chapter and presented in the form of discussing key themes emerging from the data. These themes, which have been identified in the previous chapter, are discussed with the view of constructing the foundations for a sustainable governance framework, as well as for policy insight and recommendations. Further, these discussion aims to identify and elucidate factors that influence governance and service delivery, as well as those factors denoting the effects of poor governance and service delivery. Key themes emerging from the data are discussed with reference to categories derived from the data, i.e. categories denoting central characteristics, causal factors, strategy factors and consequential factors.

The majority of interviewees indicate that governance and service delivery focus on operation, linking it to a compliance and principle-orientation. It is a key consideration in this chapter. Thus, our values define who we are. It suggests that governance and service delivery happen in a set cultural environment, which certainly did not yield the desired results, despite legislative prescripts on governance-society interface (Ndulu, 2021). It raises an issue of the disjuncture between values and actions (Hagermann *et al*., 2020; Peterson, 2020).

This chapter seeks to highlight whether the data provide evidence as to why service delivery and governance challenges prevail, as well whether the data lead to a path to address these challenges. The researcher also seeks to address the research questions, problem statement, and research objectives.

6.2 REITERATION OF STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study objectives were the following:

1. Identify the factors that influence governance and service delivery in urbanised municipalities.

2. Examine the effects of poor governance on service delivery in selected urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape.

3. Formulate a sustainable governance framework for improved service delivery in urbanised municipalities.

4. Offer policy insights and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery in South African urbanised municipalities.

The data indicates that there are a wide variety of issues impacting upon governance and service delivery, resulting in poor governance and service delivery. These will be unpacked in the context of the study objectives mentioned above, particularly objectives 1 and 2.

6.3 GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY: CENTRAL FEATURES, CAUSE, EFFECTS, AND STRATEGIES

The key themes that emerged from the data are organisational mindset, leadership, cooperation and participation, learning and capacitation, developmentalism, service orientation, and strategy. Before discussing key themes emerging from the data, it is important to indicate that the interviewees expressed mixed opinions around the effectiveness of prevailing governance frameworks.

The data indicates that one third of the interviewees revealed that the framework used in their municipalities for service delivery was fairly effective towards enhancing service delivery. Thus, more than two thirds expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the framework.

As was discussed in the literature review, Buys and Mbewana (2017) describe management strategy development as the most influential success factor for effective and efficient municipal strategic growth and establishing a robust governance framework in the municipal setup. In this regard, grounded theory indicates that the following forces are key; organisational mindset (closed and open), developmentalism, leadership, capacitation and learning, cooperation and participation, service orientation, and strategy (Manisa, 2020). These are identified as the major forces that will enable the development of an organisation that is more attuned to adapting to an ever-changing service delivery context.

The discussion of these themes reflects the intimate relationship between them, specifically in relation to their composite characteristics, causality, strategic orientation, and consequentiality.

6.3.1 Organisational mindset

6.3.1.1 Central features

The data findings confirm that organisational mindset involves ‘thinking’, whilst other themes involve ‘doing’. How we see or think about reality is determined by how we connect life’s dots; i.e. whether we are content with preserving the status quo or whether we favour flexibility in our approach (Hasting and Meyer, 2020). From this perspective, organisational mindset can be considered to refer to the culture of openness or ‘closed-ness’ amongst stakeholders; a source of organisation growth which is crucial to developing functional organisations. Thus, our perceptions of things play a pivotal role in informing how we make sense of the world around us (Phitidis, 2020).

What does open and closed-mindedness entail in the context of this study? It implies that an organisation must possess certain capacities, *inter alia* the capacity to recognise patterns, enabling us understanding the word around us. Close-mindedness refers to an unwillingness to consider different ideas and opinions and is characteristic of an organisation that is operationally-inclined, focusing on controls and deadlines, procedures, efficiency, and effectiveness (Cleaver and Whaley, 2018). It is also explained as people being ‘singular in their thinking’ (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021:98). Dalio (2017) explains closed-mindedness in relation to a preoccupation with how you understand and see things, without bothering about how other people see and understand things.

For Dalio (2017), closed-mindedness is characterised by and ‘ego’ and ‘blind spot’ barriers. The ‘ego barrier’ refers to deep-seated defence mechanisms to protect your deepest fears and needs, whilst ‘blind spot’ refers to areas where one’s way of thinking prevents one from seeing things accurately. Typically, closed-mindedness functions by presuming too much. Although these are necessary, they render an organisation less dynamic (Stern, 2019).

A closed-minded environment promotes compliance and processes to be followed, instead of encouraging and allowing free thinking (Hastings and Meyer, 2020). Brown (2018) asserts that compliance and control orientation is grounded in fear and power. Work is reduced to tasks and to-dos, which are closely monitored in fear of ‘getting caught’, stripping work from its nuance, context, and larger purpose (Green, 2019; Brown, 2018).

An open mindset recognises that disturbances are unavoidable and that we must be geared to adapt and deal with new emergent situations when they arise, not knowing how they are going to unfold. Thus, adaptive institutions are open-minded. These institutions have the following characteristics: participatory, inclusive, integrative, risk tolerant, flexible, legitimate, accountable, diverse, creative, learning, iterative, autonomous, resourceful, self-assessing, collaborative, transparent, reflexive, and integrated with broader processes (Munene *et al.*, 2018).

The literature indicates that municipalities are trapped with conservation strategies, reflecting a short-term operational focus and adherence to a neo-liberal capitalist paradigmatic perspective. Some interviewees indicated that the prevailing governance and service delivery framework is focused on operations, and whereas some associated the appropriateness of the prevailing governance and service delivery framework with a focus on operations.

Undoubtedly, the data indicate that the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities are closed-minded institutions. Open-mindedness refers to willingness to consider different ideas and opinions, focusing on issues such as ‘capabilities’ ‘adaptiveness’, ‘learning’, and ‘coping with surprise’ (Cleaver and Whaley, 2018:45). It is also explained as people being ‘diffuse in their thinking’ (Sunter and Ibury, 2021:83). It avoids preconceived ideas about lived realities, recognising that understanding is vested in the real-life experience that we find ourselves in, and an organisation cannot be turned around on misguided realities. According to Dalio (2017), open-mindedness means considering the reasoning of others instead of stubbornly and illogically holding on to your own point of view.

6.3.1.2 Causal factors

Society is trapped between our tendencies to seek out the safety of what we know and the desire to secure a future full of promise. The discussion of the central features of an organisational mindset proposes a favour for an organisation as an open system. A closed-mindset may be ascribed to our natural inclination to seek immediate solutions to uncomfortable problems and prioritise quick wins to advance our ambitions (Sinek, 2020; Sardar, 2017).

This may be premised on our prevailing predispositions, thus affirming our beliefs, and avoiding multi-perspectives (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). Our inclination to singular or ‘standardised’ thinking can also be attributed to a lack of capacity on the part of stakeholders, leaving them unable to discern and analyse the complex implementation environment (Pollack, 2015:159). That might explain our inclination to hang on to a market and finance-oriented neo-liberal paradigmatic perspective.

In this regard a mindset that is influenced or driven by fear is indicative of insecurity and vulnerability. Most particpants expressed serious concerns about the negative effects of undue political influence in administration, but none expressed a willingness to deal with this serious threat. Some of the responses were; ‘coalition parties negatively affect engagements’; ‘political interference hampers decision-making’ and ‘political administrative conflict’.

Those feelings of insecurity and vulnerability were further demonstrated by interviewees suggesting that a five-year fixed term employment contract leaves senior managers vulnerable. This reflects finite-mindedness, a concern for their own interests, rather than a concern for the greater good of society (Bryant, 2019).

6.3.1.3 Strategies

In relation to a closed-minded organisation, the issue is to unlock an organisation's free-thinking spirit. An approach is required that opens an organisation up for different inputs and buy-in. Participation and cooperation are key in this regard. The interviewees indicated that local government interventions are imposed on municipalities without meaningful input from these municipalities, in that: 'communities are reluctant to participate'; it is a 'process-oriented engagement'; and 'communities not comprehending process'.

Thus, continuous capacitation and learning are crucial interventions; analytical forecasting and scenario planning are core competencies, amongst others. We can create a compelling view of reality by analysing real-life experiences, instead of being guided by an overarching theory of how things should fit together. Such theories are often backed by misguided assumptions about an aspect that we are dealing with; e.g. an assumption that human beings always act rationally when dealing with their own interests. The difficulty with these assumptions is that they shape the nature of our beliefs and influence decision-making (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021).

Open-minded institutions distinguish between operational and creative roles for officials; some officials are more cognitively gifted than others. Further, such organisations can invest in initiatives over which they have control, such as research and development to increase their range of products. Whilst focusing on factors that can be controlled or influenced, measures must be put in place to improve knowledge and awareness of external factors; e.g. global warming (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). Only interviewee made mention of the influence of ecological factors on governance and service delivery

6.3.1.4 Consequential factors

A major issue with standardised thinking or conventional wisdom is that it stifles individual creativity, and thus organisation progress (Pollack, 2015). It renders an organisation inflexible (Hastings and Meyer, 2020; Brown, 2018). Open-minded institutions are more resilient and are able to expand its prevailing limitations in order to address a matter at hand – limitations can be expanded through employing inventions or cooperating with others (Sinek, 2019). Standardised thinking limits options in that it favours a leverage environment, and may lead to strategies that are impracticable and irrelevant.

According to Dalio (2017), closed-mindedness causes us to miss out on all sorts of wonderful possibilities and/or dangerous threats that other people might be showing us. It prevents us from seeing our choices optimally. Thus, standardised thinking leaves us ill-equipped to deal with modern-day complexities. For example, an unrestrictive belief in the markets has a restraining effect on the economy, for disregarding the role of labour in economic growth compromises productivity, which is essential for effecting economic growth.

An infinite mindset confronted with challenges that seem insurmountable will not be overwhelmed with fear but will consider these as obstacles in the path towards achieving greater good and thus one confronts such adversaries. Challenges are viewed as sources of experience, learning, and capacitation, equipping organisations and individuals to be in better shape to deal with future challenges.

Poor government-community relations result in a lack of trust and responsibility manifest as service delivery challenges. The interviewees raised that communities vandalise municipal property, and also exclude communities from being co-owners of municipal property, a perspective shared by communities. These are evident in responses such as; ‘lack of sense of responsibility from communities’, ‘community responsibility limited to paying for services’, and ‘increase community sense of responsibility for services’. Municipal property is actually public property, implying that communities are co-owners of public property. One actually does not vandalise one’s own property. Thus, vandalism in part can be attributed to a lack of a sense of ownership on the part of communities, and a disregard for the long-term consequences of their conduct.

Failure to comprehend the service delivery environment is also referred to as the ‘limits of agency’, and results in leaders being unable to carve out a direction for the organisations they lead (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). It implies that we need to continuously develop our thinking through introspection and observing the world around us; being inquisitive, i.e., continuously searching for improvement.

6.3.2 Leadership

6.3.2.1 Central features

Historically, leadership has been conceived in hierarchical terms that rely at least tacitly on the possibility of coercion (Smith, 2018). In hierarchies, leadership depends on power and position; leaders using their power and position to develop organisational visions, manage operations, exert control, and overcome resistance to change.

Control can be exercised through oversight, telling the employee what to do, checking in frequently, and correcting work not done according to prescription (Hastings and Meyer, 2020). Alternatively, direct oversight can be avoided by putting control processes in place instead, thereby affording some freedom to employees (McNabb, 2014; Hastings and Meyer, 2020).

Based on the leader’s engagement with members of an organisation, a leader can either be directive, i.e. determining direction and steering followers in that direction, or empowering, i.e. determining direction together with members of an organisation and allowing followers to determine the right way to remain on course (Sinek, 2019a). Empowering leadership is premised upon an advanced form of control in terms of which decision-making is dispersed, amidst a focus on skills, competence, and the positive personality traits of stakeholders, individually and collectively. Contemporary conceptions and practices of governance associated with complex adaptive systems require empowering leadership (Smith, 2018). In this context leaders are sense-makers, or at least ought to be, in that they define terms, set targets, establish parameters and describe the working context (Stern, 2019).

The data indicated that municipalities base leadership on control, compliance, and oversight, thus indicating to directive leadership with a focus on achieving short-term results. Indications of this is reflected in responses such as, ‘control and supervision to ensure appropriate utilisation of resources, monitor implementation of performance targets, exercise consequence management, ‘policies regulate activities’, ‘compliance with government prescripts’, and ‘management to be consequential and effective’.

The researcher is of the view that a controlled environment reflects an issue with competence, the skills base, and negatively dispositioned officials and other stakeholders within municipalities. Further, these responses indicate a short-term perspective of issues pertaining to governance and service delivery, requiring a strategic reorientation towards a long-term futuristic perspective. Thus, when leaders with an infinite mindset use terms like ‘long-term’ and ‘vision’, they do so in the finite context of short-term goals as markers of progress towards a broader infinite vision.

6.3.2.2 Causal factors

Lack of trust amongst stakeholders, as indicated by the data, explains closed-mindedness and an operational-orientation in the municipalities. Some responses of interviewees indicated ‘apathy of communities’, ‘poor access to services’, ‘and poor service infrastructure associated with vandalism. It represents a lack of trust manifested in dissatisfaction about services. This is indicative of a belief amongst stakeholders of not having each other’s wellbeing at heart (Makgoba, 2016; Sinek, 2019a). All of these are indicative of an organisation in a conservative and collapsed state. This situation results from absence of a sense of responsibility on the part of stakeholders and concomitant failure to accept accountability for the delivery and payments of services. The data indicates to a limited sense of responsibility on the part of communities based on vandalism of infrastructure and poor payment culture.

Leadership failure is associated with poor service delivery and governance. Crucially, the data indicate the inability of leaders at municipal level to rally officials and other stakeholders around a common and compelling vision, one that is co-created. Thus a poor sense of responsibility and accountability can be ascribed to directive, instead of empowering, leadership.

6.3.2.3 Strategies

The leader must show appreciation that the true value of an organisation is in the desire of others, as it is all stakeholders contributing to the organisation's ability to keep succeeding, as well as after they have left (Sinek, 2019). A culture must be created in which people feel safe, seen, heard, and respected; i.e. connecting people to the organisation (Brown, 2018).

The data indicate to the need to install empowering and visionary leadership in view of a strong focus on operations, compliance and finances, coupled with lack of direction and insight. Further, the data indicate strong paradigmatic influences. All of these aspects counterbalance innovation and inventiveness. Thus leadership development initiatives should be a key priority for municipalities, for it critical in installing adaptive and transformative capacities in municipalities.

A leadership development strategy should have as it purpose to install leadership competence enabling leaders to transform municipalities from being rigid and inflexible institutions to institutions that are agile, aligned and engaged. It is so, for addressing challenges associated with complex adaptive systems, like municipalities, may require values be adjusted, perspectives are changed, and new habits be learned (Toendepi and Hewitt, 2018). Thus, improving socio-ecological systems may require transforming the culture in the system, instead of merely effecting cosmetic changes or adaptations.

The leader will have to make people believe in the inclusively developed and compelling vision desire it and feel connected to it in a very personal way. The vision must be communicated in a way that excites people, as well as making the day-to-day work compelling, articulating clearly what is to be achieved, and providing a compelling reason for progressing towards the positive future state and accomplishing organisational goals (Hagemann *et al*., 2020). This, coupled with clarity about roles, increases cohesiveness and collective orientation, and also promotes autonomy, ownership, job satisfaction, self-accountability, and commitment towards the organisation (Hagemann *et al*., 2020).

Strategies should address the capacities of stakeholders in this regard. It is about leveraging collective the capacities necessary to deal with complex societal issues, i.e., participatory leadership is required (Toendepi and Hewitt, 2018). People must be allowed to open up; unleashing freedom, trust, and responsibility, which are essential for creativity and innovation (Brown, 2018; Hastings and Meyer, 2020; Hagemann *et al*., 2020). These are sources of a sense of community, a sense of belonging, and identity (Stern, 2019).

Thus, crucial issues that compel stakeholders to be attached to the organisation must be leveraged. It should happen in the context of a true picture of the organisation, failing which a culture of denial and serving of self-interests may be enhanced, i.e., an organisation devoid of loyalty, devotion, and willingness.

6.3.2.4 Consequential factors

The data indicates to directive leadership, manifested in operational focus, compliance-orientation, non-strategic orientation, poor customer relations and negatively dispositioned employees. It implies that municipalities operate as closed systems, characterised by low talents density and lack of candour (Hastings and Meyer, 2020).

When an organisation feels like a community, less control, rules, or intrusive supervision is required, for people just know what to do, and set standards for each other as peers (Stern, 2019). Such an organisation is agile and characterised by disperse decision-making, with the leader not making every decision (Hagemann *et al*., 2020). Thus, such organisation experience empowering leadership.

When a leader takes care of employees, physically and emotionally, they will take care of the communities, based on moral or altruistic values (Sinek, 2019). Revealing a true picture of the organisation assists in gauging possibilities for improvement.

A finite-minded leadership model is not sustainable for municipalities and might produce decent performance over a brief period. Further, you will highly likely find municipalities that used to perform well, but are now dysfunctional, having been led for prolonged periods by finite-minded leaders.

6.3.3 Learning and capacitation

6.3.3.1 Central features

The understanding is that the concepts of capacity and learning are inextricably linked; capacity building involving learning. Learning and capacitation seek to ensure that stakeholders are suitably capacitated to ensure municipalities are able to deliver serves with an open mindset. It also refers to talent density, a term implying building high performing officials founded on high levels of skills and competence (Hastings and Meyer, 2020).

The issue is the competencies needed to render an organisation adaptive or transformative. The researcher suggests that these should revolve around the thinking and parameters of governance. The significance of thinking lies in the ability to analyse the complex governance environment because an incorrect analysis may lead to ill-conceived interventions, which may further exacerbate governance and service delivery challenges.

Capacity building typically refers to attempts to foster democratic and accountable governance by strengthening civil society, and especially the knowledge, abilities, and relationships among citizens (Smith, 2018). Learning is an interactive process; a social interaction of the transfer and receipt of information and enhancing people’s capacity to truthfully engage in ideation processes, which are the sources of creativity and inventiveness.

Thus, learning depends on many opportunities for communication and interfacing; i.e. cooperation. Therefore, the interplay of learning and cooperation enables ‘learning through action’, a form of social learning, a process of social change in which people learn from each other in ways that can benefit wider societal systems (Toendepi and Hewitt, 2018; Sadar, 2017). By learning and working together, individuals gain an understanding of, and tackle, the issues they face. The strong emphasis on community participation suggests a community perspective on learning and capacitation. In this regard 13 interviewees view stakeholder involvement as essential, also indicating to the need to improve capacity.

For the researcher, that the concept of ‘anticipatory action learning’ finds relevance in the data with reference to sustainability and community participation. ‘Anticipatory action learning’ aims to engage communities and organisations in a process of future thinking to investigate the need for change and the nature of that change, and to chart the path towards positive and desired futures that can be realised (Sardar, 2017). The significance of a participatory action learning process is that it links individuals to social transformation, integrates various kinds and levels of appreciation of futures, creates open-ended and continually evolving conditions, and contributes to intelligent rather than formal knowledge (Sardar, 2017).

Communities themselves engage in their own enquiry, reflection, and decision-making for changing themselves and their circumstances (Sardar, 2017). Thus, communities are enabled to be perspicacious in relation to the issues of governance and service delivery (Sanei, 2018; Sunter and Ilbury, 2021).

6.3.3.2 Causal factors

The discussion of leadership stresses that operating on the basis of fear is the antithesis of reacting freely and purposefully, and thus of creativity and inventiveness. Fearless interaction is tied to the fact that, as human beings we are susceptible to making mistakes, from which learning and growth emerge (Hagemann *et al.*, 2020).

Learning means making mistakes (Hagemann *et al*., 2020). In this regard the strong focus on operations and compliance, as indicated by interviewees, is inconsistent with an organisation that prioritises learning and capacitation. Further, none of the interviewees indicated that municipalities prioritise learning and capacitation. It can be induced that the poor state of governance and service delivery can be attributed to a lack of awareness and focus on learning and capacitation.

The focus should be on individual improvement for collective wellbeing. It recognises that an organisation has more to benefit from failure than operating on the basis of fear of being caught for making mistakes. Core to this is an increase in the level of adaptability (Carlise and Gruby, 2019). It renders municipalities abler to adapt to change (Phitidis, 2020).

6.3.3.3 Strategies

The data indicate learning and capacity deficiencies in municipalities with reference to narrow-mindedness, acting on ignorance, ill-informed, responsibility failure, poor planning, ineffective communication, poor awareness, lack of drive, powerlessness, insensitivity to inputs, abuse of power, systemic ill-discipline, negatively dispositioned officials, poor strategising, and low self-worth. The data suggest that municipalities should place strong emphasis on personalised human attributes. Amongst the strategies that adaptive capacities should equip municipalities with are to map out future possibilities, anticipating the future using emerging issue analysis, creating alternatives using scenarios, and transforming the future through visioning, back casting and other methods (Sardar, 2017). Thus, the community must identify and explore the range of alternatives it chooses to pursue (Sardar, 2017). Dynamic and open-minded thinking should be developed to equip relevant stakeholders to operate in a rapidly changing service delivery environment, coupled with ever-increasing technological advancement.

Emerging issue analysis can be used to explore what new skills will be needed in the future, what new skills are likely to emerge, and examining how to build flexibility and agility into organisations. These can be used to inform or shape policies and frameworks. Performance management systems should reward the application of adaptive capacities and not predetermined qualitative standards, as if conditions for performance and growth are static. The focus will be on meeting or not meeting the targets, instead of the broader development and growth of an organisation and the relevant individual or group. The issue is that over-reliance on operations limits organisational flexibility and creativity (Hastings and Meyer, 2020).

6.3.3.4 Consequential factors

Poor skills and competence levels, as well as low levels of accountability, render municipalities unsuitable for dispersed decision-making; i.e. decision-making devolved to lower levels in an organisation (Hasting and Meyer, 2020). Municipalities, being led on the basis of fear and organised around operations, as indicated by the data, are devoid of the opportunity to explore the advantages associated with innovation and inventiveness. One of the interviewees even made mention of the prevalence of technophobia amongst the municipalities. These resonate with reference in the data of municipalities in the main being characterised by inflexibility, uncertainty and dilution of roles.

Not attending to adaptive capacity might result in an inability to deal with unexpected and disastrous changes in the external governance environment, such as the current global Covid-19 pandemic. Other consequences are capturing of municipalities by dominant interest groups under the influence of a dominant paradigm, lack of creative problem-solving skills, and the elimination of the diversity of institutions that underlie adaptive capacity.

6.3.4 Strategy

6.3.4.1 Central features

Strategy is about defining the future; i.e. in relation to a vision and definition of where you want to be beyond five years from now, rather than defining it in relation to solving current, immediate, challenges experienced in the day-to-day operations of an organisation (Phiditis, 2020). It is about determining the direction of an organisation, a strategic vision, and looking constructively towards the future (Graham, Amos and

Plumbtree, 2003).

The majority of interviewees indicate that municipalities lack a focus on strategy. These are supported by the data referring to ‘a lack of direction’, ‘a predominant finance perspective of challenges’, ‘an adherence to a specific paradigm’, a compliance-orientation, and ‘a hierarchical-orientation’. Also, an insignificant number of interviews referred to ‘purposefulness’, ‘sense of responsibility’, ‘forward-looking’, and ‘proper planning’.

Understanding your purpose and why you do what you do, and where you want to go, dramatically reduces the extent of an imposed crises (Phiditis, 2020). Your ability to grasp and see opportunities vested in change or crises depends on why you do what you do; i.e. purpose. Having a definitive purpose and deliberately working towards achieving it is critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of strategy (Green, 2020; Phiditis, 2020). Irrespective of your circumstances, your actions should always work towards your end goal (Sharon, 2020; Downey, 2020). Thus, strategy is employed with a definitive outcome in mind, informed by an infinite vision (Sinek, 2019). Thus, finite strategies are mere milestones in pursuance of a long-term infinite goal. There should be a coherent plan to tackle a defined problem, and one should be able to define and explain its nature (Stem, 2019).

6.3.4.2 Causal factors

Ambiguity about organisational reality and our envisaged reality is indicative of poor strategising. It may result in ill-conceived strategies, ill-suited to address the challenges associated with the current realities (Sinek, 2019). The clearer we see what we are setting out to achieve, the more likely we are to achieve it.

Some interviewees indicated that interventions from other spheres of government are ill-conceived, misguided, and impractical due to ignoring local realties, single-mindedly focusing on finances, focusing only on compliance, and lack of clear understanding of the goal of interventions.

The emphasis placed on compliance is misplaced, for a municipality’s main constituents are employees and communities. The outcomes should be aimed at serving these. These invariably contribute to a culture of short-termism, with less attention paid to strategy, fundamentals, and long-term value creation. This situation is exacerbated by the insecure employment environment prevailing in municipalities. The fear associated with an insecure employment environment and political interference was highlighted.

6.3.4.3 Strategies

The following are considered important to the development or planning of strategies, namely engaging diverse ideas, maximum involvement of all stakeholders in an organisation, thorough analysis and understanding, understanding that good strategy is about action not theory, focus on organisational goals, and consistency but flexibility to adapt (Stern, 2019). The data indicate, though minimally, that strategies are poorly conceptualised with reference to strategies being uninformed, poor sense of responsibility and poor planning.

Developing strategy should always involve considering value-adding propositions. For example, the impact of Covid-19 on businesses and the world in general indicates that considering the possible impact of these risks has significant strategic value (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). As I have alluded to elsewhere in this study, short-term approaches are contending with conservation strategies; i.e. doing more of the same. Strategy-invalidating tipping points such as Covid-19 exposed these strategies, leaving organisations extremely vulnerable (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021). Municipalities should be equipped to respond to these.

6.3.4.4 Consequential factors

The data indicate that governance and service delivery frameworks in municipalities are predominantly operational-oriented, characterised by undue political influence, and concerned with finances rather than people. Further, challenges of participation and cooperation, as indicated by the data, pose a challenge for the development of municipal strategy.

The eminent challenges as examined in the literature review (Chapter 2), and confirmed by the interviews about the participation of stakeholders, leave doubts as to the functionality of IDPs as key strategic service delivery implementation instruments. Generally, IDPs tend to be bureaucratic and democratic processes, but they should be deepened in a manner that would make communities take responsibility for participating in consultative structures (Mlokoti, 2017).

In addition, IDPs often become 'shopping lists', rather than encompassing a strategic and long-term vision for the development of municipal areas, overemphasising infrastructure development at the expense of social and economic development (Cameron, 2019). Challenges associated with participation leave the IDPs largely as instruments for exerting bureaucratic and political control (Heller, 2020). Also, the challenges of political interference harbour the danger of service delivery and governance initiatives being subject to control by the minority groups with political connections. Ultimately these processes promote and protect the interests of these groups, instead of the interests of the vulnerable and marginalised in society. A perpetual decline in services, as well as the quality of services, in municipalities might be an indication of this.

6.3.5 Participation and cooperation

6.3.5.1 Central features

The literature indicates that participation involves stakeholders interacting towards achieving something; i.e. consulting or affording an opportunity to be involved. It is also suggested that participation should be meaningful to have any impact on governance and service delivery. Participation should be based on information that is truthful and accessible, and should solicit engagement that is aimed at having an impact on the eventual decision-making.

Stakeholders must be engaged as valued participants in the governance and delivery processes. These find expression in responses to stakeholder engagement that are reflected as 'stakeholders of different capacities give input', 'poor understanding of issues leads to poor relations', 'capacity building through information sharing', ‘capacitation increases the value proposition’, ‘miscommunication between levels’, ‘communities not understanding the purpose of planning’, and ‘engagement without purpose’.

The challenges of participation are stated in the following terms by interviewees; ‘hierarchical decision-making’, ‘decisions taken arbitrarily’, ‘centralised endorsement of decisions’, and ‘process-oriented engagement.

The data suggest that municipalities prefer coordination as the preferred from of relational exchange, in view of high levels of control and supervision. However, innovation and inventiveness prefer cooperation, for it is better associated with an open-minded system and a commitment leadership paradigm. Moreso, for it attaches value to all stakeholders as service delivery agents as opposed to being passive recipients of services. The significance of cooperation as an engagement strategy vests in that high levels of capacity implicit in cooperation allow for releasing accountability and responsibility across the organisation; i.e. dispersing decision-making across the organisation (Carlise and Gruby, 2019).

Therefore, cooperation and participation depict trust in the political system and elected politicians, which is critical for accepting decisions of government (Lefko-Everett, 2020). Thus, cooperation is portrayed as the optimal form of engagement and implies high levels of individual and organisational capacity (Soininen, 2018, Carlise and Gruby, 2019).

6.3.5.2 Causal factors

The dominant level of engagement and the extent of the engagement might be indicative of system failures or successes; e.g. involvement or non-involvement of a stakeholder or stakeholders at a certain level might be a source of disharmony within a governance system. The level and extent of engagement can be indicative of exclusionary practices such as limiting access to information, inaccessible engagement platforms and facilities, and limited use and access to technology.

Various interviewees indicated a prevalence of technophobia in municipalities; ‘limited use of technology’, and ‘professionals tend to use modern technology in exchanges. Further, a lack of diverse and authentic information impacts negatively on the quality of engagement. These are indicative of an environment characterised by excessive controls and risk-averse tendencies with no room for own initiatives and creativity. Participants commented that municipalities are rigid and inflexible, which inhibits participation and cooperation.

6.3.5.3 Strategies

Various challenges relating to cooperation and participation reflected as follows; ‘scepticism’, ‘non-responsiveness’, ‘demotivated officials’, ‘dispositioned officials’, ‘intolerance for diversity’, ‘non-appreciative of responsibility’, ‘poor communication’, ‘acting on ignorance’, ‘responsibility failure’, ‘poor stakeholder relations’, and ‘poor awareness’. These challenges encompass various capacities essential to improving governance and service delivery; thus not engaging all relevant stakeholders relating to matters of governance and service delivery that concern them amounts to reneging on a core responsibility.

Therefore, strategies for value-adding participation and cooperation should be designed around the following; inclusivity in relation to who should be engaged with accessible, suitable, and appropriate platforms for engagement (Toendepi and Hewitt, 2018); accessibility to authentic information; and an environment for continuous free, fearless, and truthful feedback without sanction; and opportunities for continuous capacitation and learning (Hasting and Meyer, 2020).

Thus strategy should enhance individual, and thus organisational, ability to freely effect meaningful and authentic engagement, for it is a pathway to creativity and inventiveness (Hastings and Meyer, 2020). It is so because unduly limiting freedom or autonomy limits choices, as well as rendering an organisation inflexible and lethargic; it inhibits cooperation.

6.3.5.4 Consequential factors

Organisations should be mindful of those practices that may thwart cooperation, and participation for these may lead to a stagnation of any new or innovative ideas. Some cooperation-diminishing factors appear from the data; trust-deficit, silo-mentality, technophobia, and customer apathy. These correspond with Brown's (2018) articulation that poor feedback leads to a lack of clarity, diminishing trust, and an increase in problematic behaviours.

The more we receive feedback through cooperation, the faster we learn and the more we achieve (Hastings and Meyer, 2020). Through feedback, misunderstanding is minimised, and a climate of co-accountability is created (Hastings and Meyer, 2020). Cooperation by free and capacitated stakeholders serves to inculcate trust and responsibility as the cornerstones of accountability (Green, 2020; Hastings and Meyer, 2020).

Moreso, authentically capacitating stakeholders about the affairs of an organisation, e.g. finance and other issues, inculcates a sense of self-worth, responsibility, and ownership, creating a better understanding amongst stakeholders of the affairs of an organisation. Significantly, cooperation serves as the foundation for devolving decision-making to lower levels in an organisation.

People continually transform the structures through interplay and the exchange of knowledge. Knowledge actually resides in the citizens, and it is only those participate in the learning process who push for more knowledge (Toendepi and Hewitt, 2018). From this perspective, capacitating stakeholders creates room for self-organisation through which communities and groups can mobilise for their own upliftment (Atkinson *et al*., 2020). Thus, cooperation serves as a basis for improving structural relations.

6.3.6 Service orientation

6.3.6.1 Central features

The data indicate that municipalities view service as prescribed and specified material services. Thus, services are denoted as codified products, e.g. a basic provision of 6 kilolitres of water. This is the case, despite the data also suggesting that services be considered from a community perspective. It implies that what services entail should be the result of feedback and input from those intended to benefit from such services.

However, there is a notion that services have material and non-material dimensions, paving the way for a balanced or multi-level approach to service delivery (Sanei, 2018). It includes a value proposition dimension of services linking services with development, leadership, organisational mindset, capacitation, learning, participation, cooperation, and strategy. Further, it includes the notion that the provision of municipal goods, activities, benefits, and satisfaction that are deemed public, and enhance the quality of life in municipalities (Reddy, 2016; Musitha, 2016).

Therefore, this study proposes that services in themselves should not be the focus, but rather the pursuance of an infinite goal or vision; e.g. inclusivity and equality, and values that can withstand change and crisis (Sinek, 2019; Pink, 2019). Thus services should be provided on a sustainable basis (Rosling, 2018). Municipalities and communities have needs and interests that are not merely long-term, but perpetual (Green, 2020; Pollack, 2015).

Thus, the importance of participation is vested in attaching value to services from the community perspectives (Sinek, 2019; Bryant, 2019). Communities are not passive recipients of services, but services are co-created and communities are co-owners of service infrastructure. This is a characteristic of services supported by grounded theory.

6.3.6.2 Causal factors

The data indicate various causes leading to a disjointed notion of service delivery. Some indications in the data are ‘benign neglect’, ‘lack of sense of responsibility’, ‘ignorance about what is to be achieved’, and ‘disregard for urbanisation and population growth’. It appears that a sense of service is to a large extent influenced by negatively dispositioned municipal officials, which certainly has a negative influence on how measures to effect service delivery are conceptualised and implemented.

Further, a predominant materialistic view on services leads to a disregard for the human element of services, manifested in a focus away from improving the wellbeing of those that must be served. Hence a focus on processes and operations, as the data reveal.

6.3.6.3 Strategies

The data indicate that service strategies should have regard to customer needs, customer input and feedback, and sustainability and continuous delivery of services. Further, service improvement and expansion require leveraging technologies and personalised human attributes as sources of innovation and inventiveness.

Thus a move away from a predominant focus on the material aspect of services is advocated for. Strategies must leverage higher order needs, beyond the mere satisfaction of basic needs, in order to unlock service delivery opportunities (Green, 2020; Hagermann *et al*., 2020). From this perspective strategy should not unduly limit freedom, for it limits choices. It departs from a perspective that a focus on the non-material aspect of services will invariably lead to improving and enhancing the material aspect of service.

6.3.6.4 Consequential factors

A focus on compliance and processes, as indicated by the data, indicates deficiencies in our moral make up, which negatively influence efforts to improve governance and service delivery. Further, compliance and an operational orientation result in poor or inadequate levels of organisational adaptability.

Thus, not focusing on improving human wellbeing has cultural consequences, which negatively influence municipalities' ability to render services, reflected in poor payment culture, poor services, vandalism of service infrastructure, and poor government-community relations. Thus, in essence, a focus away from improving human wellbeing negatively impacts upon social cohesion as a driver of long-term prosperity and competitiveness.

Further, the focus of municipalities on short-term material considerations, especially financial considerations, prevents municipalities from delivering sustainable services, for municipalities lack a long-term futuristic outlook of service delivery. Such organisations are unable to build a loyal base of stakeholders, critical to providing an organisation with the strength and longevity that a predominantly short-term and finance-based approach alone cannot provide. Organisations with a bias for will over resources turn out to be more resilient than those that prioritise resources (Mzimakwe, 2020; Sinek, 2019). Thus, a service that is focused on material considerations has economic, social, and political consequences.

6.3.7 Developmentalism

6.3.7.1 Central features

The Northern Cape reflects a highly distorted developmental map. As Hartflief (2019) argues, many of the smaller municipalities (in population size, usually covering large areas), are not strategically ready to offer improved standards of services to communities (Madzivhanila and Asha, 2019). The Northern Cape urbanised municipalities under study suffer the same fate, as indicated in the literature review.

The data indicate the following in relation to adherence to requirements of a developmental state; ‘poor intergovernmental relations’, ’poor state-society relations’, ‘focus on compliance and processes’, and ‘incapacity and incompetence’. These have been identified as the focus areas of a developmental state (Evan and Heller, 2015). The interviewees indicated that ‘development’ implies the delivery of sustainable services. It was also expressed that development improves living conditions.

The data indicate a serious dereliction on the part of the state to effect its developmental mandate; more particularly with reference to its incapacity to deliver services. Ineffective state interventions, manifested in increased inequality, unemployment and poverty is a testimony to that.

6.3.7.2 Causal factors

The current development trajectory is not delivering sufficient economic growth, social inclusion, or spatial integration, and it is also not fiscally sustainable (Karaoğuz, 2020). There is a lack of an economic tax base due to poverty and unemployment, coupled with service delivery backlogs, poor planning, and the lack of a revenue base.

The sustainability of services has been mentioned by interviewees in the following terms, 'planning for future generations', 'continuing and uninterrupted services', and 'economic activity improves lives of people'. Mabondo (2018:204) views 'the structural class power of business' as a root cause of dissatisfactory developmental success. Race and class inequalities, and the spatial inequalities that they create, exist at all levels, between and with various categories of municipalities.

As discussed in the literature review, neo-liberal approaches favour protecting finance and profit, often to the detriment of people involved, e.g. employees and customers. Samuel and Nordhaus (2020) attribute a failure to improve standards of living to a lack of capital deepening, and thus low labour productivity. It accounts for challenges of unemployment and is typical of an economy focusing on process improvement (Muras and Hovell, 2014).

In the main these are attributed to a lack of effective leadership and governance (Makunde *et al*., 2018). The World Bank now recognises that disparity has adverse consequences on entities undermining good governance (World Bank Development Report, 2016).

6.3.7.3 Strategies

The challenges associated with development suggest that development strategies should depart from a focus on the provision of material services, including affording municipalities a greater role in rural and urban development. Such an approach is founded on inclusive stakeholder capacitation and assistance.

A decentralised development approach implies the promotion of efficient local markets and demand-driven inclusive growth; thus direct and indirect market support. Thus, all spheres of government should focus on inclusive demand-driven support at all levels. This should be augmented with the robust expansion of employment-creating initiatives and the expansion of the provision of employment by all stakeholders, including the private sector (Lemanski *et al*., 2018).

Thus strategies should involve instituting implementation instruments such as policies and bylaws that promote and give effect to inclusivity and differentiation, thus having regard to political and social effects of exclusion and discrimination. Stated differently, strategies should avoid democratic deprivation (Baud *et al.,* 2019). Further, ethical considerations require that policies and legislation be informed by our sense of right or wrong in relation to how municipalities treat communities. These are not easily captured by laws and policies, but easily felt by everyone, particularly the marginalised in society.

The concept of sustainable development requires awareness of effects of development efforts on carrying capacity of resources, i.e. increasing demand leads to less per capita availability of resources (Baud *et al.,* 2019). Thus notions of a shrinking eco-space require that governance, from an ecological perspective, deals with issues pertaining to ecological standards; e.g. in relation to resources, ecological responsibility, technology, and resource utilisation (Baud *et al*., 2019).

A futuristic perspective of sustainable development requires participatory planning whereby communities are afforded an opportunity to affect the future direction of development in their communities (Leedy and Ormrod, 2021; Sardar, 2017).

6.3.7.4 Consequential factors

Spatial and income inequalities, coupled with poverty and unemployment, seriously impact on the ability of all municipalities to have developmental local governance. Poor human capabilities impact on the ability of municipalities to promote and practice good governance (Sen, 2019; Heller, 2015). The researcher holds that conceptualising and implementing development strategies, as outlined, will yield increased productivity as a foundation of sustained and inclusive economic growth. In this regard, the ability of government, at all levels, to deal with challenges of inequality and poverty will be enhanced.

Reference in the data to consequences of failure to effect development are; ‘incapacity to deliver services’, ‘poor planning’, ‘responsibility failure’, ‘poor consultation’, ‘inequality’, ‘material targets’, ‘discrimination’, ‘poor customer relations’, ‘exclusionary decision-making’, ‘non-responsiveness’, ‘limited economic opportunity’, and ‘leadership deficit’.

A failure to effect the developmental state prevents that society shares the fruit of development in a fair way, thereby compromising common prosperity as a fundamental principle of governance (Tsheola, 2017). By implication, social harmony, i.e. harmonious relations amongst all relevant actors in the process of delivering services, is compromised (Tsheola, 2017). Thus, social cohesion, as an outcome of the National Development Plan (NDP) and source of openness, transparency, cooperation, commonality of interests, and shared goals, is compromised. From this perspective, the constitutionally-entrenched social democratic system is also compromised (Tsheola, 2017). It amounts to unethical behaviour, since the underpinning of democratic values enshrined within the Constitution is neither adopted nor seriously considered within municipalities (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018; Hanekom, 2018). Mafunisa (2019) argues that it is a source for the erosion of public trust and confidence.

The Edelman Trust Barometer, which surveyed more than 36 000 interviewees in 28 countries, interviewed between November 1 and 24 in 2021, reveals that South Africans now trust business more than any other institution to solve societal challenges that have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis. Government is seen as distrusted, unethical, and incompetent (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021). Thus, the state’s inability to deliver services resulted in reputational damage on the part of municipalities, which also influences particularly rural municipalities’ ability to attract competent skilled employees, to be able to execute its mandate, and thus also experience systemic under-performance. Stigmatisation and stereotyping of municipalities as ‘blood-suckers’ and ‘hopeless’ were raised by some of the interviewees, mentioning municipalities’ dependence on grants, as well their inability to collect their own revenue.

Without social cohesion, the forces of innovation and knowledge creation cannot be set in motion (Gasper, 2012; Tsheola, 2017). It is so, for an environment characterised by a lack of or poor social cohesion is a breeding ground for exclusionary politics or non-responsive governments. In municipalities it manifests in limited participation and inputs in IDP processes, as well as in engagement structures such as intergovernmental forums.

The President's drive of the District Development Model (DDM) recognises that state architecture needs reform to guarantee that from District/Metropolitan levels all governmental areas can put their programmes into operation in an inclusive manner and thereby ensure the synchronisation of implementation and shared capabilities (STATSSA, 2019).

6.4 DISCUSSION OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS RESPONSES

Table 6-1: Comparative analysis: Responses on some questions

Questions	Dawid Kruiper	Emthanjeni	Ga-Segonyana	Nama Khoi	Sol Plaatje
What do you understand by the term governance ?	Service orientation Cooperation Strategy Capacitation	Service renewal Leadership Closed mindedness/ Participation Management systems Hierarchical perspective	Cooperation Service orientation Structural perspective/closed mindedness Functional arrangements	Leadership/poor Internal relations Closed mindedness Learning Open-mindedness	Service orientation Closed mindedness Leadership
What do you understand by the term service delivery?	Development Closed mindedness Service orientation Capitation	Closed mindedness Service orientation Development Collective service responsibility	Development Closed mindedness	Capacitation/non-reflexive authority Cooperation Development Multi-dimensionality Service orientation	Development Service orientation Closed mindedness
What is the prevailing framework or practice in your municipality relating to the governance-service delivery	Development Service orientation Close-mindedness	Closed mindedness Inflexible organisation Development/municipal viability Compliance oriented framework	Strategic operations Closed mindedness Innovation and inventiveness Leadership Service orientation	Leadership /organisational development Lack of adaptability Service orientation Cooperation Responsibility-deficit Utilitarian practice	Close-mindedness Service orientation Co-governance

Questions	Dawid Kruiper	Emthanjeni	Ga-Segonyana	Nama Khoi	Sol Plaatje
nexus?					
What effects of governance and service delivery have you been experiencing in your municipality ?	Leadership Strategy Development Learning Cooperation	Development Service orientation Poor community-council relations Internal organisational incapacities	Responsibility deficit Community centred delivery Discriminatory service practices Receptiveness Development	Leadership/lack of Innovation Service orientation Responsibility deficit	Disconnected communities Poor stakeholder relations Capacitation
How are stakeholders, internal and external, engaged or involved in matters of governance and service delivery?	Co-ordination Participation cooperation	Participation Cooperation Learning Development	Engagement structures Meaningful engagement /cooperation Learning Engagement through participation	Receptivity and adaptability Cooperation Influence and engagement Poor stakeholder relations participation	Participation Cooperation Closed mindedness Learning
Do you think the prevailing governance framework is appropriate to bring about desired service delivery outcomes?	Learning Leadership Close-mindedness Toxic workplace	Learning Impracticable framework Toxic service delivery environment Dysfunctional organisation	Innovation and adaptability Singular service perspective/closed mindedness Capacitation Participation Learning	Strategy Closed mindedness Learning Practicable framework Impracticable framework	Open-mindedness Inappropriate systems designs Leadership Closed mindedness Learning

Author's own

In relation to governance most municipalities view governance in the context of service delivery, i.e. material services. The majority of municipalities view governance not in direct association with participation. Governance is an operational issue.

All municipalities link service delivery to development, in the context of material services. Only one municipality views service delivery in the context of collective responsibility.

All municipalities, but one views the framework as service-centred. However, three associated the framework with development. Only two municipalities mention innovation and adaptation. The majority indicate that the framework is not feasible, which can be indicative of poor service delivery. It indicates to a quest for an alternative framework which accord with the objectives of this study.

Four municipalities indicate poor stakeholder relations, which can be associated with poor services and poor community buy-in. It corresponds with indications of poor stakeholder relations, which might be indicative of non-authentic engagement. These, despite four municipalities indicating the importance of participation.

Municipalities' responses in the main indicated to municipalities being mainly closed systems; e.g. operational oriented, non-receptiveness, inadequate focus on innovation and inventiveness, poor adaptability and non-authentic engagement, all which merged from the data. These provide motivation for adopting a governance framework to create adoptive or transformative municipal institutions.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The chapter has successfully critiqued the findings of the study in line with the study objectives, the theoretical framework underpinning governance implementation in municipalities, and the literature review. In the main, the discussion of the identified themes revealed that governance presents as both a cause and a consequence of poor governance and service delivery.

These causes and effects manifest as economic, social, political, ecological and cultural problems (Mamabolo and Tsheola, 2020). Scant reference to ecological factors and effects is deplorable, for ecological cause and effects are at the roots of the delivery of services on a sustainable basis.

The discussion confirms that the identified themes are interdependent. These themes, individually and collectively, are indicative of the prevailing culture relating to governance and service delivery. It is a culture for the discussion of these themes as presented the behaviour and mind-set lived, not perceived, by stakeholders (Hagman *et al*., 2020; Dalio, 2021; Fuhr, 2021).

Interviewees shared their lived experiences through responses to questions relating to governance and service delivery. Through analysing and synthesising the responses of the interviewees, the researcher could discern the factors of success and failure in the culture of the municipalities; culture being posited as the best determinant for organisational success (Humphreys and Hughes, 2021). Organisational performance can fluctuate, leaving culture as something that can truly be relied upon (Hasting and Meyer, 2020).

In the main, the data indicated that the prevailing governance frameworks give effect to negative cultural characteristics, associated with a closed and non-adaptive socio-ecological system, thus representing a weak culture. The cultural characteristics of municipalities can briefly be outlined as follows; ecological – disregard and ingratitude; political – exclusionary politics, poor engagement and non-responsiveness; economic – economic exclusion, as well as spatial and income inequalities; social – weak social cohesion, manifested as poor state-community relations; and cultural – adherence to single paradigm, neo-liberal market, dehumanising governance and service delivery.

These weak cultural characteristics establish the need for organisational realignment in order to increase organisational agility. Thus, the discussion of the categories and themes establishes the foundation for the building blocks of a governance framework, policy insights, and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery.

The next chapter will showcase the recommended governance framework for the lagging Northern Cape Municipalities under study, essentially addressing Objective 3 of this study. The researcher formulates responsive policy insights and recommendations to facilitate transforming municipalities into icons of the Northern Cape and the country at large, essentially dealing with Objective 4 of this study.

CHAPTER 7: PROPOSED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK (SMGF)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 5 and 6 addressed the first and second research objectives. This chapter addresses the third objective; i.e. to formulate a sustainable governance framework for improved service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

The aim of this chapter is to develop a robust hybrid and responsive governance framework that provides a broad, yet concise, framework that will serve as a roadmap for Northern Cape urbanised municipal service delivery or performance. Such a framework should guide municipal management, administrators, and those tasked with oversight responsibilities (Rangi, 2018).

The proposed governance framework is relevant because it offers a self-audit facility to ensure cohesion and the appropriate conceptualisation of a working solution contextual to the urbanised municipalities under study, as well as for general policy consideration (Fourie, 2019; Imenda, 2014). Moreover, the proposed framework serves as an analytic tool for assessing congruence between governance measures and service delivery outputs in the light of the findings highlighted in Chapters 5 and 6 of the study.

The proposed governance framework was developed by identifying and outlining the concepts and themes that emerged from the analysis of findings; more particularly a holistic systems-orientation and an avoidance of a locked-in system state (Brink, 2017; Imenda, 2021). This framework is to encapsulate qualities or dimensions that will enable the municipalities to absorb, adapt, and transform in a dynamic service delivery context. The SMGF identifies key performance areas for measuring performance in local government, and identifies good governance factors that have a positive impact on improved service delivery of local government in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province.

The framework SMGF is not an exhaustive framework, and can be further extended by adding other variables, depending on each unique situation at a municipality. It is non-deterministic as it rejects the notion that some factors have causal primacy over others. Notwithstanding, it provides a good basis that could have a wider application in the local government arena in South Africa as it highlights requirements of good governance arrangements that must be in place for each dimension of good governance. Thus, the SMGF aims to improve and maintain municipalities as resilient socio-ecological systems.

There are a number of studies and researched articles that have investigated factors that have a critical role in the success of local government, but none that the researcher could locate provide a logical connection between the good governance dimensions and service delivery or organisational performance in local government. The proposed SMGF seeks to measure municipal performance in relation to the identified objects of local government, as outlined in Section 152 of the Constitution.

The literature review, theoretical framework and grounded theory support the view that a functional, well governed and performing local municipality involves three important dimensions for assessing municipal governance effectiveness, namely: Firstly, whether the municipality is performing its functions and delivering on the desired outcomes as set in the Constitution, particularly in Section 152; secondly, whether the political leadership and organisational capacity of the municipality is of a make-up that it will be able to execute functionality and deliver outcomes on a sustainable basis; and, thirdly, whether the execution of political and administrative actions is underpinned by the principles of good governance and aimed at improving the conditions of citizens and service users.

7.2 PROPOSED SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK (SMGF)

The proposed SMGF, aimed at improving and sustaining municipal performance, is demonstrated in the figure below.

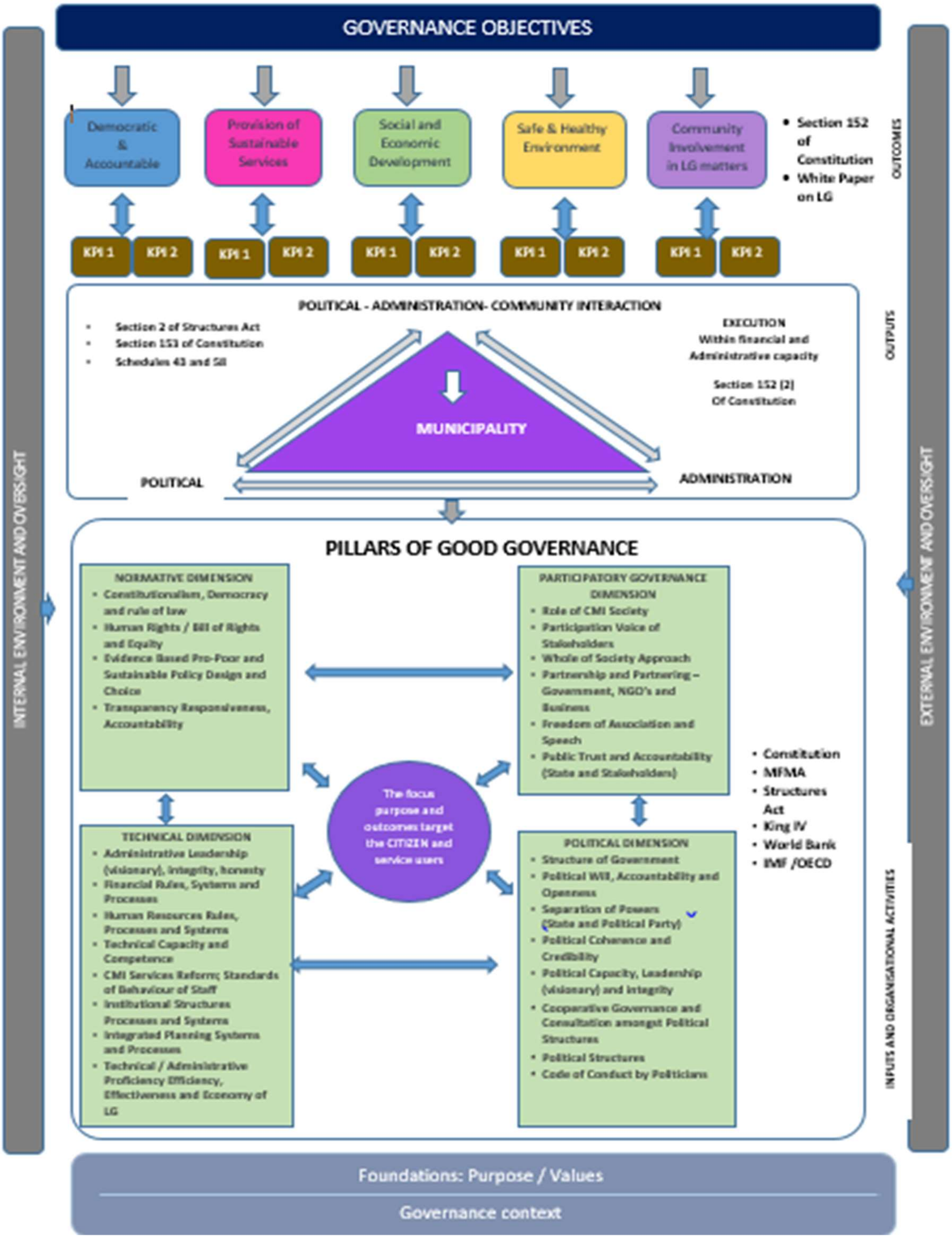


Figure 7-1: Proposed sustainable municipal urbanised governance framework

Author's own

The SMGF is in line with global governance standards that support participatory development at the heights of good municipal governance (SALGA, 2021).

Globally, the good municipal governance framework was discussed at the World Bank's Public Sector Governance Committee (2020), at which governance was defined functionally, i.e. whether local, provincial, or national governments achieved their indicated goals effectually. The World Bank Governance Committee (2020) views good governance as being helpful to nations to achieve sustainable, self-reliant developmental and social integrity, whether local, provincial, or nationally (Ndulu, 2020).

As highlighted in the literature review, good governance has a strong participatory character. The central focus of raising quality participation by local societies relates to participatory development and good governance to better attain self-reliance, sustainable development, and social integrity through participation crucial to public values as embedded within the needs and opinions of individuals (Turkel, 2016:3). Good governance is a benchmark for long-lasting improvement. From this viewpoint, good governance resolves the conundrum between democracy and efficiency (Kraai *et al*., 2020).

In the context of this study, the quality of participation encompasses participation by capacitated stakeholders, including exerting a genuine influence over decision-making and the decision-making processes. Good governance is the underpinning of taking part in advancement, providing the government functions to push public participation creating an environment conducive to the participatory process.

Participatory development and good governance are consequently inter-related, as are the two composite elements of good governance; the ideal orientation of the state and the ideal functioning of government.

The figure next shows the relationship between good municipal governance and participatory development.

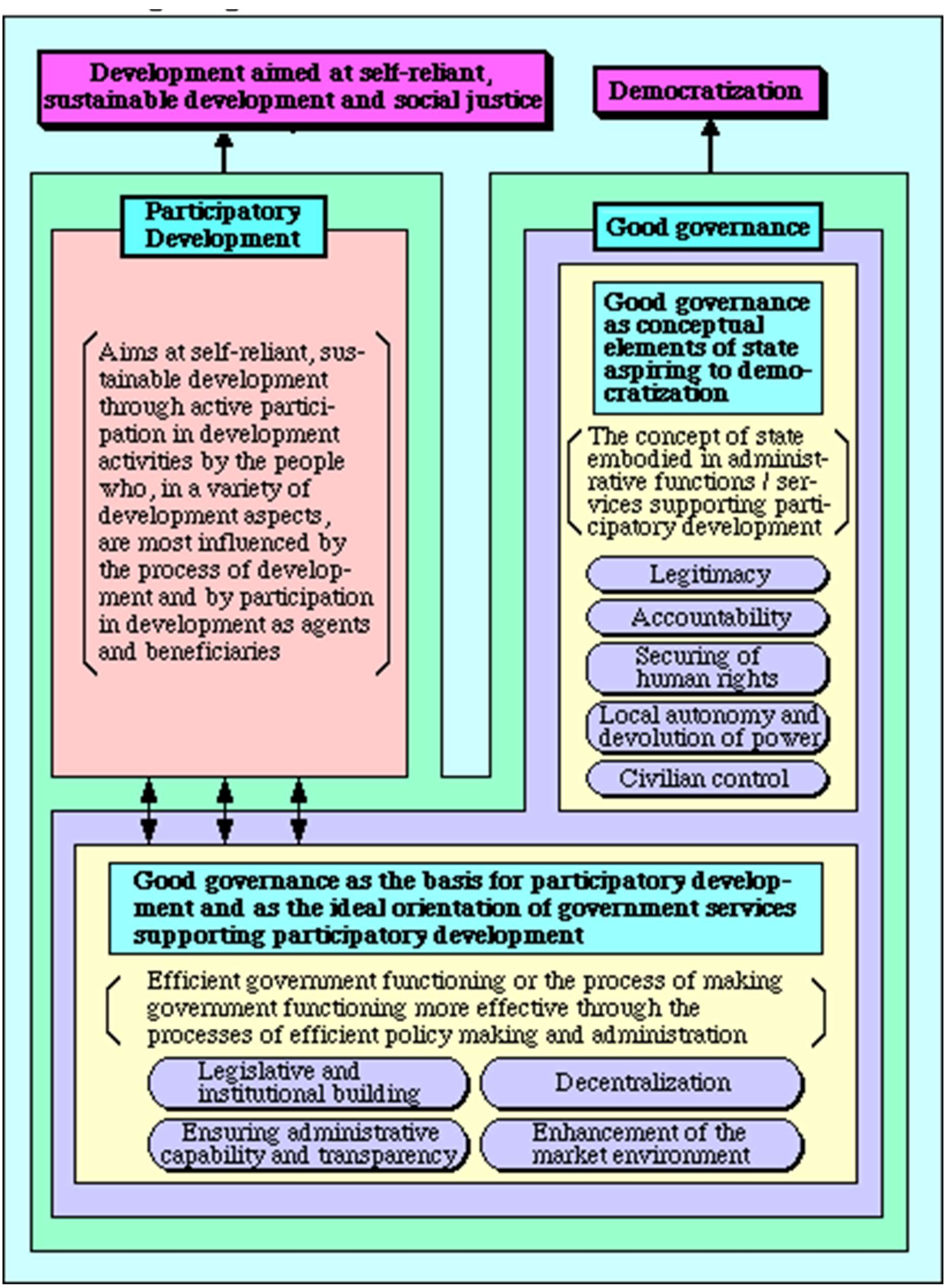


Figure 7-2: Good municipal governance and participatory development

Ndulu (2020)

The SMGF does not attempt to develop sub-indicators such as KPIs and objectives, nor does it show the key activities for each element of the model. The National Treasury, COGTA, and the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluations (DPME), who are primarily responsible for performance monitoring and oversight of local government, have already commenced with some work in this regard; i.e. developing a set of standardised indicators for performance measurement of local government.

The researcher believes that this study and model will complement, inform, and enrich the National Treasury, COGTA and DPME processes, making municipalities more responsive to deliver on their constitutional requirements. It should be kept in mind that if local government fails in its mandate, South Africa fails.

7.2.1 Governance context: wider, specific and structural

The previous chapter concluded that municipalities operate in a cultural environment focused on compliance and operations, instead of focusing on human wellbeing. This approach was key to the prevailing governance frameworks failing to address governance and service delivery challenges. Addressing these challenges requires an in-depth understanding and analysis of the impact and effects of the cultural environment on municipal performance.

Chapter 3, dealing with the theoretical framework, concluded that governance involves a contextual setting (a wider, structural and specific context), structure, agency interaction (agents interact through various relationships, informed by culture, beliefs and traditions), and purpose (service orientation). Thus, our conception of governance is capable of application in divergent settings; urban or rural municipalities (Mokoela, 2018; Auerbach *et al*., 2018; Smith, 2018; Schindler, 2020; Bayirbag and Penpecioglu, 2020; Chapman and Hugo, 2016).

7.2.2 Foundation: purpose and values

The purpose and values that municipalities are pursuing are key to their existence. Municipalities perform constitutionally entrenched obligations. Therefore, the purpose of municipalities is about improving the wellbeing of communities and members of communities, and is a critical component of the notion of services adopted in this thesis. The municipal culture should further this purpose. This notion also holds that all stakeholders bear a responsibility to ensure that the needs and wants of communities are served and manifest in a real improvement in living conditions. The literature review and theoretical framework have expanded on core values, which *inter alia* include leadership, capacitation, responsibility, accountability, trust; rule of law, participation, and transparency.

Thus, working together for a common purpose or benefit for those involved is preferred (Khan, 2019; Yang *et al*., 2019). People feel motivated through their interaction with and relationships developed in the context of common values and public values (Ngqobe *et al*., 2021; Kraai *et al*., 2017).

Chapter 6 concluded that a resilient municipal system also places emphasis on characteristics that ensure the long-term and continuous performance of municipalities. Thus, performance indicators should reflect both the short- and long-term objectives of municipalities.

7.2.3 Pillars of good governance: Normative dimensions

7.2.3.1 General

The normative dimension relates to the structural element of the governance context, requiring implementing the following: Constitution and supporting legislation; pro-poor policies; separation of powers, i.e. clarity of responsibility and roles; and principle orientation, e.g. trust, accountability, transparency. It represents a departure from an approach predominantly premised upon economic and financial efficiency as advocated by the traditional public administration approach.

The researcher argues that these provide a normative framework for short-term objectives, instead of the pursuance of a long-term vision. Conceptualising governance as resilient provides a basis for long-term considerations. Thus, the normative dimension creates room for pursuing both short- and long-term objectives.

Indicators developed by the National Treasury and COGTA involve outcomes (transformational and functional), outputs, compliance, and questions. In analysing these outcomes and output indicators across the spectrum of key priority areas, it is clear that there is a strong bias towards measuring the provision of services to communities, with an emphasis on outputs rather than outcomes and impact, with far less attention being given to whether or not these are being performed in a sustainable manner.

The outcomes for specified services are generic, non-prescriptive (in terms of municipalities replicating their formulation in planning documentation), and provide the common organising and logical frame through which both outcomes and output indicators should be understood (Munzhedzi and Phago, 2014).

This analysis corresponds with the grounded theory, which indicates that there is much focus on short-term operational outcomes, rather than a focus on the long-term sustainability of the provision of services. For example, some interviewees alluded to the provision of a statutory quantity of water of electricity as effective performance, which is detached from its effect on the life quality of the beneficiaries of these services. Thus, the normative proposition advocated in this study subscribes to the public value of the common good (Kraai *et al*., 2017). Serving communities is a key value proposition.

Other than dealing with outcomes for specific services, the other objects of local government, as set out in Section 152 of the Constitution, received little attention and expansion when these standardised indicators were formulated. Further, besides standardised indicators giving little or no attention to objects other that the provision of services, the grounded theory suggests that these also receive little to no meaningful attention in the municipalities under study. The proposed SMGF thus provides broad normative parameters for achieving objectives as set out in Section 152 of the Constitution.

7.2.3.2 Resilience parameters

These parameters are based on the key driver of resilience, i.e. describing or explaining resilience dynamics. The approach in the study is to present resilience as a series of characteristics or dimensions. Key to the approach adopted for the identification of resilience characteristics is the use of qualitative evidence of focus of attention of the determining factors or qualities used to describe the object of interest. From this perspective, resilience, as a qualitative approach, provides a holistic set of insights; a perspective for evaluation and decision-making, with principles presenting inputs, resulting in patterns and recommendations as outputs (Borisoglebsky *et al*., 2019). Therefore, the use of qualities in the resilience approach renders such an approach qualitative.

These provide an analytic dimension to governance in the context of systems as objects of analysis (Borisoglebsky *et al*., 2019). Socio-ecological resilience, as an aspect of systems, forms the basis of the analytic approach used in this study. Thus aspect-based decomposition and component-based decomposition principles are applied (Constas *et al.*, 2020). The assumption is that an 'object of analysis' is component-based, with interactive parts on two or more levels of structure, with observations and conclusions made up of working, constructional, contiguous, or temporal features of the system's parts extent and interfaces (Borisoglebsky *et al.*, 2019).

The assumption is that an aspect-based decomposition presumes that an object can be illustrated as a set of qualities of which components are (in part) inconsequential individually. A narrow set of qualities are induced, and in a way talks to this set of qualities while excluding other qualities (Fox and Bayat, 2017; Constas *et al*., 2020).

The literature suggests a preference for process-oriented principles; including inclusiveness, diversity, anticipation, system redundancy, engaging in networks, diversity of knowledge, participatory engagement, learning and experimentation, innovation, modes of decision-making, extending scope and enabling choice, being forward-looking (Hofman *et al*., 2017; Travis *et al*., 2017), fostering complex adaptive systems thinking, reflexivity, contextualisation, directionality, impact and goal orientation, conflict resolution, strategising, and monitoring by a broad range of stakeholders (Sievers-Goltzbach and Schersick, 2019).

These factors accord with the notion of socio-ecological resilience as a value-neutral concept. Further, the construct of resilience, as a process, is to differentiate resilience from outcome, so as to capture its dynamic attributes. Critically, governance is confirmed to resort to the following dimensions; problem and goal orientation, multi-actors, multi scales and levels, networks, creativity and ideation, adaptation, futuristic, multi-resource base, paradigm, and power relations.

These principles, identified through the literature review, can serve as a basis for developing broader criteria for measuring improvement in governance and service delivery. In the main, these criteria provide a basis for the continuous strengthening of the absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of socio-ecological systems. For example, an absorptive capacity requires functional early warning systems and information regarding the potential or pending fiscal crises, adaptive capacity requires a framework for progressive decision-making and learning from experience, and transformative capacity requires an environment wherein structures are consciously changed, and root causes addressed, also opening up for new ways of interacting and power sharing (Corbetta, 2013).

Thus, resilience capacities, individually and collectively, facilitate strengthening systems to be responsive and transformative (Binãs, 2018). These capacities are crucial to determining and locating elements of risk, i.e. people, infrastructure or service, for they will assist with the identification of root causes for hazards, thereby enabling one to determine the capacity needed to address the emergent hazard.

7.2.3.3 Extent

Extent refers to inclusivity; it is completeness and comprehensiveness in relation to the scope of the issue. It refers to the degree to which scales, perceptions, instruments, and resources are complete in reflecting what is relevant in a particular setting; i.e. whether all the stakeholders are involved and are sufficiently capacitated. Stakeholder capacitation is a crucial ingredient of extent and can be called systems-user-resilience, offering protection of a high proportion to service users, especially vulnerable users (Bovaird and Quirk, 2017).

Capacitation may take the form of improving user resilience by adopting a co-production approach; e.g. involving service users through co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, and co-assessment of services; and community resilience – identifying community assets and potential contributions and mobilising them in community co-production (Bovaird and Quirk, 2017).

In this way government promotes and delivers services consistent with citizens' preference, whether government carries out the tasks it is authorised to do, and whether government takes a holistic view of the functioning of the system and promotes inclusive thinking. For example, governance arrangements that promote inclusivity can contribute to rethinking of pre-existing attitudes and beliefs about marginalised populations (Pineda, 2020).

The issue is whether governance arrangements solicit behaviour and a relational exchange that promotes optimising or maximising service delivery. Therefore, the extent encompasses matters of equity, trust, and responsibility, which favour a social norms approach. Fairness dictates the distribution of resources and affording maximum opportunities in providing access to services. It entails the extent to which wellbeing is distributed, as well as how residents are treated, to levying taxes and related rates.

Further, it entails addressing trust and confidence in local government as an instrument of public wellbeing – part of it is to hold local government accountable and responsible. An aspect accompanying it is whether the allocation and distribution of resources, as well as services, ensure processes applicable to all residents, i.e. whether process and enforcement equality is applied, and further, whether local governments dispense with the responsibility to take care of those unable to care for themselves. Along with these is the government's responsibility to invest in the human and social capital necessary to keep society together and promote social cohesion.

7.2.3.4 Depth

Depth refers to the intensity or quality of change; i.e. the degree to which dimensions of governance arrangements propel change in the status quo or in current developments. The issue is whether or not there is an urge to depart from the business-as-usual governance arrangements. For example, is a municipality stuck with overly engaging with conservation strategies focusing on efficiency, instead of collectively engaging all elements of the human condition? i.e. engaging in diverse economic activities, including new innovative technology. This is not to discard that activities should be undertaken in a manner that limits waste of resources. Efficiency refers to the true value or quality of services to communities; i.e. services that raise wellbeing, as well as optimisation, which is the best or most effective use of resources.

A focus on accountability and responsibility in the individual sets the emphasis on self-focus, which is a characteristic of a closed bureaucratic system, advocating against changing practices, i.e., something should be done the way it has always been done, and compliance is the goal. Further, do governance arrangements possess the character to effect meaningful systems change; e.g., factors enabling an appropriate social response such as trust, loyalty, and inequity aversion?

An issue is whether there is an overreliance on market norms that focus on short-term impact. Thus, structural arrangements, such as social capital and policy as well agency, are crucial to a system's ability to absorb, adapt, or transform. It is also about transforming or deepening the quality of capacity and awareness that people in these systems apply to their actions, both individually and collectively (Scharmer and Yukelson, 2015).

7.2.3.5 Flexibility

Flexibility relates to the ability to fit into a changing environment, enhancing capacity to deal with change, whilst insulating society from instability; e.g. dealing with change in the governance context resulting from unexpected conditions such as Covid-19 and natural disasters. It relates to the extent to which elements of the regime espouse and enable compliant actors and tactics (Bressers *et al*., 2016).

From institutional and process points of view, flexibility includes agility, adopting working practices and mechanisms to facilitate quick responses (Janssen and Van der Voort, 2016). Further, it provides a leeway to each actor to optimise its contribution (Bressers *et al.*, 2016). For example, the presence of discretion in relation to pooling resources likes funds and people, as well as the decentralisation of power. Furthermore, flexibility refers to the degree to which governance arrangements are open to accommodating other possibilities and governance options based on innovative ideas; i.e., not adhering to a specific logic or paradigm.

Flexibility and responsiveness in networks are considered key governance ingredients for enabling human beings to navigate co-operation, coordination and collaboration (Uys and Jessa, 2016). Thus, flexibility is crucial in preventing socio-ecological systems from collapsing. Therefore, flexibility touches on the adaptive capacity of a system.

7.2.3.6 Connectedness and coherence

This requirement stems from governance encompassing networks of interaction in various dimensions. Municipalities encompassing multiple systems require one to look at the inter-connected dynamics of the municipal system. It is so, for a system that draws resources from policy sectors requires concerted action on multiple levels and time-scales, which requires a lot of connective capacity (Bressers *et al.*, 2016).

Connectivity refers to cross-scale connectivity; spatially and temporally (Nyamwanza, 2021). Spatial connectivity reflects particular thinking; i.e. the interplay at individual, household, and community levels (Green, 2020; Nyamwanza, 2021). Temporal connectivity reflects the dynamic nature of systems; i.e. systems changing over time (Nyamwanza, 2021).

Connectedness and coherence acknowledge the importance of relationships in a socio-ecological system; i.e. the significance of stakeholders staying connected with each other. This reflects the idea that socio-ecological systems, due to their complexities, require a holistic approach. The issue is whether systems can be viewed as operating as a unified whole.

In view of the significance of the engagement of stakeholders in the service delivery and governance arrangements, consistency and considerateness should be hallmarks of the way stakeholders relate to each other, thus signifying the significance of coherence; i.e. the qualities of being logical, consistent, and able to be understood. Thus, a coherent system is in a state of a logical, orderly, and harmonious connectedness between the parts.

This has implications for stakeholders. The notions of equity and social justice should be considered, with particular awareness of the obligation to provide sustainable services and the provision of a democratic and accountable government. Stakeholders should have clarity on what is expected; e.g. roles and responsibilities, and what is to be achieved.

Thus, it is crucial for stakeholders to give input regarding their expectations and for misconceptions to be cleared. The value of positive interaction relating to service improvement is highlighted; a sense of belonging and strengthened commitment. In a coherent state, systems are performing optimally and there is synchronisation between the different elements of the system. Thus, coherence enables a system to be in a state of balance, whilst bring able to respond to changes in the external environment.

A coherent state examines the extent to which the arrangement of governance elements reinforces, rather than diminishes, each other; e.g. whether system activities are integrated, congruent, and intelligible. It is about identifying and defining relationships within a system. For example, an organisation pruned to coordination is associated with hierarchies and compliance, whilst a high prevalence of cooperation is indicative of dispersed decision-making and open-minded thinking. Likewise, an organisation that focuses on operations, coupled with a silo mentality, is less coherent and connected than one with a long-term strategic focus coupled with meaningful participation and cooperation.

Thus, coherence and connectedness seek to provide answers to questions such as the following: How do elements of governance arrangements relate to each other? Do governance arrangements promote a systems approach to the delivery of services?

Disconnectedness is reflected in the configuration of the different spheres of government. It is also about synergy; e.g. urban areas are considered as engines where people of different skills, expertise, trades, and professions converge and engage in economic growth producing activities and action.

The scope and impact of connected activities are crucial. Connectedness includes proximate, as well as distant, connectivity; e.g. globalisation can develop a world market for certain products and services. Likewise, globalisation and urbanisation allow for the transmission of ideas and inventions crucial for access to services and improving service quality. The transmission of ideas and inventions presupposes the presence of transport and communication networks. These imply that improving services goes hand-in-glove with improving and exploiting technologies, as well as knowledge networks. Thus, innovation and knowledge networks, or relationships, go hand-in-hand.

Connectedness through networks is denoted as crucial to innovation and knowledge acquisition, for governance networks bring a plurality of public and private sector actors, and thus resources, together in more or less institutionalised arenas of negotiated interaction, involving the exchange of ideas, experience, and knowledge (Torfing and Díaz-Gibson, 2016). It implies that such networks must be supported with the appropriate structures to enhance their affectivity; i.e. to facilitate collaboration and the circulation of ideas and knowledge.

7.2.3.7 Reflexivity

Reflexivity, individual and social, provides a lens through which people can become aware and act upon risk or uncertainty as key qualities of modern-day society (Ward, 2016). Reflexivity is the capacity to see, interrogate, and re-imagine the taken-for-granted structures that sustain current systems relationships (Moore *et al*., 2018).

It reflects a sensitivity towards observing tipping points, rates of change and trajectories, and cross-scale dynamics, in order to facilitate timeous interventions (Constas, D'Ericco, Pietrelli, 2020). Institutional reflexivity, providing a way of dealing with embedded, distributed agency, is defined as 'an individual's general awareness of the constraints and opportunities created by norms, values, beliefs and expectations of the social structures that surround them' (Suddaby *et al*., 2016:229). Reflexivity occurs in a social system when an actor observes and thinks about their actions and their consequences, and then modifies their behaviour (Umpleby, 2017).

Reflexivity in the social context is more than just adapting, and entails the capacity to be something else, rather than doing something different (Dryzek, 2016; Dryzek and Pickering, 2016). Reflexivity means that the capacity to change is not conditioned on path dependency; i.e., not influenced by early decisions, but a real situation – the now is the reference point for the process of reconstruction (Dryzek, 2016). It is a high-level capacity, enabling organisations to transform whatever unexpected complexities and dynamics arise. It embraces the dimensions of forward-looking, innovation, learning and experimentation, and directionality.

These qualities enable systems to move beyond adaptation when the situation requires such. Thus, capacity of reflexivity empowers systems to deal with navigating emergence in the context of transformative agency being distributed, instead of just being able to deal with the experience of emergence (Moore *et al*., 2018).

The researcher argues that reflexivity connotes a keen sense of responsibility affecting how an individual carries out life, how one tries, an undertaking to achieve all the desires in life. Thus, reflexivity encompasses an awareness that something needs to be attended to, and positive steps being taken to attend to what needs to be done. A solid awareness of other's expectations brings forth advancement, flexibility, boldness, accomplishment, and liberality.

This heightened sense of responsibility engenders a concern for human wellbeing, rather than compliance and operational considerations. On a practical level, it *inter alia* implies improving and sustaining creativity, as well as avoiding and overcoming procrastination. Reflexivity in the context of socio-ecological systems bears significance in that its qualitative nature renders it suitable to be applied to complex adaptive systems. In this regard, Dryzek (2016) asserts that reflexivity embraces the attributes of transformability, without requiring adherence to strict normative standards, leaving it open to attributes capable of accommodating the dynamisms and complexities of socio-ecological systems whilst overcoming problematic path dependency.

7.2.3.8 Oversight and compliance

In this section, the researcher draws attention to oversight as a necessary part of ensuring the realisation of the principle of good governance. Fundamental to the values enshrined in Section 195 of the Constitution is that public administration must be accountable. In the South African context, legislative structures of the state have oversight to evaluate and guide executive orders of other organs of the state (South African Accountability Model, 2021).

Oversight is used to delineate the various functions executed by the legislature to hold executives (public officials) to account (Sebakamotse and Van Niekerk, 2021). Most significantly, oversight means scrutinising the functions of the executive in search of improved service delivery to provide a better life for all.

The framework of governance seeks to enhance effectual oversight and responsibility between the legislative and executive municipal authorities. Relevant partition of powers provides checks and balances regarding the carrying out of executive functions, providing accountability to the people, although the Constitution plainly delineates a partition of powers within national and provincial areas of the government. It is unspecific relative to local government. Sections 18 and 19 of the Municipal Structures Act specify that all power and functioning are bestowed upon the municipal council.

The mix of executive and legislative roles within the municipal council brings about short comings of the perception of the roles of office-bearers, as well inadequate management. It limits the extent to which the municipal council is able to effectively check itself (Sambumbu and Boniface, 2017). Central amongst these limitations are possibilities for peer accountability – the non-mandatory nature of Section 79 committees to support the council; exclusive powers of mayoral committees to the exclusion of other committees; challenges of separation of powers affect partiality, e.g. council as formulator and implementer of policies and by-laws; and capacity constraints linked to the absence of skills and competencies (Green, 2020; Sambumbu and Boniface, 2017).

The legislative structure for municipalities allows adequate room for the municipality to promote oversight and scrutiny (Ngqobe *et al*., 2021). Accordingly, the Municipal Structures Act says that a municipal council must plan a structure of delegations to enhance managerial and operating competencies, providing suitable checks and balances, thus providing the key requisites for the formation of committees. Therefore, committees established in terms of Section 79 of the Municipal Structures Act must support the municipal council to execute oversight (Ngqobe *et al*., 2021).

Thus, the Constitution and supporting legislation give credence to ensuring the fulfilment of service delivery obligations. In the context of the SMGF, oversight involves the whole spectrum of the framework; i.e. inputs and organisational activities, outputs, and outcomes. The National Government Oversight Model (2021) asserts that management is made up of various aspects; partisan, organisational, economic, moral, legitimate, and tactical elements. These are foundations of overseeing the cost-effectiveness of services and specified outcomes of activities, including unintended consequences (Kuye, 2017; Turkel and Turkel, 2016:5).

In the final instance, it is about outcomes and impact. It involves assessing day-to-day operational activities in relation to whether they are effective, efficient, and economical in pursuit of the objectives and outcomes. Further, whether an organisation develops and maintains qualities that ensure adaptability and the long-term ability to deliver services.

Oversight requires establishing and maintaining structures and instruments with the necessary expertise and skills to perform the oversight function; Section 56 of MFMA for SDPIB, and the Structures Act for PMS systems, and further, the existence of appropriate structural measures to ensure accountability and consequence management, including training and capacitation where needed. Sebakamotse and Van Niekerk (2021) imply that an oversight approach to governance engenders government to be amenable to changing necessities within their communities.

Moreover, Section 6(2) of the Municipal Systems Act requires municipalities to endorse the values of responsibility and public service between its municipal officials, implement measures to avoid corrupt practices and offer cooperation and interaction locally, give truthful and dependable information regarding service delivery standards, and afford community and community organisation information and participation in local government affairs according to the IDP. Sections 152 and 153 of the Constitution encapsulate the developmental mandate of municipalities (Sebakamotse and Van Niekerk, 2021).

7.2.4 Pillars of good governance: Participatory governance dimension

This dimension relates to the structure-agency interaction element of governance. Participation has been identified as a critical component and principle of providing services, as well as being shown to be intimately linked to accountability and responsibility. Its significance and link to other critical values warrants a separate consideration.

It encapsulates aspects such as the role of civil society opportunities for input; whole society approach, i.e. inclusive participation; partnership and partnering, which is co-production and provision of services; freedom of association and speech, which is free and autonomous engagement; and public trust and accountability, i.e. legitimacy and authenticity of the state. It encapsulates the notion of stakeholders being meaningfully involved in governance and service delivery processes (Brown, 2019; Vyas-Doorgapersad and Aktan, 2017).

This is a manifestation of democratic and accountable government in the form of continuous seeking of social consensus (Green, 2020; Vyas-Doorgapersad and Aktan, 2017). It is the concept of meaningful engagement that draws cooperation into the exchange equation. Cooperation implies the engagement of capacitated stakeholders to the extent of exercising shared leadership, characterised by disperse decision-making and the continuous improvement of talent density. In this way organisational resilience is built and harnessed.

7.2.5 Pillars of good governance: Technical dimension

This dimension relates to the structural context and structure-agency interaction elements of governance. It encapsulates aspects such as administrative leadership; financial rules, systems and processes; human resource rules, systems and processes; technical capacity and compliance; institutional structures, processes and systems; technical/administrative proficiency efficiency, effectiveness and economy; and integrated planning systems and processes.

These touch on the cultural aspects of governance and thus the functionality of the governance system, whilst also presented as technical mechanisms aimed at the improvement of service delivery. Particularly, it relates to the financial and administrative capacities referred to in Section 152 of the Constitution, drawing on the internal delivery environment. In the realm of delivering services to the public, good governance reforms advance human rights when they improve the state's capacity to fulfil its responsibility to provide public goods.

7.2.6 Pillars of good governance: Political dimension

The significance of the developmental state in the South African context warrants this be treated as a separate dimension of good governance. In South Africa, the majority of citizens are dependent on the state to improve their living conditions and wellbeing. The political dimension encapsulates aspect such as structure of government; political will, accountability and openness; separation of powers – state and political party; political coherence and credibility; political capacity, leadership – visionary and integrity; cooperative governance and consultation amongst political structures; political structures; and code of conduct by politicians (Tshishonga and Mafema, 2010).

The history of South Africa prompted the institution of a social democratic system of government, advocating for state involvement in the creation and distribution of services to citizens. Democratic government includes key principles such as 'freedom of speech', 'freedom of association', 'the promotion of human rights', 'public voice and opinion' and 'transparency'. However, constitutional principles must be lived, not only spoken about or just be on paper – they must translate into access to improved services. The political dimension is moving into a coordinative, instead of a hierarchical, mode of work with other sectors. For example, the private sector is becoming more involved in the delivery of public services due to its capacity to deliver services of high value at lower costs than the public subjects (Jarosza, 2014).

Interestingly, the ability to be of service, instead of promoting ideology, proves to be a critical determinant of public trust (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021). Autocratic countries like China prove to be high in trust, due to its handling of the Corona virus pandemic (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021). It creates the impression that factors relevant to trust, like cooperation, weigh heavy on the legitimacy of government or form of government.

Concrete steps should be taken to rid the state from patriarchy. Such steps may include extending and improving the participation of stakeholders, creating access to diverse economic and employment opportunities, and promoting and supporting the efforts of innovation and creativity at various levels of society. The state should deliberately work towards decreasing citizen dependence on the state, founded in the capacitation of the citizenry.

The strength of a state's desire for democracy also influences the process of formation of political and administrative structures, and the government's capability to translate this national stance into action. In turn, this too influences the evolution of participatory development.

7.2.7 Political-administration-community interaction: Outputs

What is interesting is the fact that there is perfect alignment and overlap between the institutional arrangements of local government and the dimensions of good governance as both encapsulate the three important elements of politics, administration, and the community, and therefore the success of any municipality is dependent on an appropriate interface between the political, administrative, community, and private sector (economic development) structures. The proposed framework includes and demonstrates these interfaces and connectors.

Nabatchi (2017) posits that in an age of complexity and fourth generation technical advancement, it is incumbent upon municipal officials to apply a governance methodology in a transformational, systematic, integrative, and collaborative manner. These allow for the application of different rationalities, relational capital, and co-operative logic, enabling decisions to be based upon substantive rationality as opposed to a narrow understanding of rationalities (Thorpe and Govenda, 2020).

Such an environment supposes tolerance for diverse and conflicting ideas. High priority is given to feedback and communication across the organisation (Hastings and Meyer, 2020). The value of these in enhancing people's ability to think is priceless, for continuous feedback and interaction amongst informed individuals certainly enhances their ability to judge. Improved judgement holds the potential for improved performance. Informed stakeholders are better equipped to engage in the execution of their responsibilities because of an improved understanding of the relevant local government matters.

The understanding is that interaction occurs in a harmonious environment, characterised by adaptability and transformability, cemented by institutionalised pillars of good governance, as proposed by the SMGF (Sinek, 2021; Buergelt *et al*., 2017; Hill, 2013).

7.2.8 Governance objectives: Outcomes

This component of the SMGF is about whether the municipality is performing its functions and delivering on the desired outcomes as set in the Constitution, particularly in Sections 152 and 153. More specifically, the Constitution states in Section 152(1) that the objectives of local government are to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; to promote a safe and healthy environment; and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. Further, Section 152(2) of the Constitution requires that '[a] municipality must strive, within its financial and administrative capacity, to achieve the objects set out in' Section 152(1). Section 153 of the Constitution directs municipalities to 'organise and direct its administration, financial and organisational procedures to prioritise the essential needs of the community, and to uplift the community socially and economically through development'.

Such efforts must be effected through appropriate political, administrative, financial and community institutional arrangements, as envisaged by the Systems Act, Structures Act and MFMA respectively. Thus, the key components and elements of the local government are administrative, fiscal management, and accountability cycle (Mukamunana and Brynard, 2016). These demonstrate that municipal performance is dependent upon sound state-community arrangement, as foundation of trust.

This component of the SMGF pertains to conformance to municipalities' obligation to be service–oriented, and seeks to assess the extent of municipalities' performance effects felt improvement in the living conditions of communities. Thus municipalities' obligations in terms of Section 152 should be interpreted as encompassing an expanded definition of service-orientation, which includes sustainability and impact assessment (Borisoglebsky *et al*., 2019). Among other things, the effectiveness of a governance system depends on its objectives, e.g. efficiency or equity (Carlise and Gruby, 2019). Therefore, outcomes that must be effected, and key performance indicators, should be developed for each.

The obligation to engender a secure and beneficial neighbourhood is intimately related to the concept of sustainability, which requires that resources, particularly natural resources, be consumed in such a manner that the resource availability for future generations is guaranteed. It acknowledges that governance and service delivery challenges require long-term thinking and long-term solutions (Sanei, 2018). For example, the availability of water and other natural resources are pivotal to the very existence of the human species, as well as maintaining critical industries responsible for producing food and other products crucial to human consumption.

Further, the obligation entails safeguarding human beings and other forms of live from natural disasters, e.g., those threats associated with global warming and global pandemics such as Covid-19. In the municipal context, the pollution of rivers as sources of water through sewer spillages, resulting from poor maintenance of service infrastructure, is a real threat to the health of communities.

7.3 PRACTICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SMGF

In this section the researcher seeks to locate and confirm justification for the SMGF in grounded theory. This discussion unfolds in the context of the different components of the proposed SMGF. This discussion is undertaken with reference to the composite components of the SMGF. Further, practical justification unfolds in the context of governance and service delivery challenges accentuated in the discussion of findings.

7.3.1 Governance context

Most of the interviewees noted that they need a more robust, responsive, and contextual governance framework that captures the unique circumstances of their municipalities to ensure the execution of their municipal mandate and hence, better service delivery. It encapsulates the notion of municipalities as socio-ecological systems, requiring consideration of both the internal and external contextual factors.

The need for the development of the SMGF was prompted by responses from interviewees indicating that the prevailing governance framework was inappropriate to bring about the desired service delivery in their municipalities. In the main, the reasons for this view were indicated as being impractical, poorly conceived, and removed from reality. These responses highlight the significance of contextualisation when dealing with service delivery challenges and having regard to local realities, and not being trapped in a specific paradigm, e.g. a neo-liberal capitalist paradigm, as it limits the options and leads to one dimensional solution-seeking efforts, whereas a balanced approach is required.

7.3.2 Foundations: Values/principles

Responses reflected on governance as; ‘government responsibility’; ‘value-based engagement’; ‘a guiding system’; ‘broader wellbeing a central consideration’; ‘service delivery as purpose’; ‘applying uniform standards’; ‘principle and broad framework’; and ‘direction and purpose’. Therefore, the data implies that a governance framework must address matters relating to principle-orientation. It is at the heart of pursuing a compelling vision, co-created and co-owned by all stakeholders.

7.3.3 Pillars of governance

Responses reflected as follows; 'inflexibility'; 'rigid and prescribed framework'; and 'lack of initiative and imagination'. Governance is portrayed as a narrow focus, requiring a shift to an open system characterised by candour. A narrow focus or 'singular thinking' often results from adherence to predetermined paradigm, a neoliberal market paradigm viewing governance and service delivery challenges as finance challenges.

7.3.3.1 Normative dimension

The interviewees raised the following challenges in relation to norms, namely 'indiscriminate uniform standards'; rigid compliance with prescripts'; 'one dimensional approach'; and in this regard the contextual nature of governance is ignored, creating room for irrational decision-making and ill-informed solutions. Rightly so, one response indicated to adopting a 'balanced approach'. Consistent with the approach in this study, norms must be contextually interpreted.

This dimension aims to render governance more receptive and flexible by encompassing resilience parameters. Further, a focus on constitutionality and human rights aims to ensure that the wellbeing of communities and community member are attended to. Accountability and consequence management are ensured through the separation of powers and evidence-based policy design and choices.

7.3.3.2 Technical dimension

This dimension caters for advancement of innovation and inventiveness, e.g., through Research and Development. Aspects of operational efficiency and improvement of social capital are important considerations. Leadership deficiency is identified as a key challenge. Reponses are: 'operational focus'; 'inflexibility' and 'non-adaptive organisation'; 'poorly conceived framework'; 'technophobia'; 'poor imagination'; 'lack of direction'; and 'trapped in the present'. A leadership-deficit and other capacity constraints, as indicated in the discussion of findings, are indicative of challenges relating to this dimension.

7.3.3.3 Participatory governance dimension

This dimension is justified in that grounded theory indicates that the municipal governance framework has a strong participatory focus. In this regard interviewees responded as follows; 'value public input'; 'participatory delivery process'; 'engagement based on collective input'; and 'customer input'.

The interviewees noted information sharing as critical for effective engagement so that capacitated stakeholders can add value to the engagement. The interviewees mentioned the following participation challenges; 'non-motivated participants'; 'lack of awareness;'limited stakeholder engagement'; ill-informed engagement'; and thus engagement should be optimised by allowing for inclusivity, diversity, and ideation. It implies that appropriate platforms and opportunities should be created for stakeholder engagement.

7.3.3.4 Political dimension

State-community relations are critical for the vulnerable members of society, for their livelihood depends on it. Political will, leadership, intergovernmental relations and accountability are critical in this regard. Ethical considerations are critical, for trust is at the core of state-society relations. A cooperation mode of operation is preferred rather than a hierarchical mode of operations.

The responses from the interviewees were; 'political interference/conflict'; 'poor stakeholder relations''; 'breakdown in trust'; 'community apathy'; 'high cynicism' ; 'poor role clarification' ; 'poor intergovernmental cooperation'; and 'negative coalition influences'.

7.3.3.5 Political-administration-community interaction

Structural arrangements, state-community relations, and political-administrative interface are central to this dimension. From a structural point of view, the following responses were relevant; 'operational focus'; poor engagement and communication'; 'capacity constraints and non-receptive'; 'arbitrary decision-making'; 'perpetual political interference'; 'hierarchical decision-making'; 'organisation trapped in present'; and 'poor role clarification'.

The following responses indicate poor state-community relations; 'stakeholder discontent'; 'capacity constraints'; 'leadership-deficit'; 'breakdown in trust and poor engagement'; 'short-term focus'; and 'high level of cynicism'.

The following responses have relevance to the political-administration dimension; 'over-concern with structures'; 'poor sense of service'; 'non-strategic-orientation'; 'limited input'; 'ignoring context'; 'reluctance to explore'; and 'serving dominant interests'. Political interference, poor role clarification, and trust-deficit, mentioned in Section 7.3.3.4, find relevance here.

These responses reflect a serious deficiency in the implementation environment, manifested through managerial supremacy in decision-making, an internal organisational focus ignoring external contextual factors, a focus on technical and structural efficiency, a self-focus, and a silo mentality. Capacity constraints are typical of such an environment, characterised by exclusionary practices and subsequent service delivery constraints. The need is to expand diversity and inclusivity in decision-making and decision-making processes; hence a focus on empowering leadership, as well as authentic participation and cooperation in the proposed framework.

7.3.4 Governance objectives

The Interviewees responded as follows; 'improving lives'; 'continuous delivery of services'; 'broader developmental role'; 'service delivery as an evolving concept'; 'continuous expansion of availability of services';'sustainability'; 'broad considerations and receptivity to new ideas'; 'long term and community perspective'; and 'empowerment through economic advancement'.

Therefore, the data denotes service delivery as having a broader developmental goal beyond the mere delivery of material services, without appreciating service delivery as also having material connotations. More particularly, non-material aspects are seated in customer perspectives and an orientation that encapsulates an emotional and personal dimension (Malhorta, 2017).

7.4 THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SMGF

Human beings are placed at the core of efforts to improve governance and service delivery, having consequences for how governance and service delivery should be approached. Service delivery is denoted as an object of governance (Borioglebsky *et al*., 2019). Therefore, service delivery obligations are central to the design of the SMGF. From this perspective, this section seeks to provide the theoretical justification for the adoption of the proposed SMGF.

7.4.1 Contextual Governance Framework (CGF)

The application of theoretical multiplicity leads to the contextual conceptualisation of governance. Human beings must leverage contextual factors when attempting to comprehend and improve governance and service delivery (Runji, 2018). Human agency is crucial to affecting governance outputs through applying various capacities and ecosystemic relations (Pineda, 2020). Thus, relational exchange is essential for achieving governance objectives (Zagumny, 2019).

A focus on improving living conditions requires enabling human beings to optimise leveraging contextual factors such as the wider context, e.g. economy, ecology, politics, and technology; the structural context, e.g. processes, strategies, resources, laws and policies; and the specific context, e.g. local environment, previous decisions, and specific circumstances (Runji, 2018). This is the essence of creating an adaptive organisation able to withstand disturbances caused by changes in the contextual environment.

Thus, any framework should deal with the characteristics of a resilient organisation. The dimensions of good governance incorporate these characteristics into the SMGF. Thus the SMGF aims to inculcate characteristics rendering municipalities flexible and agile socio-ecological systems (Jeans *et al*., 2020; D'Orville, 2020).

More particularly, the SMGF gives credence to the following aspects highlighted in the literature; strong participatory character of local government; re-orientation of approaches to municipal performance away from a financial compliance orientation; clarification of the roles of political and administrative arms of municipalities; and re-orientation of leadership and other technical capacities of municipalities towards an open system of governance. All these aspects are critical to promoting candour, and a source of innovation and creativity (Hasting and Meyer, 2020).

These aspects incorporate the need for a strong focus on authentic engagement and sound state-society relations (Draai and Taylor, 2019; Phago, 2018). The quality of engagement and participation is dependent upon the levels of capacitation of individuals in an organisation; the higher the collective capacity, the more open and cooperative an organisational system. From this perspective, a governance framework must deliberately deal with inculcating an open-minded organisation. Public participation should set a precedence for service delivery, legitimately informed by the community, and supported at all levels of local government (Nzimakwe and Reddy, 2015).

Further, a quest for participation is an urge for greater accountability, politically and administratively, as the duties and liabilities of government and public officials is to achieve community objectives (Fox and Meyer, 2019; Molapo, 2020). Napier (2020) and Tengeni (2016) posit that accountability relates to the observance of regulatory frameworks, ethical considerations, and achieving results. These are at the core of oversight requirements incorporated in the SMGF.

The literature review and theoretical framework suggest that governance and service delivery are principle-based; the most prominent principles being people-centeredness, accountability, transparency, responsibility, service-orientation, democracy and participation, and sustainability (BathoPele Handbook, 2015). The severity of prejudice suffered through poor governance and service delivery requires that measures must facilitate a real improvement in living conditions (Fourie, 2019). A service-orientation, premised upon improving living conditions, requires the SMGF to address governance context, foundational values and principles, as well as service delivery as a governance objective.

Thus the researcher holds that matters of contextualisation, service-orientation, participation, accountability, and oversight provide justification for the SMGF.

7.4.2 The SMGF links to TIPS – the Da Vinci Institute Framework

To a great extent, the SMGF links to the Technology, Innovation, People and Systems thinking (TIPS) Framework of the Da Vinci Institute. This is so because the SMGF is a responsive framework founded from the practical problem statement that the urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province need a practical, urbanised municipal governance framework that aids in effective, efficient governance and improved service delivery capacity of the five municipalities under study. Therefore, the nature or mechanisms of the SMGF relate to TIPS in the following ways:

Technology: Technology has relevance in two respects. Three of the municipalities demonstrate scant use of technology. However, use of computers is limited to a few staff members, mainly senior managers. Other municipalities demonstrate the use of advance communication technology where usage is widely spread amongst staff member. Generally advanced smart metering and related technologies are lacking and manual processes are the norm. Thus the use of technology is a major source of service renewal and innovation.

Innovation: As highlighted above, innovation is vital to ensure that municipalities are responsive to the needs of the communities they serve and can respond to. As such, as shown from Chapters 5 and 6, four of the urbanised municipalities under study have adopted innovative approaches towards their governance framework that is contextual to the governance and services delivery challenges they face such as establishing an ICT access point whereby anyone can receive and get governance training online for their municipal governance issues. This is in line with the TIPS framework.

People: Generally, the SMGF demonstrates a strong focus on people empowerment and advancement. Service-orientation is viewed as addressing human wellbeing. The SMGF embraces a people-centred solution, manifested in a strong focus on meaningful participation and cooperation as evidenced by the one of the pillars of good governance in the SMGF called ‘participatory governance dimension’ that focus on bringing community members to participate in the governance issues concerning their municipalities.

Systems thinking: The SMGF shows that the whole framework involves the principles of systems thinking, whereby the architecture of operations in a municipality is considered in a holistic way. This is so because the SMGF is constituted with firstly, inputs in the form of governance objectives such as social and economic development, safe and healthy environment, community involvement to mention but a few of the governance inputs in the SMGF.

Secondly, processes in the form of the political, administration and community interaction with the municipality. Finally, outcomes in the form of the pillars of good governance that focus on the integration of four main variables notably: political, participatory, technical and normative dimensions of good governance as shown by the SMGF.

Therefore, to a great extent, all these features from the SMGF clearly show the application of the systems thinking regarding the formulation or conceptualisation of the SMGF in line with the TIPS Framework. Without doubt, all this is reflected by the way in which the SMGF has integrated the goals of the municipality, interests of the community, and the operational processes of the municipality in the structure of the SMGF, hence it is befitting to argue that the SMGF embraces the TIPS framework because its organisational and performance activities are integrated into a whole package that functions in a 360-degree manner.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the SMGF, effectively indicating how, through its design characteristics, it will facilitate addressing governance and service delivery challenges. The emphasis is on the actual improvement in living conditions, for the SMGF is premised upon strong constitutional and ethical underpinnings. From this perspective, the SMGF is theoretically and empirically justified. Therefore, the SMGF was developed to address the shortcomings of the prevailing governance and service delivery framework in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

The next chapter deals with the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings of the study objectives, and specifically, the last objective that provides for policy insights and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities.

In addition, this chapter provides a discussion of several recommendations in relation to measures to overcome various factors that influence municipal service provision in the urbanised municipalities; i.e. Dawid Kruiper, Emthanjeni, Sol Plaatje, Nama Khoi, and Ga-Segonyana in the Northern Cape Province. Finally, a brief discussion on further research topics related to the provision of municipal basic services in developing countries is presented.

Wilkinson (2019) asserts that the conclusion section is the logical outgrowth of the results section, and that the focus of the discussion is on the interpretation of the results. Wilkinson further concludes that the objective of the conclusion is to examine the results, determine whether they solve the research question, compare them and write other results (from the literature), explain and interpret them, draw conclusions or derive generalisations, and make recommendations for applying the results or for further research.

The discussion in this chapter unfolds in the context of whether the study achieves the following; addresses the problem statement, answers the research questions, and achieves the aim and objectives of the study. The researcher proceeds by indicating some of the challenges experienced by municipalities.

The study problem statement sought to address the challenges of poor governance and service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province, particularly Sol Plaatje, Emthanjeni, Nama Khoi, Ga-Segonyana and Dawid Kruiper municipalities. The key challenges faced by those municipalities include, but are not restricted to, poor service delivery and governance, poor or aging infrastructure, poor leadership development, poorly qualified senior management, inadequate or poor development and spatial planning due to entrenched Apartheid spatial arrangements, huge housing backlogs, insufficient provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, urbanisation and population growth, increasing indigent population, and shrinking revenue base (STATSA, 2016; SALGA, 2020; Demarcation Board, 2018). Poor service infrastructure and services prevent municipalities from leveraging significant economic potential and opportunities vested in *inter alia* urbanisation and population growth; i.e. leveraging potential in demographic dividend (Echendu and Okafor, 2021).

COGTA's local government assessment looked to ascertain the foremost reasons for poor service delivery within municipalities across South Africa. The outcomes revealed a number of problems, and the primary results showed that problems suffered in certain communities did not apply to all the municipalities (Edwards, 2015). Many municipalities are struggling to operate and maintain their services infrastructure in a cost-effective and sustainable manner (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2021).

Challenges included were related to the overall provision of services to communities, the procedural appointment of new members of staff, procurement anomalies and deficiencies, leaks and overflowing waste systems, and also included the absence of dialogue and inter-municipal cooperation with the business community (Matos, 2020).

8.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The problem statement sought to address the challenges of poor governance and service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape. In addressing the problem statement, the study aim was to determine the effectiveness of the governance framework in urbanised Northern Cape municipalities. This section provides a summary of findings in relation to the problem statement, aim, objectives and research questions.

The findings from Chapter 6 and 7 revealed much insight relating factors and effects which are brief discussed in this section.

Key themes that emerged from the data are presented as factors that influence governance and service delivery, and reflect the following characteristics; central features, causal factors, strategy factors, and consequential factors. These reflect an intimate relationship between the identified factors.

8.2.1 Objective 1: Identify the factors that influence governance and service delivery in urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province

The following factors emerged from the data and influence governance and service delivery in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities. These factors have been explained during the discussion of results, thus only characteristics are outlined in this section.

8.2.1.1 Organisational mind-set

Central features: Municipalities are confirmed to be closed-minded organisations, focused on operations and compliance.

Causal: A closed-mindset is influenced or driven by fear, and is indicative of insecurity and vulnerability. Our inclination of the known and paradigm paralysis may be a force behind a closed-mindset.

Strategies: A free-thinking spirit must be unlocked, opening municipalities for different inputs and buy-in. Participation and cooperation are key in this regard.

Consequential: Standardised thinking limits options in that it favours a leveraged environment, and this may lead to strategies that are impracticable and irrelevant. It renders an organisation inflexible and non-receptive, blocking new ideas into the organisation.

8.2.1.2 Leadership

Central features: Directive leadership, based on control, compliance, and oversight, with a focus on achieving short-term results.

Casual factors: Lack of trust amongst stakeholders, resulting from the absence of a sense of responsibility on the part of stakeholders and concomitant failure to accept accountability for the delivery and payments of services. Leadership failure is associated with poor service delivery and governance, poorly capacitated organisation, and a lack of candour.

Strategy: There is a need to install empowering and visionary leadership in view of a strong focus on operations, compliance and finances, coupled with a lack of direction and insight, which counterbalance innovation and inventiveness. Thus leadership development initiatives should be a key priority for municipalities; installing leadership competence enables leaders to transform municipalities from being rigid and inflexible institutions to institutions that are agile, aligned, and engaged. The leader should leverage stakeholders around a compelling vision, with a culture of shared-responsibility and shared leadership.

Consequential factors: Operational focus, compliance-orientation, non-strategic orientation, poor customer relations, and negatively dispositioned employees.

8.2.1.3 Learning and capacitation

Central features: A serious lack of capacity amongst all stakeholders due to poor stakeholder involvement.

Causal factors: Limited opportunity for community feedback, i.e. poor communication. Leadership on the basis of fear inhibits candour. There is a strong focus on operations and compliance.

Strategy: Municipalities should place strong emphasis on developing personalised human attributes. Learning and capacitation are not prioritised, and there are limited opportunities for participation and input. Performance management systems should reward the application of adaptive capacities and not predetermined qualitative standards.

Consequential factors: Municipalities, being led on the basis of fear and organised around operations, are devoid of opportunities for innovation and inventiveness due to a leadership deficit. They are unable to deal with unexpected and disastrous changes in the external governance environment.

8.2.1.4 Strategy

Central features: Generally, the view is that municipalities lack strategic-orientation.

Causal factors: Ambiguity about organisational reality and our envisaged reality is indicative of poor strategising. Compliance orientation contributes to a culture of short-termism, a lack of drive and non-authentic interventions, a non-learning culture and scepticism, and a lack of creativity and foresight fuelled by a low awareness of competency and employee worth.

Strategy: Strategies are poorly conceptualised as strategies are uninformed, and there is a poor sense of responsibility and poor planning. There is a lack of a systematic approach incorporating strategic planning, risk, and performance management.

Consequential: Governance and service delivery frameworks in municipalities are predominantly operations-oriented. There is a sense of dependency due to the inability to creatively deal with challenges.

8.2.1.5 Service-orientation

Central features: Municipalities view services as prescribed and specified material services, and services lack community input. This leads to insecure service standards.

Causal factors: A poor sense of service is largely influenced by negatively dispositioned municipal officials. The predominant materialistic view on service leads to a disregard of the human element of services and non-acceptance of services and service standards. There are conflicting and unrealistic service demands, and poor customer inputs regarding services.

Strategy: Strategies should have regard to customer needs, customer input and feedback, and sustainability. Technology and personalised human attributes should be leveraged as sources of innovation and inventiveness. There is poor communication and awareness of systems and structures.

Consequential factors: Not focusing on improving human wellbeing has cultural consequences. A focus on short-term material considerations threatens service sustainability. Excessive compliance standards and processes create apathy and responsibility on the part of customers.

8.2.1.6 Participation and cooperation

Central features: Stakeholders should act to achieve something. Participation should be based on information that is truthful and accessible, and there should be authentic participation. Stakeholders must be engaged as valued participants, as there is poor decision-making and a high level of control and supervision.

Causal factors: Lack of diverse and authentic information, based on authentic engagement, impacts negatively on the quality of engagement. An operational focus is indicative of an organisation that does not engage stakeholders in matters of governance and service delivery.

Strategy: Engagement systems and structures are not designed for authentic engagement, and are characterised by poor communication, non-responsiveness, and responsibility failures. Thus strategy should enhance the organisational ability to freely effect inclusive, meaningful, and authentic engagement.

Consequential factors: Poor participation and cooperation manifest in a trust-deficit, silo-mentality, responsibility failures, customer apathy, and a lack of inclusivity and diversity. These reflect an organisation characterised by resistance to change.

8.2.1.7 Development

Central features: There is poor adherence to the requirements of a developmental state, poor intergovernmental relations, poor state-society relations, a focus on compliance and processes, leading to incapacity and incompetence. There are limited development opportunities.

Causal factors: The lack of a revenue base leads to poor governance and inability to provide services. Poor planning leads to poor development structures and infrastructure, and a lack of development opportunities. The lack of effective leadership leads to ineffective interventions and initiatives. There is limited awareness of ecological and related matters.

Strategy: Development strategies focus on the provision of material services, leading to a limited focus on the development of non-material human capacities as drivers of development. Poor intergovernmental relations exclude municipalities from a greater role in rural and urban development, thus negatively affecting municipal awareness of its importance in development. Non-inclusive stakeholder capacitation and assistance negatively impact the human capacity essential to development and implementation instruments, such as policies and bylaws that promote and give effect to inclusivity and differentiation.

Consequential factors: There is a serious dereliction on the part of the state to effect its developmental mandate, more particularly with reference to its incapacity to deliver services, resulting in service delivery backlogs. Spatial and income inequalities, coupled with poverty and unemployment, lead to exclusion from economic opportunities. The lack of social cohesion results in poor municipal-community relations, manifested in protests and vandalism.

8.2.2 Objective 2: Examine the effects of poor governance on service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province

Objective 2 is intimately linked with Objective 1, more particularly the consequential factors. The researcher decided to cluster the effects to enhance understanding of the failure to address issues as outlined in the problem statement and research questions. This is done by highlighting the cumulative effects of factors identified in Objective 1. The following effects, emerging form analysing the data, of governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities have been identified as follows.

8.2.2.1 Social effects

Social effects often manifest in disregard for inclusion, diversity, and differentiation. These manifestations may result from the design of governance structure, such as policies and legislation, e.g. through the disregard for the possible effects of social factors, and the failure to have regard for the relevant contextual factors.

From an organisational point of view, some social effects are stigmatisation, referring to the reputational damage the organisations suffer due to perceptions surrounding their inability to deliver services; unethical working environment, due to benign neglect of the delivery responsibilities and abuse of sick leave benefits; unfair employment practice, due to political interference in employment and appointment of unqualified and incompetent staff; and perceived patronage in the awarding of tenders; and systemic under-performance.

From a customer point of view, the following can be mentioned; xenophobic prejudices, inequality, poverty, unemployment, and differentiating levels, access and provision of services; exploitation of inability to serve viewing service delivery challenges as clandestine entrepreneurial opportunities, e.g. communities disrupt services; and non-delivery as an entrepreneurial opportunity.

8.2.2.2 Economic effects

Economic effects are often considered in close proximity to social effects, for economics and social conditions draw on a cause and effect relationship, e.g. income inequality is linked to social exclusion and discrimination. Economic effects are associated with a failure to partake in, or to have access to, economic opportunities, resulting in economic dependence, negative stigmatisation, and negative stereotyping. Generally, supporting capacity constraints limit access to economic activities and opportunities, qualified and competent development practitioners, and adequate leadership.

From the point of view of the municipality, economic effects manifest in the inability to collect revenue, the inability to attract investment, and the inability to promote local economic development due to a lack development competence. There is a disregard for factors and effects of the process of urbanisation and population growth. Urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape struggle to attract investment because of lack of good educational and health facilities, as well the geographic location of these municipalities, other than the Sol Plaatje municipality.

From the point of view of customers, the economic effects are the inability to pay for services, unequal access to land, unemployment, poverty, inequality, unavailability of land for economic development, and a lack of skills and expertise. In the main, land for limited economic opportunities is located far from residences, e.g. an inability to create and expand the township economy. Bureaucracy and red-tape, as a manifestation of a focus on compliance and processes, has an exclusionary and discriminatory effect.

8.2.2.3 Political effects

The political system of cooperative governance and developmental government are considered to fail citizens in that the state fails to respond to communities' service demands in an ethical and principled way. Political trust is considered to be the glue that keeps the political system together.

The ability of municipalities to deliver services is deeply compromised, due to a lack of authentic participation structures and systems, poor municipal-society relations due to poor trust-relations, exclusionary and discriminatory implementation arrangements such as by-laws, policies and legislation, weak intergovernmental structures and cooperation, and hierarchical decision-making and decision-making structures and systems such as delegations and standard operating procedures.

These leave municipalities largely non-responsive in dealing with community and societal issues, diluting accountability, and leaving municipalities with unquestionable reputational damage. Thus, bad stigmatisation and stereotyping as useless and helpless lessens the municipal standing and status as responsible institutions. The poor state of municipal finance, coupled with the poor payment culture, is symptomatic of poor municipal-society relations. Thus, a lack of co-ownership and co-responsibility, in relation to efforts to improve governance and service delivery, emanates from a breakdown of trust between municipalities and communities.

8.2.2.4 Ecological effects

Limited reference was made to ecological effects on municipalities' ability to govern and to deliver services. Lack of strategic orientation, and poor or limited development planning capacity leads to limited, or in some instance no, focus on ecological issues such as pollution and carbon emissions. IDPs are silent on these issues, and in many instances these ecological matters find little or no expression in Council and portfolio committee meetings. As a result, little or no provision is made in municipal budgets.

Provision in the financial statements for 'unaccounted for water' is a testimony of the failure to look after natural resources. These losses in revenue are indicative that the effects of ecological factors threaten the resilience of municipal governance systems, and thus the sustainability of municipalities.

8.2.2.5 Cultural effects

Cultural effects, as used in the study, refer to the accumulating effects of the social, economic, political, and ecological effects on the day-to-day experiences of stakeholders.

The overarching cultural effect is that municipalities operate as closed-systems, with characteristics summarised as follows; lack of candour and non-receptivity; limited authentic input by both internal and external stakeholders as essential for learning and growth; a leadership deficit characterised by directive and unethical leadership, weak individual and organisational capacity, founded upon limited focus on learning and capacitation; a limited focus on strategy characterised by a focus on operations, compliance and processes; inability to effect development; and an approach to services with a focus on the provision of prescribed material services, as opposed to a focus on human wellbeing.

Thus generally, a culture of closed-mindedness prevents the formation of meaningful relationships which are essential for building and maintaining high performing and successful organisations.

8.2.3 Objective 3: Formulate a sustainable governance framework for improved service delivery in urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province

The researcher has developed a SMGF. The researcher considers the SMGF, a product of this qualitative study, a detailed literature review and the conceptual framework, as a robust and responsive roadmap for improving municipal service delivery or performance. As a self-audit facility, it should guide all those associated with governance and service delivery responsibility, but more particularly, senior managers, administrators, and those tasked with oversight responsibilities.

Moreover, the proposed framework serves as an analytic tool for assessing the congruence between governance measures and service delivery outputs in the light of the findings highlighted in Chapters 5 and 6 of the study. Informed by a holistic systems-orientation, the SMGF could ensure that these municipalities are able to maintain system stability, as well as rebound, adapt, and recover from future setbacks (Brink, 2017; Imenda, 2021). Consequently, the study noted that the formulated governance framework should be based on the identification and application of good governance principles across the dimensions of governance in the public sector urbanised municipalities (Matlwa, 2016).

The framework proposed in this dissertation is not an exhaustive one, and can be further extended by adding other variables, depending on each unique situation at a municipality. The SMGF, consistent with a contextual notion of governance, emphasises organisational flexibility. The framework provides a good basis that could have application in the local government arena in South Africa as it highlights the minimum required good governance arrangements that must be in place for each dimension of good governance aimed at ensuring the effective performance of a municipality.

Therefore, the proposed SMGF in urbanised municipalities should fulfil the following considerations and governance objectives as the key measurements for local government performance obligations, inclusive of other legislative and policy requirements measuring municipal performance: The political-administrative-community interaction component outlines the importance and dynamics of the interface between stakeholders; the pillars of good governance, based on the literature review, theoretical framework, and grounded theory as set out in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6.

These pillars provide an evaluative basis for the framework and the contextual factors for good governance and the performance of local government, as well the foundational values and principles as set out in Chapters 2 and 3. It also builds on the strong link between good governance and participation as the foundation of trust and thus good state-society relations, as explained in Chapter 7. Therefore, the SMGF is relevant and in line with the global standards of most governance frameworks.

Without doubt, the shortcomings of the current governance framework in the urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province under study necessitate the need to explore a more robust and responsive SMGF; particularly because addressing governance and service delivery challenges involves analysing a continuous, interdependent dynamic process. Further, leverage for change and transformation emerges from the dynamic interaction of all factors and elements in the governance-service delivery system. The SMGF is designed to assist municipalities in pursuing these objectives.

8.2.4 Objective 4: Provide policy insights and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities

8.2.4.1 Policy insight

This discussion on policy insight reflects on some of the systemic challenges highlighted in the literature review and grounded theory, which challenge the present major obstacles for municipal performance. Thus the policy insights flow from the discussion of findings relating to Objectives 1, 2 and 3.

The researcher is of the opinion that poor cooperation and participation are drawbacks to effecting meaningful participation by municipal management in implementing effective governance in municipalities. A poor sense of ownership and a poor sense of responsibility are deeper symptoms of poor participation and cooperation, for they lay bare the absence of a sense of belonging to an organisation.

These seem to suggest, from a policy perspective, a move away from a focus on processes and operational and routine activities, towards a strategic long-term alignment with organisational values and principles as identified in the SMGF. It is critical that people's participation increases the perception of a valid municipality. It was advocated for municipalities to institute, reinforce, and facilitate ward committees linking themselves and the people they serve to ensure active community participation in service delivery projects. The ideas of control and central planning certainly have not worked thus far; to the ultimate cost of the communities.

The researcher proposes that players are capable of making decisions where ownership of the outcomes is collective. The findings established, however, that this scenario is barely there in the municipalities studied, and the spirit of collectivism is markedly wanting. The language of integrated planning, multi-stakeholder engagement, and cooperative governance is met with a practice characterised by a silo mentality, unwillingness to cooperate, reluctance to take responsibility, employee scepticism, self-interest, managerial and centralised decision-making, and hierarchical decision-making. These explain why decision-making thus far has not led to improved service delivery and governance.

The size of the municipality, together with high levels of organisational instability, as indicated by grounded theory, placing a high significance on building harmonious relationships amongst stakeholders, render a dispersed decision-making model more practicable. Thus, collective leadership is implicit in authentic participation and cooperation for there to be a keen sense of trust, accountability, and responsibility. Social acceptability is enhanced by authentic engagement.

Through participation, credence is given to the finding in this study that communities are not passive recipients of services but bear co-responsibility for the delivery of municipal services. As a primary partner with local communities, the government plays a catalytic role, given the above participative governance discussion. It could be argued that in the South African context, the democratic government established frameworks encouraging and strengthening participation.

It is common cause in the South African context that municipalities are characterised by strife between political figures and executive officials. This is an aspect depicted by the majority of interviewees as a highly destructive force in municipalities. Grounded theory indicates that it might be subscribed to a genuine ignorance or a lack of awareness on the part of councillors and officials - attributed to education levels and inexperience.

The dilution of political and administrative roles needs to be addressed, an aspect that intimately ties with municipal effectives. Grounded theory reveals that municipal officials and politicians are unable to separate political tenets from municipal management. This study found that political leaders' obscure interference with intervention, accordingly some political leaders, involves them in administrative management. Roles and responsibilities must be brought into line with municipal objectives, whist high degrees of flexibility and accountability must be maintained to foster a commitment culture; clearly communicating the vision and goals; keeping stakeholders engaged and accountable; ensuring that stakeholders are aware of and understand their roles; and developing and maintaining optimum organisational functionality. It implies that relations between these two critical components of the municipality be brought into harmony. A suggestion in this regard is the professionalisation of politics and administration.

There is also a general perception that most municipalities lack an ethical foundation, as manifested through high levels of corruption, particularly in relation to tender irregularities and irregular appointments, disregarding procedures in awarding tenders; awarding of tenders to relatives, associates or other people connected to senior officials or political leaders; and jobs for pals and family. Further, political affairs play a crucial role in the management and delivery of services. The impact of a political party in a given municipality governs the *modus operandi* within that local municipality; e.g. accessing services and opportunities for employment are dependent upon political players.

Green (2020) suggests that the prevalence of these has turned South Africa into a kleptocratic kakistocracy; i.e. a system in which all the high-level government officials are complicit, where they deliberately work to enrich themselves, and then use their accumulated wealth to keep themselves in power.

These insights show South African municipalities in a negative light, both on the national and international stage; thus tarnishing their image in the eyes of private entities or people who want to conduct business or invest in local municipalities, i.e. reputational damage. Thus the damaged reputation of municipalities stands in the way of economic and job opportunities. Irregular appointments deprive municipalities of valuable skills and competence needed to assist in improving service delivery and governance. A drawback from this is that the burden of keeping the administration running falls on a few capacitated and competent officials. It results in the so-called ‘brain drain’ in that those with expertise and skills opt to pursue other opportunities in other areas.

The lack of an ethical foundation in the municipalities explains the lack of a long-term focus. This lack of an ethical foundation manifests itself in instances where short-term, selfish gains are pursued; e.g. circumventing tender procedures to solicit kickbacks, and firing an exemplary employee for alerting the organisation to activities that are harmful to fellow employees and the organisation.

The importance of infusing policy with ethical principles is that ethics form the foundation for doing what is right for the organisation, instead of doing the right things one is being steered towards. Ethics are crucial to optimising stakeholder engagement, for they go beyond merely what is expected of you. Importantly, ethics is the foundation upon which long-term relationships are built (Sunter and Ilbury, 2021).

The literature review and the theoretical framework support the view that policy issues related to good governance must be endorsed with objectivity and detachment from preconceived paradigmatic predilections, e.g. an ideology of rationality or *laissez-faire*. The researcher also proposes that no political organisation ever came to being devoid of constitutional attributes. Good governance should reconsider the inclusion of policy principles. Policy principles should support structures working at the original level of budgetary practices, managerial philosophy, skills development, transparency, and the engagement of citizens.

The notion of institutions being strategically orientated to be able to deliver sustainable services has been dealt with in the literature review and the theoretical framework. It is suggested that municipalities must be able to ensure a sustainable existence through developing and strengthening adaptive and transformative capacities, additional to absorptive capacities. It is so, for approaches that are focused on a finance-base orientation fail to inspire improving governance and service delivery. The following have been highlighted as essential administrative and operational qualities; leadership, skills, competence, training and capacitation; technological advancement; creativity and innovation; and dispersive decision-making, visioning, and strategising.

The study thus confirms that people systems are at the centre of ensuring fulfilment, i.e. ensuring that the right people are doing the right things for the organisation and for each other. The objective is to lead and capacitate people, because people that are well-directed and inspired will pursue the vision of the municipality. The ability of a leader to lift the spirit and heighten performance comes from strong motivation and is considered the pinnacle of leadership competence (Taylor, 2016; Stern, 2019).

Taylor posits that 'the future is not shaped by people who don't really believe in the future... but is created by highly motivated people; men and women who want something very much or believe very much' (Taylor, 2016:95). In Chapter 7, the researcher argued that such a level of motivation requires pursuing a compelling vision, which touches on the emotions of leaders and followers. In the public service, these emotions are informed by a consciousness that 'we are in it to serve others'.

The tendencies of being self-serving, as indicated in the data collected, serve a misguided purpose of the self and not the purpose of public office or service. Developing a policy on the basis of self-interest is morally corrosive and socially destructive, leading to a socio-ecological system that does not fit our reality and is evidenced by exclusion and deprivation from services.

Thus, the researcher advocates for a policy to be designed to connect people, as well as recruiting people that will fit into an open system of governance; e.g. people who are self-motivated, seek autonomy, and are naturally open to change and thus create a flexible working environment. Amidst well-defined roles and responsibilities, everyone should be geared towards doing the right things, driven by the adaptive and transformative qualities of the broader organisation.

Founded on the principles of trust, cooperation, and responsibility, and centred on fulfilling a constitutional obligation of delivering sustainable services, people stitch the system activities together to operate as an integrated whole. Therefore, this study advocates for an adaptable and transformative organisation that operates on the basis that people must work together with shared values, a compelling vision, an open mindset, and a similar approach to doing things – connectivity and culture. This is the breeding colony for experimentation, creativity, and innovation.

Thus, people's drive is optimised in an open system. It warrants that engagement challenges are constantly on the radar of municipalities, and mechanisms are put in place to deal with these challenges. Quintessentially, public participation highlights the right communities have to contribute to the decision-making processes ensuring their demands are not forgotten. These people know what measures need to be taken to ensure that life in their communities is worthwhile because they live, work and play in the neighbourhood.

Providing services in an open system, characterised by collective leadership, an authentic approach to engagement and service provision, is centred on improving living conditions, presenting a radical redefinition of power structures in society and all its subsystems. The historic centralisation of power is replaced by a flatter hierarchy where power is dispersed to everyday citizens. Thus, this evolving paradigm acknowledges that society has changed and is evolving, necessitating evolving governance and policy-making paradigms. This places service improvement in the hands of all stakeholders. These policy insights find expression in the subsequent sections on recommendations and suggestions on further studies.

8.3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are reflective of the findings in relation to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4.

8.3.1 Objective 1: Identify the factors that influence governance and service delivery in urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province

The researcher successfully identified the factors influencing governance and service delivery, and the conclusions emanating from the findings are reflected below in relation to each factor.

Organisational mind-set: Northern Cape urbanised municipalities are undoubtedly closed-minded institutions, characterised by an operational focus and compliance orientation.

Leadership: Northern Cape urbanised municipalities are governed through directive leadership, characterised by direct control, compliance, and oversight, with centralised decision-making.

Learning and capacitation: Northern Cape urbanised municipalities demonstrate a limited focus on learning and capacitation, characterised by poor awareness and poorly capacitated stakeholders.

Strategy: Northern Cape urbanised municipalities lack strategic-orientation, with a short-term perspective on governance and service delivery performance.

Service-orientation: Northern Cape urbanised municipalities predominantly harbour a notion of services as specified or prescribed services, with a focus on the provision of material services.

Participation and cooperation: Northern Cape urbanised municipalities' participation systems and structures are non-authentic, whilst coordination is the preferred mode of relational exchange.

Development: Northern Cape urbanised municipalities are poorly capacitated and unable to perform their developmental duties.

8.3.2 Objective 2: Examine the effects of poor governance on service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province

The researcher has successfully examined the effects of poor governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities, and conclusions emanating from the findings are reflected below in relation to each factor.

Social effects: Poor governance and services result in a deteriorating social fabric and discriminatory and exclusionary practices.

Economic effects: Poor governance and service delivery result in an increasing inability to afford services on the part of communities, and a decrease in the ability of municipalities to provide services and maintain services infrastructure.

Political effects: Poor governance and service delivery result in dysfunctional municipalities characterised by an incapacity to optimally perform obligations, poor inter-governmental relations, responsibility failure or deficit, reputational damage, and a lack of authentic participation structures and systems.

Ecological effects: Poor governance and service delivery result in poor awareness about ecological factors and an increasing neglect of the environment.

Cultural effects: Poor governance and service delivery result in a closed municipal system, with limited authentic stakeholder input, a stakeholder responsibility deficit, limited creativity and innovation, poor municipal-community relations, and the cumulative effect of which results in the unsustainability of services.

8.3.3 Objective 3: Formulate a sustainable governance framework for improved service delivery in urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province

This objective was achieved as the researcher developed a SMGF for improved governance and service delivery, as outlined in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

8.3.4 Objective 4: Provide policy insights and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities

This objective was achieved as the researcher provided policy insight and recommendation in this chapter.

8.4 SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTION

The problem the study intended to address was the challenge of poor governance towards service delivery in urbanised municipalities in the Northern Cape Province; in particular, the Sol Plaatje, Emthanjeni, Nama Khoi, Ga-Segonyana and Dawid Kruiper municipalities. Service delivery and governance remain poor, despite an extensive framework of governance, particularly the idea of good governance, as discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review. The question is why, despite an extensive good governance framework, are there continuous governance and service delivery failures? What are the foundations of these failures?

The body of research on smaller towns is limited (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016), mostly focusing on the national level, and investigations are regional-specific. Few researchers are investigating small towns in South Africa, and there is an absence of research from those areas of South Africa where there are many small towns, such as the Northern Cape (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2016).

A recent study focused on the connection between service concepts; i.e. services to be delivered and service systems that were currently being delivered and whether or not they were effective (Hoeyi and Makgari, 2021). The study centered on interviewees from the areas targeted in other municipalities. However, the study does not present a holistic enquiry into governance-service delivery linkages, and certainly not in a municipal or local government context. Also, the study lacks a local government focus, more particularly a senior management perspective, and it lacks a holistic governance perspective, and thus there is a knowledge gap that this current research study seeks to fill.

This study is important because the findings may provide a meaningful contribution to informing decision makers in the Northern Cape urbanised municipalities when formulating governance structures orientated to the delivery of service in poor communities. It provides a view, based on empirical evidence, on service delivery and governance challenges in relation to the identified areas of study, from a perspective different from a traditional financial perspective.

Significantly, it presents a SMGF, produced in the local municipal context, which is grounded in a whole systems approach, also providing a flexible basis for municipal performance improvement. Policy insights and recommendations provide guidance consistent with the SMGF, suggesting an approach to governance and service delivery away from a finance-oriented compliance and operational focus.

8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are presented in respect of findings made in relation to objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4, as well as conclusions made in respect of the findings. Thus, the discussion of recommendations is inclusive of all these aspects. Recommendations present key focal points for a turnaround strategy to be developed by municipalities in order to implement findings, conclusions, and policy insights gained from this study.

8.5.1 Operationalising values and ethics

A critical challenge identified throughout the study is the gap between 'talking' values and ethics and 'doing' values and ethics. Often values and ethics are reduced to a checklist; i.e. a bunch of requirements that must be met to show that the organisation is not discriminating or is intolerant of corruption or a procedure to access information to showcase accountability and transparency. Being service-centered requires aligning the values of the communities with those of the municipality (Sanei, 2018).

Municipalities may, by ticking the boxes, subscribe to minimum standards of values and ethics without effectively changing the organisational culture around the operationalisation of values and ethical behaviours. The researcher recommends that operationalising values and ethics be infused into the organisational purpose, i.e. measures aimed at operationalising values and ethics must be examined in relation to whether they contribute towards improving service delivery. Public representatives must be answerable to their electorate for performance or non-performance (Napier, 2017).

A turn municipal turnaround strategy should incorporate an inclusively developed compelling vision, with buy-in from stakeholders. A clear direction should outline acceptable behaviour within the municipality, including how to deal with deviations from accepted norms.

8.5.2 Create a learning organisation: Creativity and innovation

The data reveal that senior managers work in an environment of fear and uncertainty. Officials are conditioned to be followers with no room for own initiatives, manifested thought a sense of dependency, and a simplification of the challenges as only finance challenges. The municipalities lack authentic ideas and are trapped in conservation strategies, manifested in established ways of doing things.

The municipal leadership must ensure that people are allowed to implement new things without fear for reprisal. Innovation suffers in a highly pressured environment, thus requiring breathing space (Sanei, 2018). The organisational culture must be optimised for innovation and adaptability. Thus, a culture of experimentation has to be introduced as a prelude to leaning, creativity, and innovation. An organisation should be developed that is open, forward-looking, and adaptive. Therefore, a system of capacitation and training has to be introduced to add value to the processes of creativity and innovation.

Furthermore, adaptability requires being aware of, and dealing with, resistance to change, reluctance to accept failure as a natural process of progression, as well as a reluctance to accommodate ideas out of line with regular beliefs and thinking. These aspects turn out to be barriers to creativity and innovation. These are all resident in hierarchical organisational structures with painstakingly defined roles and responsibilities, undue political interference, demotivated officials, a culture of dependency, hierarchical decision-making, and leadership deficiencies.

Therefore, creating a learning organisation implies that municipalities must: introduce collective leadership and individual development programmes; and create systems and structures that promote candour. Also a comprehensive strategy on innovation, allowing for experimentation and learning, should be developed and implemented.

8.5.3 Create sense of community and responsibility

The researcher indicated in the theoretical framework that in relation to complex adaptive systems, the concept of governance involves a network of interactions, as well as people working together for a common purpose. The understanding is that through the continuous and authentic giving and receiving of feedback, a sense of community is enhanced.

Also, ‘rubbing-off’ behaviour in a group context; i.e. social receptivity, is important for improving performance in relation to service delivery. Furthermore, that relatedness is an innate psychological human need, in that human beings have an innate inner drive to be connected to one another (Pink, 2020). Liberating the drive to be connected contributes towards people being motivated and productive. Thus, freeing human beings to explore their desire to connect and building trust is the glue that keeps relationships together. In turn, a sense of responsibility and accountability is created, and a broader sense of community and responsibility. The understanding is that it will serve as a foundation for developing a sense of service which is crucial to improving service delivery and governance.

Therefore, it is recommended that positive steps be introduced to engage all stakeholders as value-adding propositions in the delivery of services. Practical steps include capacitating stakeholders; creating an environment of open, frank, and honest dialogue across the municipality for increased accountability and transparency; increasing or improving candour; reducing controls by allowing diverse and free initiatives; and inspiring instead of controlling.

At the heart of these recommendations is improving stakeholder self-discipline and responsibility; increasing decision-making through knowledge creation; and developing a culture of openness, transparency and accountability. All of these are considered important to enable municipalities to be more open and adaptive, thus rendering municipalities resilient, as discussed in the theoretical framework.

Therefore, a comprehensive and inclusive communication and engagement framework should be developed to implement authentic input and feedback amongst stakeholders. Such a framework should account for capacitation of stakeholders.

8.5.4 Review of performance metrics

This recommendation is premised on the idea that changing the current state of governance and service delivery requires reviewing the metrics upon which progress with service delivery and governance is to be measured. The researcher indicated in the literature review, and confirmed by grounded theory, the tendency in municipalities to measure governance and service delivery exclusively in financial terms; i.e. compliance with budgetary prescripts away from any reference to the impact on human beings which is a short-term perspective.

A contextual and value based approach, with a focus on improving living conditions as advocated by the SMGF provide guidance as to how performance matrix be reviewed. More so, for the SMGF concerns the implementation of good governance standards with local and international appeal. Furthermore, such an approach is consistent with the four inter-related characteristics of developmental local governments; maximising social development and economic growth, integrating and coordinating, democratising development, and leading and learning.

Therefore, a performance appraisal framework should be developed, in line with components of the SMGF, to promote improving living conditions and account for developmental state priorities.

8.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The below recommendations are set out according with the limitations of the existing study. Therefore, future studies should have a wider scope, encapsulating other provinces' municipalities to ensure that there is a comparison of results between or among the municipalities within those provinces. Also, future studies on service delivery and governance framework should incorporate the following elements:

Faster economic growth: Prioritised enhancement of service delivery and macroeconomic plans to address poverty and unemployment within municipalities do not garner sufficient traction. These macroeconomic plans, their potential, and their application should be investigated further.

Environmental stability*:* The link between ecological factors and poor service delivery and governance received little attention in this study. This link should be investigated further.

Human capital: Developing a healthy, skilled, and productive workforce should be investigated; further to guarantee that the essential needs of the communities are met.

Good governance: Stakeholder involvement in the Integrated Development Plan should be extended beyond its current scope to include implementation and monitoring of the roles of councillors and communities, and in this regard should be investigated further.

Inter-municipal co-operation*:* Alignment to priorities and activities of the local municipalities and metropolitan municipalities, and the impact of this alignment on visible service delivery should be examined to ensure that there is proper inter-municipal cooperation.

8.7 CONCLUSIONS

To a great extent and without doubt, the full eight chaptered thesis successfully addressed all the study objectives, problem statement and research questions. The study methodology was appropriate to the study objectives as evidenced in chapter four, five and six resulting in the formulation of the SMGF that addressed the governance and service delivery challenges faced by the five urbanised municipalities in Northern Cape Province.

Furthermore, this concluding chapter provided the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study objectives, and specifically the last objective that provides for policy insights and recommendations to enhance governance and service delivery in Northern Cape urbanised municipalities. The researcher is mindful of the possibility that the study might be interpreted as advocating for a choice between following the group norms and adhering to central leadership versus disturbing the collective and maximising self-interest. However, the researcher argued in the theoretical framework that the complexities of socio-ecological systems do not require an either/or selection between these two philosophical paradigms. Those policy considerations should be informed by an objective scrutiny of prevailing realities; i.e. the context will determine the relevance of the governance and service delivery mix at a given juncture.

Thus, the position adopted in this study is a response to the leader-follower and command-and-control tendencies in the municipal governance and service delivery praxis, which have failed to bring about the desired improvement in service delivery. The signs of malfunctions have been discussed throughout this study, particularly in the literature review and the research findings.

The chapter noted that in this chapter it was noted that governance is both a system and a process which seeks to impart municipal direction through structures and processes, as well as maintain a controlled environment with the help of members within an organisation in order to achieve municipal objectives. Also, this chapter provided a discussion of several recommendations in relation to measures to overcome several factors that influence municipal service provision in the urbanised municipalities notably Dawid Kruiper, Emthanjeni, Sol Plaatje, Nama Khoi, and Ga-Segonyana in the Northern Cape Province.

It was also noted that there is a need to reinvigorate the institutional capacity, while conducting regular appraisals concurrently as time changes. Moreover, municipal resources should be monitored closely while interventions such as the 'Turnaround Strategy, Rebranding, Repositioning, and Renewal Policy' should be afforded visibility for potential further activities. Finally, a brief discussion on further research topics related to the provision of municipal basic services in South African municipalities was presented.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter to participants

Dear Participant

My name is Elias Ntoba, registered for a PhD with the Da Vinci Institute.I would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled Challenges of poor governance towards service delivery in South African urbanised municipalities: Evidence Northern Cape Province.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study.

Also, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

   The objective of this study is to research the service delivery-governance relation in local government, manifested in inadequate service delivery and poor governance practices.

2. PROCEDURES

   If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to make yourself available, at a time and place convenient for you to discuss various themes related to the research. The total length of time for the discussion should not exceed one hour.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

No foreseeable risks, discomforts or inconveniences to yourself are anticipated.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There is no guarantee that you will benefit directly from the study. However, I believe the results of the research can generate knowledge that may create a framework that will improve governance and inform solutions and recommendations for improvement and challenges experiencedin local government. The results of the study could also lead to suggestions for policy, mechanisms of governing local government and a model for further use/replication to study similar research problems in other or related contexts.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained.

7. PARTICIPATION AND RESEARCHER

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don’t want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCHER

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Mr Elias Ntoba at 079 664 4483.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Elias Ntoba at 079 664 4483. You have a right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent Form.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached Declaration of Consent and hand it to the researcher before the interview.

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I …………………………………………… agree to take part in a research study entitled ……………………………………………………: a study conducted by Elias Ntoba

I declare that:

- I have read the attached information leaflet and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.

- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

- All issues related to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed on ………………………………

……………………………………………

Signature of participant

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to ____________. The participant was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

………………………………….. ……………………..

Signature of Researcher Date

Appendix 2: Permission letter: Municipality

ATTENTION: THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

FROM: ELIAS NTOBA

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEWS PERMISSION

TOPIC: CHALLENGES OF POOR GOVERNANCE TOWARDS SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICAN URBANISED MUNICIPALITIES: EVIDENCE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.

Dear Sir/Madam

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. The above subject matter refers thereof.

2. My name is Elias Ntoba. I am currently doing my PhD at DaVinci Institute. I have been busy with my fieldwork research hence am kindly requesting permission to conduct interviews at your organisation whereby I will interview at least 20 of your Senior and Middle Management.

3. As such, your kind responds are greatly appreciated. My email address is: entoba@lantc.net. Also, you can contact Elias Ntoba at 079 664 4483 should you have any enquiries.

4. Included herewith is individual participants' information and declaration, which should be provided prior to the interviews.

Thank you for your support.

Regards

....

Elias Ntoba

Appendix 3: Permission letter: Supervisor

11 May 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RECOMMENDATION LETTER FOR ELIAS NTOBA PhD STUDENT: THESIS TITLED CHALLENGES OF POOR GOVERNANCE TOWARDS SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA URBANISED MUNICIPALITIES: EVIDENCE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.

I write to confirm that Mr Elias Ntoba is a bonafide PhD Student at Da Vinci Institute of Management and Innovation. He is currently executing his PhD thesis fieldwork with regards to the topic mentioned above. I am writing in the capacity of his academic supervisor.

By virtue, I kindly appeal to you to accept his request to include your municipality or institution in his PhD case to collect data through interviews or questionnaires or both depending on his approach to the study. All the data he will gather from you, or your institution will be treated with great caution and confidentiality. Inevitably, it will be utilised for data analysis and academic purposes only. Mr Ntoba is one of my best, disciplined and responsible students hence I do personally encourage you to grant him permission to do his fieldwork at your institutions. Consequently, I do hereby recommend him to carry out his fieldwork research at your institution.

Yours faithfully

____

Blondel Nyamkure PhD

Academic Supervisor

Appendix 4: Interview questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the terms ‘governance’?

2. What do you understand by the term service delivery?

3. How important is good service delivery?

3. What is the prevailing framework or practices in your municipality relating to the governance and service delivery?

4. How is governance measured in your municipality?

5. How is service delivery measured in your municipality?

6. What effects of governance and service delivery have you been experiencing in your municipality?

7. What factors affect the ability to provide good governance?

8. How are decisions relating to governance and service delivery taken in your municipality?

8. How are stakeholders, internal and external, engaged or involved in matters of governance and service delivery?

9. Do you think that the prevailing governance framework or practice is appropriate or inappropriate to bring about desired service delivery outcomes in your municipality?

10. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the governance and service delivery framework or practice in your municipality?

11. What recommendations do you have to provide that will improve governance and service delivery in your municipality?

12. What are your views regarding service delivery challenges?

13. What are your views regarding governance interventions in the past that did not have the desired outcomes?

14. What are your views on governance and service delivery challenges linked to being governed predominantly by the market, as opposed to social norms?

15. What are your views about the manner in which relational exchanges happen in an organisation that are crucial to decision-making? What should be the preferred manner through which ideas flow?

Appendix 5: Ethical clearance certificate

The Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management (Pty) Ltd

P O B o x 1 8 5 , M o d d e r f o n t e i n , 1 6 4 5 , S o u t h A f r i c a T e l + 2 7 1 1 6 0 8 1 3 3 1 F a x + 2 7 1 1 6 0 8 1 3 3 2 w w w . d a v i n c i . a c . z a

Reference: 002520

Date: 13 October 2020

Ethical Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the Doctorate Research of the student named below has received ethical clearance from The Da Vinci Institute Ethics Committee. The student and supervisor will be expected to continue to uphold the Da Vinci Institute's Research Ethics Policy as indicated during the application.

Proposed Title: Challenges of poor Governance towards service delivery in South African Urbanised Municipalities Evidence Northern Cape Province

Student Name: Ntoba Elias

Student number: 10930

Supervisor: Dr Blondel Nyamkure

Co-Supervisor: N/A

Period: Ethics approval is granted from 2020/10/13 to 2024/05/13

HKlopper

____

Chairperson: Research and Ethics Committee
Prof HB Klopper
Executive Dean: Research and Institutional Partnerships