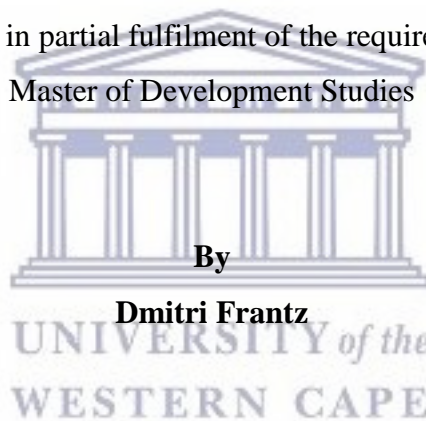


UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE



**The role and impact of local government communication strategies in participatory
governance: The case of Lamberts Bay**

A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Development Studies



By

Dmitri Frantz

Institute for Social Development (ISD)
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS)
University of the Western Cape (UWC)

Supervisor: Dr Sharon Penderis

November 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that “The role and impact of local government communication strategies in participatory governance: The case of Lamberts Bay” is my own work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other University and all the sources I have used or quoted have been acknowledged as complete references.

Dmitri Angelo Frantz

Signed:

Date:



ABSTRACT

This research examines the role and impact of local government communication strategies in participatory governance with particular reference to Lamberts Bay, South Africa. The investigation aimed at establishing whether the communication strategies of the municipality serve as an effective mechanism to promote public participation in local government.

The study used qualitative research methodology, towards the realisation of the aims and objectives of the study. Accordingly, an interview schedule was used as a tool that contains the pre-determined questions prepared in order to acquire insight and knowledge of the councillors, administration, community and community organisations. In addition, observation was used as a tool to observe the dynamics of the different institutionalised structures such as the ward committee meeting, council meeting and public meeting.

An empirical study was conducted to measure the role and impact of communication strategies used by the local authority in the case study area of Lamberts Bay to enhance public participation. The findings indicated that the communication strategies used by local government to encourage meaningful participation within the case study area is not effective with regard to enabling local residents to participate meaningfully in governance decision-making within the region. The study concluded by presenting a number of recommendations in an attempt to improve the communication between the citizens and local government and to enhance public participation of local residents.

KEYWORDS

- Participatory governance
- People-centred development
- Communication strategies
- Local government
- Lamberts Bay
- Cederberg Municipality



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- Cederberg Municipality, who supported and allowed me the opportunity to conduct this study.



DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to De-Quan Joshua Frantz. I hope that this academic thesis would guide you in your academic endeavours.



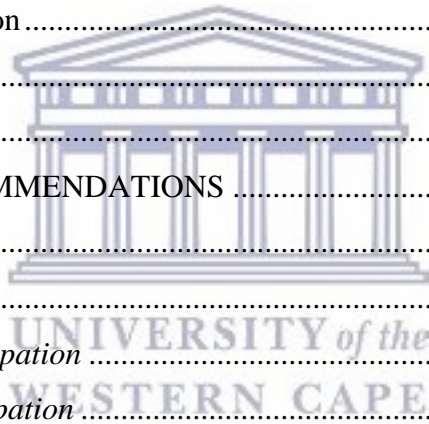
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

People-centred development (PCD) practices and participatory governance approaches have risen rapidly since the 1990s in most countries throughout the world. The rise of PCD and participatory governance in democratic countries is aimed at enabling a more just society and informed citizenry who actively participate in government decision-making at the local level. This is supported by Gaventa (2003) who notes that the linking of citizens' participation and democracy at the local level has increased over the past twenty years.

The rationale behind PCD is the conviction that ordinary people, as development beneficiaries, have a right to be participants in decision- and policy-making processes (Gaventa, 2003; Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). Moreover, participatory governance practices afford disadvantaged groups such as the poor or marginalised the opportunity to take ownership of their own development. This is enabled through legal frameworks and policies that provide opportunities for citizen participation at the grassroots level in democratised countries. In addition, Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) are of the view that the rise of participatory governance leads to an informed citizenry who hold government officials accountable.

As democracy in South Africa evolved, a culture of developmental municipal governance emerged that complements a system of mandatory participatory governance (Piper & Von Lieres, 2008; Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). This demonstrates that local government, as the sphere closest to the people, is responsible for enabling forms of public participation at grassroots level to enable ordinary people to participate in government decisions. De Visser (2009) acknowledges this view by noting that participation in municipal governance is a precondition for reaping the benefits of decentralisation. In addition, Piper and Von Lieres (2008) note that decentralisation is a response to the bottlenecks created by apartheid between local communities and central government. Decentralisation of responsibility to the local level and participatory governance becomes an important feature and mechanism in post-apartheid governance and the mechanism to enable an engaged citizenry. As local government in South Africa is mandated to be 'developmental' and inclusive, municipalities

are legally required to implement forms of public participation in their areas of jurisdiction (ibid, 2008).

McLeod et al (1999) provide additional insight into participatory processes and emphasise the function of communication. They state that communication channels have an important role to play in enabling and stimulating local participation. In addition, McLeod et al (1999:3) emphasise that “the processes through which various forms of communication affect participation differ for institutional forms of participation and for participation in civic forums, with significant implications for processes of local democracy”. Friedman (2006) agrees with this sentiment, noting that communication is a critical component of participatory democratic governance. Communication at the local level is therefore seen as an important means of encouraging participation in local government. In this regard, and according to Adedokun et al (2010), knowledge, information and skills relevant to development are exchanged through a number of communication technologies (emails, bulk short message services, and social media networks), letters, print media, workshops, Integrated Development Planning (IDP) meetings and ward committee meetings at the local, provincial and national levels to encourage citizens to engage in matters of government.

Given the above, the focus of this study is to identify the role and impact of local government communication strategies in participatory governance in Lamberts Bay. In doing so, the study illustrates the effectiveness of communication strategies in encouraging participation. This is due to communication being a central point in development and governance as it permits interaction and engagement (Adedokun et al, 2010; Sarvaes & Liu, 2007).

1.2. Rationale and significance

South Africa is guided by numerous policies and legislative frameworks to support its commitment to participatory governance. This is evident not only in the legislative and policy frameworks but also in the Constitution of the country. The South African Constitution of 1996 stipulates that the ‘people should govern’ which implies being involved and participating in decision-making processes (RSA, 1996).

Many research efforts within South Africa highlight the lack of people’s ‘voice’ and participation in government initiatives, despite the number of legislative and policy mandates supporting inclusive governance and people-centred development. Since much of the focus of

such research is usually centred on communication and participatory governance in large metropolitan areas, this study will contribute to the literature by studying these dynamics in the small coastal town of Lamberts Bay. The available literature on development communication is mostly based on mass media that consider people as audiences ready to be influenced by the messages received. This method has been proven to be limited (Mefalopulos, 2008). The aim of this study is thus to understand the role of communication in enhancing and encouraging active participation in the decision-making processes of the government.

Furthermore, the findings of this research will not only contribute to the literature on development communication and participatory governance, but has the potential to raise awareness of these processes in small towns and their role in enabling the citizen's 'voice' in government decision-making processes. In addition, the results of the study will inform local government institutions of the impact of their communication strategies with regard to facilitating participatory governance.

1.3. The case study area

The coastal town of Lamberts Bay is located within the Western Cape Province of South Africa. Regarding political demarcation, the Western Cape is divided into five rural districts and one metropolitan municipality. Figure 1.1 below illustrates the location of the five district municipal areas, namely the Cape Winelands, Central Karoo, Eden, Overberg and West Coast and the metropolitan municipality, City of Cape Town. Each district municipality comprises of a number of local municipalities.

The West Coast District Municipality includes the local municipalities of Bergriver, Cederberg, Matzikama, Saldanha Bay and Swartland. Lamberts Bay, the focus of this investigation, is located within the Cederberg municipal area. Lamberts Bay is situated about 60km from the municipal head office in Clanwilliam. It is a small town comprising an area of around 45.73 square kilometres, a population of 6120 people and 1720 households (StatsSA, 2011). The Cederberg Municipality is situated 280km from Cape Town on the national N7 route to Namibia. This location places the Cederberg municipal area in the middle of the economic corridor between the Western Cape and Namibia.



Figure 1.1: Map of the Western Cape Municipalities

(Source: MyCape, 2018)

The Cederberg local municipality, within which the case study area of Lamberts Bay is located, consists of six wards incorporating nine towns. The towns included in the municipal area are Citrusdal, Clanwilliam, Graafwater, Elands Bay, Lamberts Bay, and some of the smaller hamlets which include Elandkloof, Leipoldville, Paleisheuwel and Wupperthal.

1.4. Problem statement

Within this section, the nature of the research problem will be discussed and the aim and objectives of the study will be documented.

1.4.1. Statement of the problem

A number of scholars are of the view that although participatory local governance has been well established in South African legislation and policy frameworks since 1998, the implementation thereof has been worrisome to many and the ideal of a participatory

democracy has not been realised (Smith, 2007). Piper and Von Lieres (2008) agree, stating that despite the numerous frameworks, little progress has occurred at local government level with respect to meaningful participation. This is due to municipalities struggling with a multitude of other transformational processes with the outcome of minimal community participation in municipal affairs (ibid, 2008).

According to Friedman (2006), post-apartheid social policies and frameworks have miscalculated the needs of the poor and formal participatory mechanisms have failed to enable local residents to participate meaningfully in matters of governance. It is for this reason that communities feel marginalised as their voices are not heard and their needs and priorities are not taken into account at the local level (November, 2012). As a result communities vent their anger in the form of protests due to inadequate service delivery. They become frustrated and ‘battle-ready’ against authorities in order to voice their dissatisfaction at not being consulted (ibid, 2012). Mchunu (2012:24) concurs with this finding, arguing that the “people embark on protests to demand their voices to be heard in order to influence, take control and own development processes at improving their lives”. It is for this reason that it can be hypothesised that the lack of communication from authorities is the recipe for protests as authorities are unable to provide meaningful platforms for the citizens to voice their concerns about their own well-being. South Africa’s Constitution specifically acknowledges that the public have a democratic right to participate in matters that have a direct influence on their lives and to communicate their needs as mandated in legislative frameworks such as the Municipal Structures Act (RSA, 1998b) and the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000).

It is against this background, that this study focuses on investigating the nature and extent of participation in the case study area of Lamberts Bay and the communication strategies used by the municipality to encourage community participation as well as enable local people to have a voice in decision-making processes. The rationale underpinning the focus of this research is that the importance of communication strategies as a tool for participatory governance, is still not appreciated or understood by many (Steyn & Nunes, 2007).

1.4.2. Research aim and objectives

The overall research aim of this investigation is to examine the role and impact of the communication strategies used by the local authority in Lamberts Bay to enhance participation of community people at the grassroots level.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the different types of communication strategies used by the Lamberts Bay Municipality to foster community participation in local decision-making.
2. To ascertain the different types of participatory platforms used by local government to encourage participation of local residents and enable their input into decision-making.
3. To determine the perceived effectiveness and impact of communication strategies on community participation and engagement in the case study area.
4. To provide recommendations to policy makers and stakeholders in the region.

1.5. Research design

According to Terre and Durrheim (1999) a research design is a plan that guides the researcher to conduct and analyse data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose. This means that the research design is a framework for action which serves as a bridge between the research questions and the implementation of the research. In essence the research design guides the research phases using a pre-developed plan which indicates the approach and types of tools used for data collection and data analysis. This research focused on real life events, which gave the researcher an understanding of the experiences and reality of the respondents.

Due to the nature of the research, a phenomenological research design was employed in order to understand the dynamics in the case study area and gather data of a more sensitive nature. The approach was deemed relevant for this study as it is typically used to collect primary data which focuses on a specific phenomenon concerning human experiences within a case study area. Creswell (2003) views phenomenological research as research that is based on human experiences where the experiences are captured from a small number of subjects through extensive engagement in order to understand the research problem.

1.5.1. Research methodology

This study employed qualitative research methods as it provided the researcher with flexibility in the collection of data. The different methods used in this investigation captured the experiences, feelings, attitudes and perceptions of community members, ward councillors, officials and community organisation members relating to the role and effectiveness of communication strategies in the case study area of Lamberts Bay. The interviews took place face-to-face, within the natural setting to enable the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the views and experiences of the participants in the case study area.

1.5.2. Data collection techniques and tools

The researcher made use of semi-structured interviews and observation as research instruments to conduct the research. The semi-structured interview technique was used to gather information relating to the research question, whereas observation was used during attendance at community, ward and council meetings to understand how the meetings were conducted and to examine the dynamics of the different role players and the behaviour of the participants during the meetings within the community.

1.5.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviewing is a particularly useful tool in terms of gathering information through direct personal contact with selected respondents. This method comprises the selection of predetermined themes and an open-ended questioning format which enables participants to elaborate on topics as the interview progresses (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Miles & Gilbert, 2005). Semi-structured interviews were used to conduct the research using an interview guide with open-ended questions which gave the researcher flexibility to probe responses to gain a more in-depth understanding of the research question and to uncover the experiences and perceptions of participants and highlight new issues related to the topic.

The researcher interviewed a total of 57 participants in the study. This included four municipal officials, three councillors of the current dispensation, two councillors of the previous dispensation, one ward assistant, one ward secretary, three ward committee members, three members of community organisations and forty community members.

- a. Municipal representatives:* Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted with municipal officials of the Cederberg Municipality. The interviews included the Municipal Manager, Public Participation Manager, Communication Officer and Community Development Worker. The interviews were based on the implementation of communication strategies by the local authority to encourage participation in the community. The first two questions related to public participation in the case study area to determine the role of the officials in the promotion of participation as well as the different structures used to enable public engagement. Other questions related to the perceived impact of municipal communication strategies.
- b. Members of the council and ward committee representatives:* In order to gather information related to the implementation of communication strategies, a number of

persons were targeted and interviewed. These included the Executive Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Speaker, Executive Secretary of the Speaker, Ward Assistant, previous Speaker, previous Proportional Representative Councillor (PR) and three Ward Committee members. Interview themes related to participation strategies, decision-making powers, ownership and the implementation of communication strategies. This gave the researcher an indication of the nature of the communication strategies used by the council to encourage participatory governance and inclusion of community residents in matters of governance. Other interview questions focused on additional methods used by the local authority to engage with community residents.

- c. *Community residents:* A total of forty community residents were interviewed in order to gain an understanding of how they perceived the effectiveness of the local authority in terms of communicating and engaging with community people and the nature of their participation at the local level.
- d. *Community organisations:* Interviews conducted at the community level targeted three local community organisations, one person per organisation. The interviews were used to determine the extent of the interaction between the local authority, community and community organisations. It enabled the researcher to understand how decision-making and engagement strategies take place within the case study area, the involvement of local organisations and other role players and how information is communicated to stakeholders in the area.

1.5.2.2. Sampling method and procedure

The researcher used two sampling techniques to target the different participants for this study, namely purposive and random cluster sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select municipal officials, ward councillors and ward committee members as those respondents provided the researcher with the information deemed most useful in answering the research question. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling method which targets respondents who are best equipped to answer the research questions (Neuman, 2006).

- a. *Municipal representatives:* The researcher communicated the nature of the topic to the Municipal Manager and asked for permission to interview municipal officials including himself. The Municipal Manager agreed and directed the researcher to the

specific officials who were responsible for public participation and communications. The Municipal Manager also directed the researcher to the Community Development Worker, who facilitates communication between the community, local government and other governmental organisations.

- b. *Council*: The researcher wanted specific answers related to the research question from the ward councillor responsible for Ward Five. The researcher made appointments with the current, previous and previous proportional representative councillor of Ward Five. The researcher also targeted the Mayor, and Deputy Mayor purposively as it is their duty to ensure that the ward councillors enforce the mandates of local government. In addition, the ward assistant and secretary of Ward Five's councillor were interviewed as they function as the link between the ward council and the community.
- c. *Ward committee members*: Ward committee members are responsible for representing the community and therefore serve as the link between the community and the council. The ward committee assists the municipality in the ward-specific needs through the facilitation of participatory processes. It is for this reason that the researcher targeted the ward committee members as they facilitate public consultation and participation in their wards as well as prioritising their wards' specific needs.
- d. *Community representatives*: The random cluster sampling method was used in the community to select five respondents each from the eight sub-areas indicated in Figure 1.2 below. The eight sub-areas include, Wit Kamp, Sand Kamp, White City, Nuwe Land, Erwe, Harmony Park, Kompong and Malkopbaai. Respondents were interviewed at their residences as the researcher wanted to examine the effectiveness of the communication strategies in the different sub-areas.
- e. *Community organisations*: The researcher made use of random sampling to select community organisations in the area. The following organisations in the community were selected: Rural Transformation Company, Malibongwe and Lamberts Baai Inwoners Belang Forum. The director of Rural Transformation Company, Malibongwe's organiser and Lamberts Baai Inwoners Belang Forum's chairperson were selected to be interviewed.

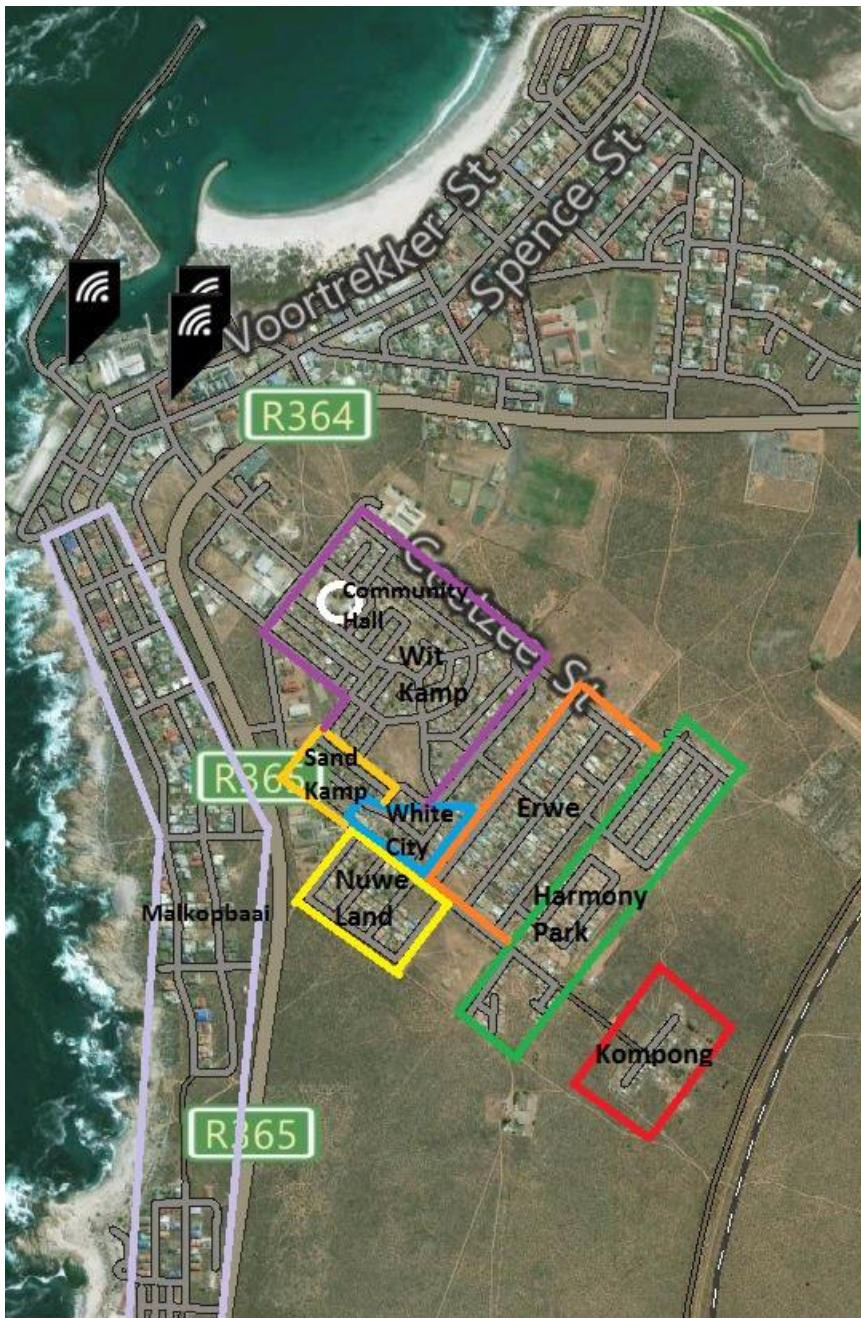


Figure 1.2: Map of Lamberts Bay sub-areas

1.5.2.3. Observation

The researcher used observation as a method at a community meeting, a ward meeting and a council meeting. Observation is a tool used in qualitative research to describe existing situations. Kawulich (2005) cites Marchall and Rossman (1989) who stated that observation is a systematic description of events, behaviours and artifacts in the social or natural setting.

Observation was therefore used in this study, to examine and understand the nature of community participation by community members, community organisations and other role players such as municipal officials and members of council and ward committees. This tool enabled the researcher to personally witness the behaviour of community members and other role players with respect to topics under discussion, the verbal contribution of community members and other role players at meetings and decision-making processes following engagement.

1.5.3. Data processing analysis and presentation

The study employed qualitative research tools which produced a large amount of data. The researcher used thematic data analysis to sort and categorise the data. According to Aronson (1995) and Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), thematic analysis identifies important themes and patterns to describe the phenomenon. Thematic analysis is a process of careful reading and re-reading text to identify the themes suitable to achieve the research objectives. The process includes, but is not limited to pattern recognition of data, where emerging themes become categories of analysis.

The researcher transcribed all the voice recordings from the interviews, as well as the notes taken during the interview conversations. The researcher then ordered the related conversations which have a similar fit into a table to identify patterns. The patterns were grouped, combined and catalogued in related themes and sub-themes. The researcher grouped all the themes and connections together to analyse the data. Furthermore, the findings are presented using verbal descriptions and quotations.

1.5.4. Ethical consideration

The research was conducted after permission had been granted from the University of the Western Cape, the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences and the Senate Higher Degrees Committees. Moreover, the researcher obtained consent from the community members/residents, community organisation representatives, municipal officials, councillors and ward committee members before commencing with the research. The consent forms signed by the participants guaranteed confidentiality and their anonymity and stated that their identity would be protected throughout the research. In addition, participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, if they chose to do so.

1.5.5. Research agenda

The research comprises five chapters. A brief outline highlighting the focus of each chapter is presented below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter introduces the research topic, provides the background and describes the significance of the research. Thereafter it provides an overview of the case study area, sets out the problem statement and outlines the aims and objectives of the study. Finally, it explains the research design and methodological tools used in the study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical underpinning of the research and a discussion of the literature that focuses on the topic. It examines people-centred development theory and conceptualises the notion of participatory development. It further provides a discussion on the nature and role of communication theory and strategies used to encourage participation in local governance. The literature review interrogates the literature on the status of participatory development in South Africa and documents the legislative and policy framework on participation and communication strategies.

Chapter 3: Overview of the case study area

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the case study area, Lamberts Bay. It commences with a description of the location of Lamberts Bay within the Western Cape Province and thereafter presents a socio-economic and demographic overview of the area.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and presentation of findings

Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the findings which are based on the information collected in the case study area. The findings are linked to the research objectives which focus on the role and impact of communication strategies used to encourage participation in Lamberts Bay.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

The final chapter provides the conclusion of the study and includes a summary of the findings, as well as a reflection on the theoretical framework and literature review. It also provides recommendations to policy makers and stakeholders on possible strategies that

could be used to improve citizen participation through improved communication between local government and the local community.



CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The theoretical framework is regarded as a structure of assumptions and rules of procedures devised to analyse, predict or explain the nature or behaviour in the real world (Swanson, 2013). For this research, People-centred Development (PCD) theory has been used as the conceptual framework underpinning the investigation. This chapter will commence with a discussion of the evolution of PCD. This discussion firstly provides a brief outline of the traditional modernisation and dependency theories as context to the emergence of the PCD theory. The discussion then moves to the concept of participation and includes topics such as power relations, participatory spaces and levels of participation. This is followed by an examination of the benefits and barriers to participation and the use of communication in participatory development. The second part of the chapter provides the literature review on the topic. The review includes a discussion on the status of participatory development in South Africa followed by an examination of the legislative and policy framework such as the South African Constitution of 1996, the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 and the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 as mandated by government to support its commitment to participatory practices.

2.2. Evolution of the people-centred development theory

2.2.1. Modernisation theory

Modernisation theory emerged during the 1950s in an attempt to explain how the transformation processes of Third World countries should take place in order for them to modernise. Modernisation theory contends that developing countries must follow in the footsteps of developed industrialised countries (So, 1990). Modernisation theorists argue that in order for a country to develop, it should follow the economic growth path of modern industrialised societies such as the United States of America and Western Europe (El-Ghannam, 2001) and should relinquish their traditional ways of pursuing economic growth and development (So, 1990; Coetzee et al, 2001). Tipps (1973) describes modernisation as a process of industrialisation, rationalisation, economic growth, political development, structural differentiation and social mobilisation. These processes are seen as representations of change in a society nationally and internationally (ibid, 1973).

Although theorists differentiated between the capitalist and Marxist versions of the modernisation theory, most sources refer to the work of W.W. Rostow, the American economist who proposed five evolutionary stages of growth that Third World countries should go through to become modern. To become modern, Rostow indicated that changes should occur in each of the five stages, namely traditional society, precondition for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity and the age of mass consumption (Graaff & Le Roux, 2001; Graaff, 2004). Graaff (2004) notes that the five stages can be described through three critical movements. The first critical movement is that a traditional society shifts from one where progress and change are seen as normal. The next movement is that there is a stimulation in the economy, a political revolution and new technological developments which push a country to the take-off stage. The final movement is that a country has national savings and investment rises to ten per cent of their national income, which enables self-sustained growth.

Modernisation theory is used to explain the process of industrialisation and how nations should progress from a traditional to a modern society with regard to advancing technology, production and consumption. Within this context, traditional societies are encouraged to relinquish their traditional cultural practices and customs and through this process will achieve economic growth by adopting political, social and technological features from modern societies (El-Ghannam, 2001). However, many scholars have criticised the modernisation model in that it requires the destruction of indigenous culture and its replacement with an industrialised western culture (Skocpol, 1977).

Modernisation theory experienced a significant decline towards the end of the 1960s due to its failure to bring about transformation and address the increasing incidence of poverty in Third World countries. This led to the emergence of the Dependency Theory which sought to explain the central forces at play in the creation of underdevelopment.

2.2.2 *Dependency theory*

Dependency theory emerged during the 1960s. Andre Gunder Frank is seen as the father of dependency theory as most of the credit went to him for popularising it. Proponents of the theory use the core-peripheral model to explain how the wealthier core countries (such as U.S., Japan, and Germany) are responsible for the underdevelopment of peripheral countries (such as Congo, Zambia and India) (Graaff, 2004). The dependency theory is very prominent

in explaining the inequality that is a result of imperialism by the rich countries, amongst the core and the periphery countries in terms of economic development (Graaff & Le Roux, 2001). The literature suggests that the developed countries became rich through the exploitation of the poor countries. They use economic forces, imposing sanctions and granting loans by the international organisations. In doing so, the developed countries deliberately keep the underdeveloped countries in their control (Friedmann & Wayne, 1977; Graaff & Le Roux, 2001; Graaff, 2004). Similarly, they explained that developed countries exist at the expense of poorer less developed countries. This causes dependency as developed countries exploit these poor nations through the appropriation of their resources and raw materials. These authors refute modernisation theory and maintain that the core countries exist at the expense of underdeveloped poor countries and build their wealth through such exploitation.

Although their reasons differ, both the modernisation and the dependency theories are macro theories which attempt to explain the causes of Third World countries' underdevelopment. For Korten (1987) modernisation and dependency theories are primarily a function of capital investment and are primarily concerned with the economic well-being and functioning of countries. In addition, El-Ghannam (2001) stated that both modernisation and dependency theories are too general and abstract in the sense that they embody functionalist assumptions.

2.3. People-centred development

The failure of the modernisation and the dependency theories in terms of their inability to address poverty led to the emergence of the people-centred development approach. People-centred Development (PCD) is defined by renowned scholars such as Chambers (1994) and Korten (1987) as people being at the centre of the development process and taking control of their own development. In so doing, local people engage and actively participate in developmental projects that they identify as a priority in their community in order to improve their quality of life and bring about transformation.

2.3.1. Evolution of the people-centred development theory

The People-centred Development theory emerged in the 1970s as a result of dissatisfaction with the implementation of standard top-down projects and programmes on diverse local contexts which did not meet the desired needs of the local people (Chambers, 1994). It was for this reason that theorists such as Korten (1987) promoted people-centred participatory approaches which placed beneficiaries at the centre of development projects. Numerous

sources emphasise the need to strengthen institutional and social capacity which would result in greater local control, accountability and self-reliance (Korten, 1991; Schenck & Louw, 1995). During the 1980s participatory discourse became part of the official aims and objectives of democratic governments and international aid organisations throughout the world (Chambers, 1994; Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Claridge, 2004). In this regard, Penderis (2014:107) notes that “participatory approaches were considered the *sine qua non* of development practice and development efforts increasingly promoted ‘people-centred development’, ‘state–society synergies’, ‘participatory democracy’ ‘bottom-up planning’ and ‘grassroots development’”.

Numerous scholars strongly criticised the appropriation of participatory discourse during the late 1980s by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international aid organisations with the intent of achieving project goals (Chambers, 1994; Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Claridge, 2004). Scholars such as Gaventa (2006) and Hickey and Mohan (2004) accused these international organisations of depoliticising development focusing mainly on achieving project effectiveness.

Summatively, PCD theory emerged on the basis that other developmental theories failed to address poverty and transformation in the developing world. This led to the promotion of bottom-up initiatives which placed local people at the centre of their own development initiatives. The following section turns to a more in-depth discussion of the PCD approach and includes an examination of the concepts of participation, capacity, empowerment and the role of power in development initiatives.

2.3.2. The people-centred development approach

The people-centred development theory is concerned about ‘putting people first’ in terms of their own development with a specific focus on the poor and disadvantaged sector of society (Burkey, 1993). PCD has been theorised as a bottom-up grassroots approach which advocates for people to have control and ownership over their own development by working in a collective manner to achieve their developmental needs. Chambers (1994) and Mathur (1997) describe this as an enabling process to take command, make decisions and analyse situations. Taking the discussion further, De Beer and Swanepoel (2006) explain the process as the transfer of political power from the privileged to the grassroots level which takes place when

ordinary people take ownership of their own development and participate meaningfully in local decision-making processes.

Researchers such as Swanepoel and De Beer (1998), Jennings (2000), Penderis (2012) and Frediani et al (2014) provide additional insight into the PCD approach. Frediani et al (2014) explains people-centred development as the direct involvement of beneficiaries in local projects and initiatives which leads to solutions to common community issues and addresses people's aspirations and needs. Frediani et al (2014) are in agreement with Penderis (2012) who notes that people-driven development is based on societal interaction and engagement through collaboration and devising supporting ways to address development challenges at the micro-level. For Jennings (2000) participatory development implies more than just the involvement of local inhabitants in development initiatives and emphasises that their contribution must be reflected in policies and programmes designed to impact their lives. Furthermore, Swanepoel and De Beer (1998) make reference to the work of Gran (1983:327) who comments that participatory development is a "self-sustaining practice engaging local residents in events that meet their basic needs and, beyond that realizes and manifests individual human potential within socially defined limits". The aforementioned scholars acknowledge that participatory development is about the presence and meaningful participation of the community in order to effect positive change.

2.4. Conceptualising participation

The concept of participation has been interrogated by a number of researchers to inform their work in the development field. Participation in community projects refers to the active involvement of local people in development initiatives intended to improve their lives. This section examines the concepts of participation, capacity building and empowerment, in terms of their relevance to the research topic.

2.4.1. Participation

Schenck and Louw (1995) describe the term 'participation' as a process whereby individuals and community members express and identify their development needs and priorities through collaboration with stakeholders on development initiatives that impact on their lives. For Jennings (2000:1), participatory development is the "involvement of local populations in the creation, content and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives", while Swanepoel and de Beer (1998) view participatory development as a self-sustaining process to

engage community members in activities that meet their basic needs. The aforementioned researchers note that participatory development refers to all stakeholders engaging in activities that benefit themselves within a community setting. Such engagement, in essence, leads to the desired change as identified by the local beneficiaries. The role of the beneficiaries is to create change through involvement in the development process and their involvement includes problem identification and assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Schenck & Louw, 1995). Thus, meaningful participatory development refers to the active role of beneficiaries in all stages of the development process including identification of the problem through to monitoring and evaluation of the project. Through their active involvement, it is anticipated that local people become empowered, are capacitated through learning new skills and are able to take control of their own development priorities. This ensures sustainable long-term development.

2.4.2. Capacity building

Capacity building occurs during meaningful participation in development initiatives. For Eade (1997) capacity building is an essential element of sustainable development and refers to the improvement of skills and knowledge which enables community people to respond more effectively to community challenges (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). Increased capacity fosters and sustains positive change (Howe & Cleary 2001). It is for this reason that Van Vlaenderen (2001) argues that capacity building is a long-term investment which ensures that local citizens are able to improve their quality of life. More so, capacity building occurs at multiple levels such as individual, organisational and community level (Liebenberg & Steward, 1997; Funnell et al, 2004). Scholars argue that positive change occurs through participation at these levels when beneficiaries are actively involved in development initiatives. Capacity building occurs when local people are the instigators of their own change and other stakeholders such as the government and NGOs only have an enabling and facilitating role (Theron & Mchunu, 2016).

2.4.3. Empowerment

The building of capacity through participation leads to empowerment which is one of the foci of the People-centred Development approach (Eade, 1997; Van Vlaenderen, 2001). Eade (1997) explains that empowerment is about gaining confidence and vision for positive change and occurs through participating in the different stages of development processes. The outcome is that the local people are able to take responsibility for creating a better quality of life for themselves and rely less on outside agents in achieving their developmental goals

(Mohan & Stokke, 2000). In the same context Mathur (1997) demonstrates that empowerment relates to people who gain control over their lives, take the necessary action to meet their needs and work collectively to reach their goals for effective social and human development. Chambers (1994) has a similar view to Mathur (1997) and argues that empowerment is a process which enables people to take command of the development process and make their own analysis and decisions about priorities that they identify at the local level. For De Beer and Swanepoel (2006), empowerment should also include the transfer of political power from the privileged as well as government to the grassroots. This is in correlation with Korten (1987: 146) who argues that the “people are encouraged to manage and mobilize their local resources, with government in an enabling role”. This means that local people make their own decisions and decision-making is a bottom-up grassroots process.

2.5. The role of power in development initiatives

Power and empowerment are described by Chambers (1994), Williams (2004), Gaventa (2006) and Penderis (2012) as two concepts that are closely related to citizen participation. Nelson and Wright (1995) and Gaventa (2006) make reference to Luke’s (1974) model of power. The model refers to three types of power, namely power over, power to and power within. Firstly, power ‘over’ is described as the power that the powerful have over the powerless. This refers to the power of officials and state actors that enables them to influence the actions and thoughts of the powerless. Secondly, power ‘to’ refers to the power gained by individuals or groups during everyday encounters that stimulate confidence and awareness in order to act, exercise agency and realise the potential of their citizenship, rights and voice. Thirdly, power ‘within’ refers to the acquisition of confidence and awareness that enables actors to participate meaningfully. This model of Luke (1974), as illustrated by Gaventa (2006), illustrates and clearly demonstrates the different power relations and levels which occur through participatory development. It suggests that there are different levels of power where people have no control at one end of the spectrum to where they have total control and are able to make their own decisions.

Schenck and Louw (1995) remind us that power cannot be handed to people, instead, people must be given the means to enable them to increase or elicit power in order to be empowered. Chambers (1994) clarifies that through the process of participation people are empowered as they are enabled to learn, share, analyse their knowledge and competence and given the

opportunity, make decisions and sustain action. At the local level, citizen participation in governance structures leads to capacity building and empowerment.

The notion of local citizen empowerment that PCD enthusiasts advocate for is a move away from a top-down approach where decisions are made for beneficiaries of development projects to a bottom-up approach where beneficiaries drive the development process. Burkey (1993) argues to ‘put the first last’ in order to empower the grassroots level and enable the powerless to take control and be at the forefront of developmental decision-making. This infers that grassroots people should be encouraged to bring their own ideas and initiatives to community planning processes and development decisions should not be forced upon them. This enables the local population to take control of the initiatives they plan and implement themselves. In doing so, people are able to build confidence, share ideas and cooperate with a range of stakeholders on all levels (Schenck & Louw 1995). With this in mind the power gained is used by the people to direct and take control over their own initiatives.

2.6. Participatory spaces

Participatory spaces are central mechanisms that provide platforms for people to unite and to engage. Scholarly writings note that participatory spaces are arenas created by citizens and governmental institutions with the purpose of engaging and exploring ideas for development initiatives (Cornwall, 2002; Cornwall, 2004; Avritzer, 2002; Gaventa, 2006). Such spaces are also seen as arenas where citizens and policy makers come together to signify transformation potential (Gaventa, 2006). Cornwall (2002, 2004) differentiates between institutional and non-institutional spaces.

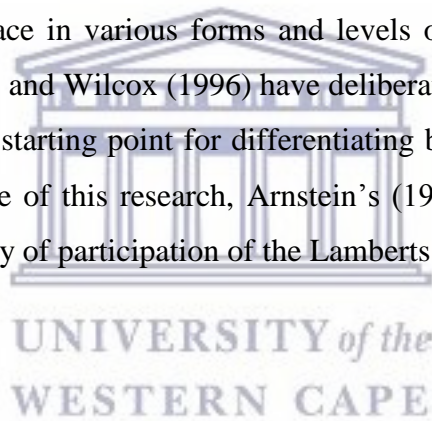
Penderis (2012:1) explains that institutional spaces are “sites within which state and society can interact and engage in mutually reinforcing ways to address development challenges at the local level”. These formal spaces are government-provided platforms frequently mandated by legislation to enable citizens to participate, engage, collaborate and reach compromises in matters of governance. This means that the institutional spaces are created as enabling environments for the public to engage and be involved in their own development (Cornwall, 2004). Institutional spaces are also referred to as invited spaces which are government-created arenas, initiated in order to enable citizens to participate in governance decision-making and development initiatives (Cornwall, 2002; 2004). However, the public often becomes frustrated due to being excluded. They accuse government of paying lip

service to the notion of participation and assert that such platforms are frequently used for merely providing information. It is for this reason that the people create, or invent their own spaces which are referred to as non-institutional spaces.

Non-institutional spaces are described as popular or organic spaces created by people with common interests. Cornwall (2002) explains that popular spaces emerge in an organic manner motivated by like-minded people who congregate together for the same goal. Such spaces are described as sites of 'radical possibility' (Cornwall, 2002), whereby those who are marginalised or excluded find a voice or a place where people can defend their interests (Penderis, 2012). These spaces are initially created to challenge the authority on concerns which are poorly addressed. It is for this reason that the people gather together for the same purpose and create spaces to protest in order for their voices to be heard.

2.7. Levels of participation

Citizen participation takes place in various forms and levels of intensity. Scholars such as Arnstein (1969), Pretty (1995) and Wilcox (1996) have deliberated on the participatory levels of intensity which is a useful starting point for differentiating between degrees and kinds of participation. For the purpose of this research, Arnstein's (1969) typology will be used to reflect on the levels of intensity of participation of the Lamberts Bay community in municipal governance.



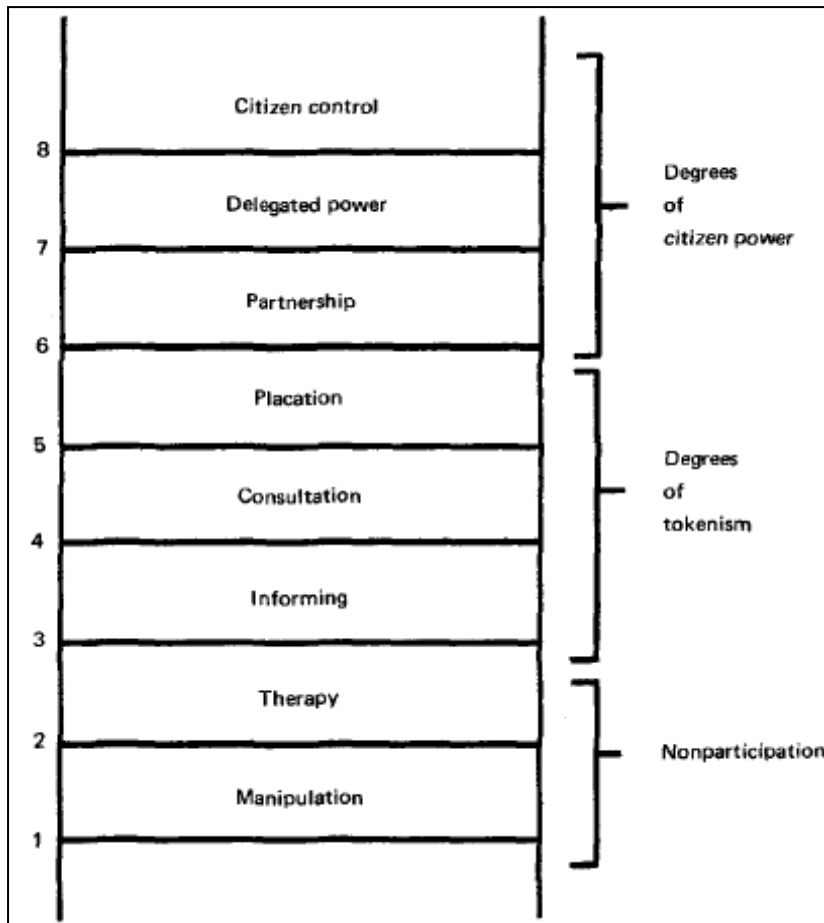


Figure 2.1 The ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969)

Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of participation, illustrated in Figure 2.1 above, is divided into eight levels which describe the different levels of intensity of participation. The steps of the ladder represent a spectrum from no power or control of the participatory process at the bottom of the ladder to full control and power over decision-making at the top (Wilcox, 1996; Tritter & McCallum, 2006; Cornwall, 2008). The levels of participation are divided into three categories, namely non-participation, degrees of tokenism and degrees of citizen power (Arnstein, 1969).

The first category, non-participation, includes manipulation and therapy and is described as the reality of people merely being told what needs to be done. This means that government/officials implement projects that they think people need, without any meaningful consultation. According to the model, within this category people are manipulated into merely agreeing to projects and are not involved in any of the project stages. The second category, tokenism, is seen as a persuasion, where people think that they are being consulted, but they only participate through their labour, for example. This means that the project in

which beneficiaries participate was decided for them by officials and is in reality a top-down process. At this level people only participate to fulfil predetermined objectives of government initiatives. The third category, citizen power, is the highest level of citizen participation and the most meaningful in terms of involvement in development projects. This level of participation refers to a situation where people are actively involved and are enabled to take part in projects and other initiatives which concern them. It is within this category that participants are truly empowered and have control over decision-making.

Although Arnstein's ladder of participation is widely used, various scholars such as Pretty (1995) and Wilcox (1995) redesigned the model. Pretty (1995) reworked the typology to include seven levels of citizen participation with a similar hierarchical design, namely manipulation, passive, consultation, material incentives, functional, interactive and self-mobilisation. Wilcox (1996) created a five-level typology of degrees of participation ranging from providing information to beneficiaries, to consultation, deciding together, acting together and finally supporting beneficiaries.

Generally, the levels of participation as proposed by Arnstein (1969), Pretty (1995) and Wilcox (1996) reflect the degree of citizen participation and citizen power in development projects. Although the models differ from each other, they are structured hierarchically from top-down participation (minimal citizen control), to bottom-up participation, where citizens have total control. Pretty (1995) describes the end result as self-mobilisation which can still be influenced by the state. However, Wilcox (1996) excluded the manipulation stage, which is a crucial stage in many top-down approaches. The reasoning is that people can first be manipulated and then be informed about a plan which makes them think that they were the initiators of the projects. It is for this reason that this research relies strongly on Arnstein's (1969) typology.

2.8. Advantages of participation

Participatory development is described as the involvement of people in their own development through initiating plans and taking ownership of development projects. As such, participatory development has the potential to bring real benefits to poor communities. Onyenemezu (2014) discusses these benefits which include enabling local people to express their desires and priorities, which leads to empowered local people through their active involvement. Cornwall and Brock (2005) note further that people are enabled to mobilise

collectively to define and claim their rights, while Mayo and Craig (1995) assert that active involvement in decision-making processes results in empowerment of participants, whereby local people are enabled to learn, be self-reliant, take ownership and solve their own problems.

Irvin and Stansbury (2004) argue that participatory development approaches enable administrators and local government officials to have regular contact with citizens in projects and policy processes which gives them the opportunity to learn from local residents. Mathur (1997) and Esau (2007) concur with this viewpoint, arguing that the merits of citizen participation in local government are to inform government and to provide meaningful input. Within this context administrators and officials are able to make use of local or indigenous knowledge within project and policy decision-making. The reason is that local knowledge is seen as an enabler as it allows for local people to identify their needs which are natural to their own environment. Korten (1987), Van Vlaenderen (2001) and Oponng (2013) refer to indigenous knowledge as the practices, skills and knowledge inherent within local communities and recognise the positive role that an understanding of indigenous knowledge of different contexts of local people can play in the success of development projects and policy-making. The importance of drawing on indigenous knowledge, according to Schenck and Louw (2004) is that local people understand their own contexts and have learned to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems through reflection on past experiences. It is for this reason that development workers must build on local knowledge systems when working with communities in decision-making processes to bring about meaningful change.

Meaningful participation in development projects builds ownership and self-reliance of local people as a result of their increased knowledge and skills gained through decision-making processes and development initiatives. This means that locals are able to take ownership over their own project initiations as they are the enforcers and the implementers thereof. Their involvement and increased capacity has a replication effect which further empowers the local people by increasing their self-reliance (Van Vlaenderen, 2001). Scholars such as Galtung et al (1980), Preiswerk (1980) and Fonchingong and Fonjong (2003) regard self-reliance as the utilisation of resources to the communities' own benefit to achieve a specific objective, which further motivates locals to complete specific goals. Self-reliant communities are far less

dependent on outside sources for motivation, resources, as well as project initiation and in most cases such communities are familiar with what is available and function accordingly.

2.9. Barriers to participation

Regardless of the numerous benefits indicated in the literature, there are a significant number of obstacles that are considered barriers to meaningful participation at the grassroots level. Some of the most common obstacles that prohibit people to participate meaningfully are due to participatory processes that are time consuming and costly and officials frequently lacking the capacity to facilitate an enabling environment for meaningful participation.

Irvin and Stansbury (2004) and Theron and Mchunu (2016) argue that participation in development is a process that is time consuming as meetings are frequently long to enable input from the range of stakeholders. This also incurs increased costs for organisations, due to the slow pace of project identification and implementation.

The domination of officials in development processes is a major factor which demotivates beneficiaries. In this regard, Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) argue that officials frequently produce authoritative decisions which are imposed on local communities in a top-down manner which excludes meaningful participation. The reason for this is that officials can enforce their own mandates within communities. Similarly, Schönwalder (1997) as cited by Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) mentions that officials come with their own agendas and take complete control over the decisions which in turn influence the traditional decision-making bodies in local affairs. Theron and Mchunu (2016) take this argument further in arguing that most projects are hijacked by councillors and other representatives to win political power. This means that community beneficiaries are being silenced as well as being side-lined most of the time.

For Mathur (1997), another barrier to effective participation is that practitioners lack the skills and ability to provide an enabling environment for people to participate in. In many cases, besides lacking the expertise, practitioners lack commitment to facilitate participatory processes due to its time consuming and costly nature. This lack of expertise, according to Theron and Mchunu (2016), Plummer (1999) and Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) results in ineffective local participation in projects and the enforcement of top-down initiatives in

accordance with the needs of officials and development practitioners and not those of the broader community.

2.10. Development communication

Development communication is the heart-beat of people being actively involved in their own well-being. This is because it serves as an enabling process which makes people the leading actors in their own development. In essence, communication enables people to shift from being recipients of external development interventions to generators of their own development (Bessette, 1996). This viewpoint is echoed by Msibi and Penzhorn (2010) when they argue that participation in development initiatives cannot occur without communication, as it is a social action of people's social relations. It is for this reason that community communication has been identified as an important component of development as it is an engagement mechanism between the state and society and is indispensable to bringing about social change and transformation. Rogers (1976) views communication development as an engaging mechanism as it has a role in conveying informative and persuasive messages from government to the public.

2.10.1. Evolution of development communication

Development communication emerged within the framework of communication and the media's contribution to development in Third World countries. According to Bessette (1996), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and US AID (The American Aid agency) sponsored a number of projects to make full use of the media as a communication medium, for information or educational purposes, with a facilitation role in development. The promotion of communication development was first used in the Philippines by Professor Nora Quebral in the 1970s as a transmitting and communicating process to gain new knowledge related to rural environments. The evolution of development communication was rooted in the participatory approaches that emerged in the 1970s as development approaches of the 1950s and 1960s were under scrutiny for their dominant top-down approaches (Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010). This approach gained momentum during the 1980s and 1990s and was linked to the spread of democracy and support of participatory decision-making at the local level during that period (Bessette, 1996).

2.10.2. Development communication

Development communication refers to the use of communication strategies and public information to facilitate development and socio-economic transformation and paves the way for people to be involved in all levels of development processes in sharing information and

knowledge, trust and commitment (Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010). For Bessette (1996) development communication is a combination of information and evaluation processes, as well as actions to solicit, encourage and motivate the participation of local communities in their own well-being.

Development communication has been characterised by the use of mass media that consider people as audiences to be influenced by the messages communicated and received (Mefalopulos, 2008). It is within this context that development communication is defined as a technological process to promote social change, which favours people's active and direct interaction through consultation and dialogue over the traditional one-way information dissemination through mass media (Wilkins, 2000; Mefalopulos, 2008). Similarly, Morris (2003) describes development communication as two conceptual frameworks. The one is knowledge transfer and the other is a participatory process, whereby people or the community involved are empowered. The community is empowered through communication that occurs in group meetings and workshops, which enable people to share knowledge and information. Empowerment occurs through the exchange of ideas and knowledge which in turn builds capacity and enables people to contribute meaningfully to the development processes. This relates to the main purpose of participatory development which is to enable people to take control of their own development and well-being. It also infers that the means to be enabled and empowered are dependent on how people engage or interact with one another in the community. Most importantly, it is seen as an educational process in which communities, with the assistance of facilitators identify their needs and become agents of their own development (Bessette, 1996).

Lunenburg (2010) states that communication is a process of transferring and receiving information and results in mutual understanding from one person to another of a particular topic. Similarly, Steyn and Nunes (2007) and Steinburg (2007) view communication as a dynamic process of exchanging meaningful messages in which people interact to enable meaning and understanding. Communication is therefore seen as an interaction that is changeable, meaningful and transactional to all participants involved.

Adedokun et al (2010) emphasise that effective communication leads to participation of local communities as they engage, interact and participate actively on issues which concern them. Kapoor (2002) shares this view, noting that communication techniques maximise

participation and through engagement, local knowledge of participants is built through working together on development projects. Altogether, communication in participatory development has an important role to play besides actual participation. Participants further deliberate and engage in discussions and reach consensus based on their specific needs and challenges (ibid, 2002). Communication at this level should result in the meaningful involvement of all stakeholders such as the community, government and non-governmental organisations as the exchange of ideas and information enables them to achieve one goal. More importantly, in this regard, communication is used as a tool to inform developmental decision-making processes. It is within this context that communication permits the mediation and facilitation processes between government and the community (Sarvaes & Liu, 2007).

In summary, communication within development promotes social justice and democracy. The reason is that the exchange of information of all participants contributes towards improving the quality of life of communities. Additionally, it is a mechanism to gain knowledge to implement the development needs of the beneficiaries with the assistance of the facilitators.

2.11. Legislative and policy framework for participatory governance in South Africa

Participation in local government is mandated by the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996) to endorse democracy. Smith (2007) argues that globally, democracy has become an important concern to policy-makers. The reason is that democracy paved the way to achieve sustainable poverty reduction and human development objectives at all levels of society. In this context, democracy at the local level not only relates to the practices enabling people's democratic rights, but also provides the framework for local government to be accountable, transparent and responsive to the needs and development of the people (Smith, 2007; Msibi & Penzhorn, 2010). The legislation and policy framework that relates to South Africa's responsibility in ensuring a participatory democracy is examined below.

2.11.1. The Constitution of South Africa, 1996

South Africa's Constitution (RSA, 1996) mandates local government to promote participatory local governance and democracy at the local level. In the South African Constitution, Chapter 7, Section 152 (e), specifies local government's legal obligation to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government. Furthermore, McEwan (2003) highlights that the Constitution gives clear directives for communities and community organisations to be encouraged to take part and be

involved in local government initiatives, as Section 118 of the Constitution acknowledges the fundamental right of all citizens to participate in the governance system. This means that all spheres of government take responsibility for citizens to participate in matters of governance.

2.11.2. White Paper on Local Government, 1998

The White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998c) provides the framework for a developmental local government system. The White Paper mandates local government to work with citizens in an inclusive and integrated manner, to meet their social and economic needs. It affords citizens the right to have continuous input into local politics and influence the way services are delivered (RSA, 1998c). McEwan (2003) notes that Section B of the White Paper concludes that integration and co-ordination is required for development planning and emphasises the need of community participation in local government initiatives. Msibi and Penzhorn (2010:5) elaborate on this by stating that Local Government visualises a process where communities are involved in government initiatives which include planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Through the White Paper, local government is mandated to empower local communities to identify their needs, set performance objectives and outlines the extent to which the municipalities can be held accountable for their performance in service delivery (RSA, 1998c).

2.11.3. Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998

The Municipal Structures Act (117 of 1998) sets out the municipality's constitutional obligations to ensure participatory governance (RSA, 1998b). Section 72 of the Municipal Structures Act provides a mandate to local government to enhance participatory democracy through the system of ward committees and/or sub-councils. It is for this reason that the sub-council and/or ward participatory system is the legalised platform that enables the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality.

2.11.4. Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000

The Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (Act 32 of 2000) specifies the legal responsibility of local government in South Africa (RSA, 2000). It instructs municipalities to work together with citizens in decision-making processes (De Visser, 2009). This means that municipalities operate according to procedures of formality, which serves as a mechanism to reach their developmental objectives, in accordance with the wishes of the local community (DPLG, 2005). Municipalities must therefore specifically adhere to the Municipal Systems Act Section 18 (1) which states that a municipality must communicate and inform its community concerning the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate

community participation. In addition, Sections 4c and 4e of the Municipal Systems Act indicate that local government has a duty to encourage the involvement of the community and must consult with the community on the level, quality, range and impact of municipal services provided by the municipality, either directly or through another service provider. In addition, Section 4, Sections 5b and 5d indicate that community members have the right to contribute to the decision-making processes of the municipality and to submit oral or written recommendations, representations and complaints to the municipal council and be informed about the decisions of the municipal council. The Municipal Systems Act thus provides the mandate to local government to communicate and share information with communities.

2.11.5. Local government's role in participation

Taking into consideration the developmental frameworks of local government, it is clear that local government as an institution is mandated to adopt a people-centred approach in their areas of jurisdiction. The roles of local government have been institutionalised in order to enable citizens at the grassroots level, to participate in matters of government. The reason for this was to enable local residents to engage in local decision-making and provide adequate service delivery at the local level (De Visser, 2009).

In summary, the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996), the White Paper on Local Government (RSA, 1998), the Municipal Structures Act (RSA, 1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000), indicate and inform the developmental role of local government. Local government is thus bound by legislation to encourage and enable communities to participate in their own development which it does through the establishment of suitable structures such as the sub-council and ward committee platforms.

2.12. Conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion of people-centred development as the theoretical framework for the research and emphasises the central role that local communities must play in their own development. The chapter further discussed the concept of participation as it relates to people-centred development theory and the aligned concepts of capacity building and empowerment. Thereafter, the concept of development communication and its critical role in enabling people to participate in matters of governance, was examined. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the South African legislative framework that guides the role and responsibilities of local government with regard to providing a platform for local

residents to participate in local governance matters. The next chapter provides a detailed background of the case study area.



CHAPTER THREE

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDY AREA

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the Cederberg municipal area within which the case study town of Lamberts Bay is situated. The Cederberg municipal area is located in the West Coast District in the Western Cape Province. The chapter further provides a description of the structure and physical location as well as the governmental structure of the area. An examination of the broader area within which the town of Lamberts Bay is located, provided the researcher with an informative platform from which to conduct the research.

3.2. Overview of the case study area

3.2.1. South Africa

South Africa is a coastal country and has a population estimate of 56 521 900 million people (StatsSA, 2017). The country is divided into nine provinces: Western Cape, Northern Cape, North West, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. The case study area of Cederberg is situated in the West Coast district of the Western Cape Province.

3.2.2. Western Cape

The Western Cape Province covers 129, 462 km² and is the fourth largest geographical area in South Africa. The province has an estimated population of 6 510 300 people comprising approximately 11.5% of the national population (StatsSA, 2017). The province is divided into five district municipalities which include the Cape Winelands, Central Karoo, Eden, Overberg and West Coast and one metropolitan municipality, namely the City of Cape Town (see Figure 3.1 below).

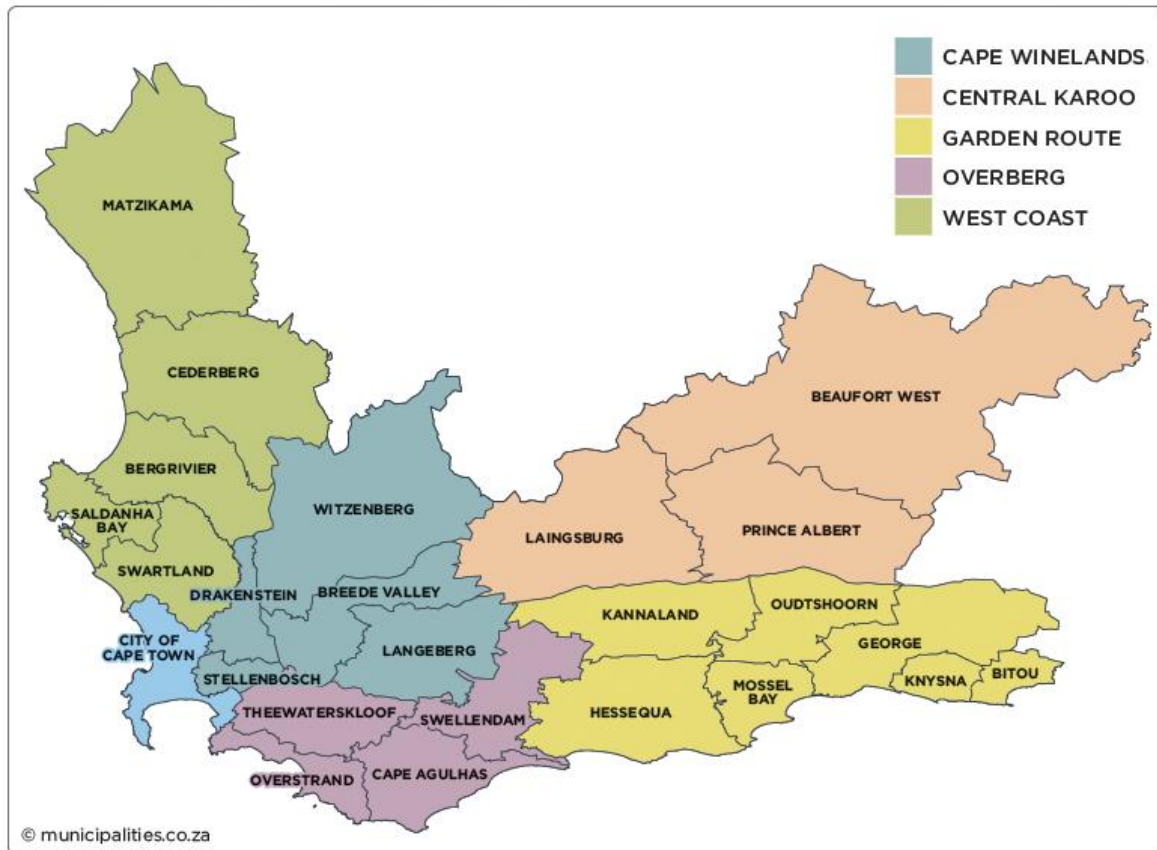


Figure 3.1: Western Cape District Municipal Boundaries
(Source: Western Cape Municipalities, 2018)

3.2.3. West Coast

The West Coast district is surrounded by the Cape Winelands to the east and the City of Cape Town to the south. Namibia is situated to the north and is accessed through the N7 national road. The district comprises of a population of approximately 391 766 people in an area of 31119 km² (StatsSA, 2011). The West Coast district municipality consists of five local municipalities with Cederberg and Bergriver at the centre, Swartland and Saldanha Bay to the south and Matzikama to the north (see Figure 3.1 above).

3.2.4. Cederberg Municipal Area

The Cederberg municipal area is located in the West Coast district and is bordered by the Cederberg Mountains to the east and the Atlantic Ocean in the west. It is bordered by Bergriver municipality to the south, Matzikama municipality to the north and Hantam Municipality to the east. Cederberg links the northern part of the West Coast region to the municipalities in the southern part of the region by means of the R27 highway along the West Coast and the N7 national road from Cape Town to the Northern Cape and Namibia. (Cederberg Municipality IDP, 2018). The Cederberg municipality covers an area of 8007 km²

and had a population of 49 768 in 2011, which is estimated to be 52 949 in 2018 with a growth rate of 2.3% (StatsSA, 2011; Cederberg Municipality, 2018). With regard to the racial composition, the Cederberg Municipal area is dominated by the coloured population at 75.7 %, followed by Black Africans at 12.7 %, whites at 11%, Indians /Asians at 0.3% and others at 0.4% (StatsSA, 2011). Census data indicated that in 2011 there were 13 513 households in the municipality with an average household size of 3.5 persons per household (StatsSA, 2011).

3.2.4.1. Administrative and governance structure

Administratively, local government in South Africa is divided into 8 metropolitan (Category A) and 44 district municipalities (Category C). District municipalities are further sub-divided into 205 local municipalities (Category B). The Cederberg Municipality, the focus of this research, is a category B municipality and consists of a mayoral executive committee combined with a ward participatory system. The Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 defines and provides direction to ward systems in local government (RSA, 1998b). The overall objective of the institutionalisation of ward committees is to provide a framework to enable community participatory governance at the local level. Within each ward, a ward committee drawn from the community is established to represent the interests of community residents with the ward councillor serving as chairperson of the ward. Ward committees are viewed as a key component of the local government municipal system in enabling participation in matters of governance and identifying key development needs within the wards (Penderis, 2014).

The Cederberg Municipality comprises a total of six wards. Figure 3.2 below illustrates the location of the wards within the Cederberg municipal area and the towns that are encompassed within the wards. The six wards are: Citrusdal, which is the gateway town into the municipality from the south (Ward 2), Clanwilliam, the administrative centre of the municipality (Ward 3), Graafwater, an agricultural service centre (Ward 4), Lamberts Bay, Elands Bay coastal and tourism nodes (Ward 5) and rural settlements which include all farms in the Citrusdal area (Ward 1), Paleishuwel (Ward 4), Leipoldtville (Ward 5) and Wupperthal and Algeria (Ward 6) (Cederberg Municipality Final IDP, 2018).

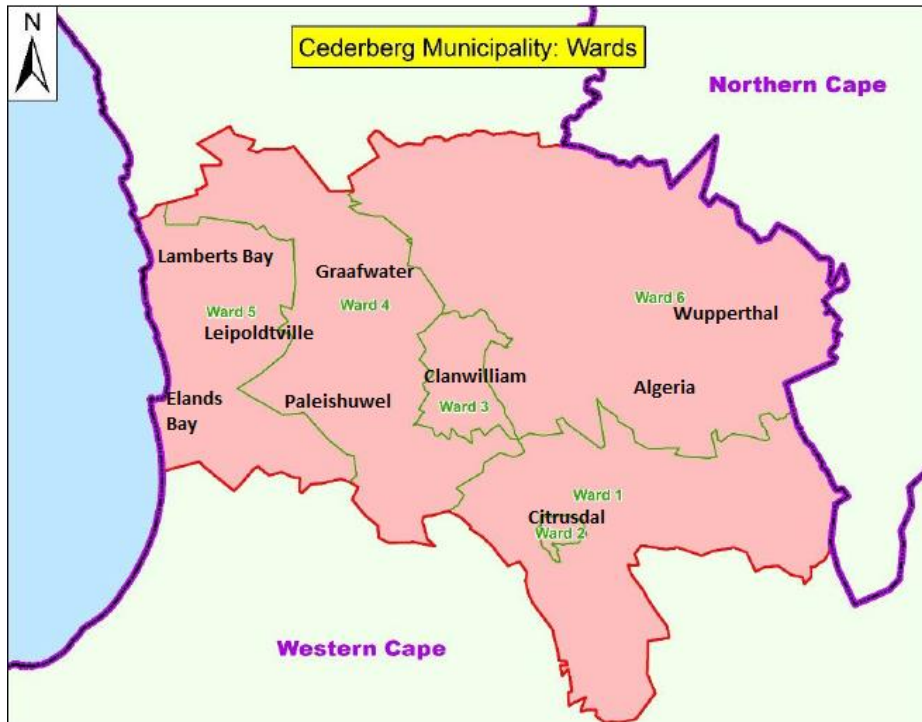


Figure 3.2: Cederberg Municipality Ward Boundaries

(Source: Cederberg Municipality Final IDP, 2018)

3.2.4.2 Governance of Cederberg Municipality

Cederberg Local Municipality is governed by an elected council which consists of eleven seats. The council was elected on 3 August 2016 for the 2016/2021 period. The Democratic Alliance (DA) won the majority of council seats, defeating the previous African National Congress (ANC) council. The DA currently has six of the eleven seats, the ANC four and the African Democratic Congress (ADC) one. The mayoral candidate, Mr Jimmy Barnard was formally elected as Mayor of Cederberg Municipality on 17 August 2016. The Deputy Mayor is Mr Benjamin Zass, the Speaker is Mr William Farmer and Mr Gerrit Matthyse is the Municipal Manager of Cederberg Municipality (Cederberg Municipality IDP, 2017a).

Furthermore, the municipality consists of four directorates, with a regional service delivery model which includes four regional managers to serve the various wards of the municipal area. The model was put in place to address the needs of the community, to take the decision-making closer to the outer towns for the community members to have direct contact with administration. It is for this reason that the municipality enforced the organisational structure to service the wide spread demarcation wards in the municipal area (Cederberg Municipality IDP, 2018).

3.2.4.3. *Ward Committees*

The formation of ward committees is a legislative mandate stated in the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998 (RSA, 1998b). The ward committee is formed to represent and be the direct link between council and the community in participatory initiatives. The ward councillor is the chair of the ward committee which consists of not more than ten individuals drawn from the community. November (2012) notes that it is the responsibility of the ward councillor to ensure that the developmental needs of the community are represented and addressed at municipal council. Each of the ward committee members of Ward 5 in Lamberts Bay represent different sectors, namely geographical location, sport and culture, chamber of commerce/tourism, education, health and crime (Cederberg Municipality IDP, 2017a). The ward committee members speak to the specific developmental needs pertaining to their sectors and they in turn represent the priorities of community residents within their sectors. Development priorities and concerns of the sectors are addressed at the ward committee meetings on a monthly basis and after council makes a decision the ward councillor provides feedback to the ward committee.

3.3. Location of the case study area

The research was conducted in Lamberts Bay, one of the six wards located within the Cederberg municipal area (see Figure 3.2 above). Lamberts Bay was originally known as Otterdam which was later named after Admiral Lambert from the British Navy. Admiral Lambert was a marine officer who was in charge of the surveying process of the bay in 1826 and 1840. Lamberts Bay was a small fishing town, well-known for crayfish and was mainly used for trading wheat from the neighbouring farms by Mr Joseph Stephan. Mr Joseph Stephan was a well-known entrepreneur who brought about industrial developments such as commercial buildings and the hotel in 1887 (Fairman, 2015; Cederberg Municipality IDP 2017a). The British made use of Lamberts Bay during the Anglo Boer War, 1900-1902 and in 1901 the HMS Sybille was wrecked opposite Steenbokfontein (Fairman, 2015; Aurecon SA, 2017). According to Fairman (2015) Lamberts Bay was proclaimed as a town in 1913 when individuals started buying plots. Lamberts Bay became a local authority in 1929 and was declared a municipality in 1969. In 2000 a process started to combine the municipal boundaries as part of the Back to Basics support plan. The amalgamation of the municipality is in relation with the Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998 (RSA, 1998a). The process was concluded as the municipality was under severe financial and service delivery strains (Oversight Report West Coast, 2017). It is for this reason that

Lamberts Bay formed part of the Cederberg Municipal area and functioned as a ward since then.

3.4. Socio-economic structure of population

3.4.1. Demographics of Lamberts Bay

Lamberts Bay is situated 62km from the administrative centre, Clanwilliam. Lamberts Bay has a population of 6 120 people and 1 720 households. Table 3.1 below illustrates the population groups of Lamberts Bay and shows that coloured people are in the majority by far at 4 561 people (74.53%), followed by Whites 973 (15.90%), black Africans at 549 (8.97%), Other at 23 (0.38%) and Indian/Asians at 14 (0.23%) (StatsSA, 2011; Frith, 2011).

Table 3.1 Lamberts Bay population

Population group	Number of persons	Percentage
Coloured	4561	74.53 %
White	973	15.90 %
Black African	549	8.97%
Other	23	0.38 %
Indian or Asian	14	0.23%

(Source: StatsSA, 2011)

Females comprise 51% and males 49%. With this in mind, 37.1 % of households are headed by females with most of the community members living in formal brick dwellings which are owned or being paid off. The majority of community members have access to flush toilets connected to sewerage, piped water, electricity and weekly refuse removal. With regard to the languages within the community, Afrikaans is the dominant language in the region at 91%, followed by isiXhosa at 6% and a small number of English and Setswana speakers (Frith, 2011; StatsSA, 2011).

3.4.2. Socio-economic information

3.4.2.1. Education

Lamberts Bay has two primary schools with Afrikaans as the medium of instruction and English as a second language. Lamberts Bay does not have any high schools. High school learners have to travel to Graafwater High School which is 30 kilometres away and

Clanwilliam, which is 60 kilometres from Lamberts Bay. In terms of the educational levels of residents within the region, the census data indicates that 2.5% have no schooling, 10.6% have some primary schooling, 7.9% completed primary schooling, 44.3% completed some secondary schooling, 26.4% attained matric and 8.3% achieved higher education (StatsSA, 2011).

3.4.2.2. Employment and unemployment

Education has a direct linkage to employment, unemployment and the economy. Unemployment in Lamberts Bay constitutes one-fifth of the Cederberg municipal areas rate, which is significantly high. Lamberts Bay has an employment status of 28.59%, with 7.96% unemployed, 1.98% discouraged work-seekers, 26.89% not economically active and 34.58% not applicable (Cederberg Municipality IDP, 2017a). In comparison the Cederberg municipal area rates are as follows: employment at 54.76%, 6.46% unemployed, 1.93% discouraged work-seekers and 36.85% not economically active (StatsSA, 2011).

3.4.2.3. Economic activities

Economically, the Cederberg municipal area has the smallest economy in the district, with a 12.6% gross regional domestic product (GRDP). The main economic sectors in the municipal area are agriculture and fishing as primary sectors at 21.3%, manufacturing as secondary sector at 28.0%, wholesale, retail trading, catering, accommodation, transport, storage and communication as tertiary sectors at 50.7% of the GRDP (Cederberg Municipality Socio-economic Profile, 2017b). In addition, the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors contribute about R765m, manufacturing R709m, wholesale and retail trade, catering and accommodation R482m and transport, storage and communication R420m to the gross value of the municipality (Cederberg Municipality IDP, 2018).

For Lamberts Bay the most prominent activities are the agricultural, fishing and tourism industries which provide the most employment opportunities to the community and are the main drivers of employment in the municipal area and Lamberts Bay. These sectors contribute about 30% of the growth domestic product (GDP) in the municipality (Aurecon SA, 2017).

Furthermore, during previous years the crayfish canning factory was the largest employment and economic activity sector in Lamberts Bay. However, due to the depletion or decline of crayfish and other fish stocks on the west coast through over-fishing, the harbour activity was reduced. The harbour is now mostly used for small fishing vessels, and some diamond mining

boats which are used for wet dredging and diving operations offshore. The canning factory is no longer in use and has been taken over by the potato chips industry, which provides raw potato chips to businesses such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, McCains in Cape Town and the surrounding businesses in the area (Frairman, 2015).

The manufacturing sector also employs a fair number of Lamberts Bay residents (Statistics South Africa, 2001). Needless to say, the manufacturing and wholesale sector fills the working opportunity gap created by the decline in the fishing industry (Aurecon SA, 2017).

According to the Cederberg Municipality IDP (2018), tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the Cederberg area. Lamberts Bay is well-known to tourists as a holiday destination (Aurecon SA, 2017). This is due to several attractions such as the Bird Island next to the harbour, one of the core attractions to tourists. The Bird Island attracts tourists or bird watching tourists as the island has about 20 000 Cape Gannets, cormorants and African Penguin breeds. Lamberts Bay is also well-known amongst tourists for its seasonal indigenous flowers.

3.4.2.4. Basic services

Access to basic services is mandated as a basic human right in South Africa with most of the responsibilities attributed to local government. According to the Socio-Economic Profile of Cederberg Municipality (2015) access to basic service delivery has a wide impact on the standards of living in the community and has an impact on education, health and the economy. It is for this reason that the developmental needs of the people are included and aligned in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan and the Budget.

According to the Cederberg Municipality IDP (2018) all formal households in the Cederberg area have access to piped drinking water, while the informal dwellings make use of communal water services. According to StatsSA (2011) 87.3% of residents in Lamberts Bay receive pipe water. Electricity is the biggest source of energy in the municipal area and 98.5% of Lamberts Bay residents have access to electricity for lighting (StatsSA, 2011).

Access to sanitation and refuse removal services plays a major role in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and healthy environment. It is for this reason that municipalities provide the local communities with a waste removal service. According to StatsSA (2011) Lamberts Bay has a weekly refuse removal of 96.1% and 89.5% has flush toilets connected to sewerage.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the case study area of the research. It outlined a broad context to the origin of the case study area and more current demographic and socio-economic information. It also provided insight into the administrative and governance structure of the municipal area. This information provides the context for the following chapter, which presents the analysis and findings of the fieldwork and data collection stages of the research.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

One of the key features of any democratic state is the quality of its mechanisms that promote citizen participation in matters of governance. Within South Africa, local government has been tasked with the responsibility of engaging the public in decision-making and participatory structures typically used by local government to engage with the local residents include ward meetings, council meetings, public meetings and integrated development planning meetings.

In order to assess the achievements and impact of local government's strategies to enhance participatory governance, this research focused on the case study area of Lamberts Bay. As indicated in Chapter 1, qualitative methods were deemed to be most suitable for a study of this nature in order to gather in-depth information relating to the research question. In this regard, a total of 57 semi-structured interviews were conducted with four categories of respondents, namely municipal representatives, council and ward committee representatives, community residents and community organisations. Four municipal representatives, referred to as officials in the data analysis, were targeted within the first category, whilst in the second category ten respondents were interviewed. Forty semi-structured interviews were conducted with community members within the third category of respondents, whilst three community organisation members were interviewed in the fourth category. In addition, public, ward and council meetings were observed by the researcher to understand the nature of community participation within Lamberts Bay.

The chapter commences with a discussion of the nature of participation with reference to the different types of participatory structures introduced to enable citizens to engage with officials in matters of governance. Thereafter, attention turns to an analysis of the extent and levels of participation in development initiatives. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the effectiveness of development communication strategies used by the Cederberg Municipality within Lamberts Bay, to enhance participation.

4.2. Nature of participation

Local government in South Africa is mandated by the Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998) to create institutional structures to enable the participation of community residents in developmental issues and matters of governance at the local level (RSA, 1998b).

This research revealed that there are different platforms that are used by the Cederberg Municipality in Lamberts Bay to enable residents to participate and engage with the local authority. The different platforms and the manner in which people participate include ward meetings, council meetings, public meetings and integrated planning meetings.

4.2.1. Ward committee meetings

Ward committees are institutionalised structures created in the municipality through the Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998, Section 72) as a legislated vehicle to drive participatory democracy (RSA, 1998b). The ward committee consists of eleven members which include the ward councillor, who is the chairperson, the ward assistant who is the secretary and nine community members who represent their different sectors. The nine committee members represent six sectors which are as follows: four ward committee members represent the geographical sector, one represents sport and culture, one for the chamber of commerce/tourism, one for education, one for health and one for crime (Cederberg Municipality IDP, 2017a). The role of the ward committee is to assist the ward councillor to facilitate communication with the broader community and to serve as the interface between the local council on the one hand and civil society on the other (Penderis, 2014).

Ward Five committee meetings are held at the Lamberts Bay Council Chambers. Discussions with the ward councillor, ward assistant, ward committee members and public participation manager revealed that ward committee meetings are held on a monthly basis to discuss the developmental issues of the community and other service delivery matters. Typically, discussions at such meetings relate to matters raised at the sectoral meetings which are held prior to ward committee meetings. Such matters are then tabled by the respective ward committee members and sector representatives for discussion at ward meetings. After the ward meeting, the ward councillor takes the issues, problems and developments raised at the ward meetings to council for further discussion and decision-making. All decisions are then relayed back to the ward committee by the ward councillor and thereafter relayed back to the sectors and civil society by the ward representative.

Attendance at ward meetings was influenced by the types of issues discussed at these monthly meetings. For example, in February 2017 at the ward meeting the only items on the agenda were the re-zoning of the old sports ground and the vacant position on the ward committee for the youth sector (see Annexure 6). This meeting was also attended by the Manager of the Public Participation Unit and the Manager of Parks and Resorts due to the nature of the topic under discussion. Both managers provided inputs and addressed the meeting. Thereafter ward committee members provided inputs obtained from their sectoral meetings on items related to their specific sectors. The ward councillor noted at the ward meeting that those items would be discussed at a public meeting organised for further discussions on those topics. One of the purposes of the public meeting is to enable broader community engagement.

As a general point on the agenda at the ward committee meeting, the chairperson raised the issue of establishing a housing committee and the identification of street names for the housing development. The chairperson informed the committee that both those issues would be raised at the public meeting as that action would require a much broader public participation process including the entire community and not just the ward committee representatives. This will be discussed further under the section on public meetings.

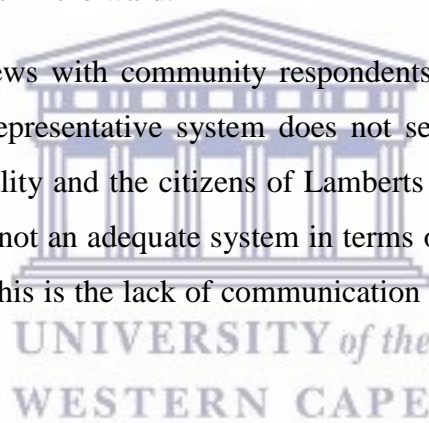
It became clear during interviews with the ward councillor, ward assistant and officials that the ward committee is used as a platform and channel to communicate and inform the community about developmental initiatives. During those interviews, ward committee members understood that their roles are to engage with the community via their sectors to obtain information relating to development initiatives and to report on the decisions taken during the ward committee meetings and during engagements with the ward councillor.

However, it was also discovered during interviews with the majority of community respondents that the broader community did not know who their ward committee members were and as a result could not discuss community issues or problems in their community with them. It was further found that the community was not fully represented by their ward committees in the different sectors. One of the reasons was that not all geographical areas were represented by the geographical sector representatives serving on the ward committee. Thus, some community residents within those geographical areas were unable to participate in matters relating to their areas as there was no sector representative. It also became clear during interviews that not all community members were members of sectors such as youth,

crime, sports and culture and their views on community issues were therefore not taken into consideration. Similarly, it became clear during interviews with the organisations within the ward that they were also not represented on the ward committee.

When the community members were asked if they attended sectoral meetings to engage with the sector representatives, it was revealed by most of the community members and members of community organisation representatives that they did not attend sectoral meetings as they were uninformed about the meetings. Similar case studies have also found that the compositions of ward committees are structurally inadequate (Khuzwayo, 2009; Madumo, 2011). The reason for this is that the ward committees do not always represent all the organisations in the community; the geographical ward sectors also do not represent all the geographical areas in the community. A study by Penderis (2014) in the City of Cape Town found that ward committees are not truly representative structures and do not reflect the input of the majority of residents within the ward.

Finally, based on the interviews with community respondents and organisations, it can be concluded that the sectoral representative system does not serve its purpose as a positive linkage between the municipality and the citizens of Lamberts Bay. It is further evident that the current sectoral system is not an adequate system in terms of enabling meaningful public participation. The reason for this is the lack of communication between community residents and the ward committee.



4.2.2. Public meetings

Public meetings are used by municipalities in South Africa to target audiences that are larger than those at ward committee meetings. This enables local government to promote and encourage community members to participate in developmental initiatives and to engage in matters relating to service delivery. In the same vein, public meetings are constructed to publicise projects and provide open debates, as well as to share information about the needs of the community and to clarify issues related to the IDP (Khuzwayo, 2009). In essence, such meetings are used by local authorities to communicate with the broader community.

Public meetings in Lamberts Bay are held in the community hall. These meetings are initiated by the local municipality and chaired by the ward councillor. Interviews with the Lamberts Bay ward councillor, ward assistant and municipal manager revealed that public meetings are used to engage more fully with the community. In this regard, the ward assistant noted that the ward councillor encourages open debate and uses his role as chairperson of the public

meeting to encourage the community to voice their concerns (Interview with Ward Assistant, 2017).

The researcher observed in a public meeting held at the community hall in February 2017 that the serving ward councillor played a facilitation role as chairperson within the meeting. That was noted during the discussion on the establishment of a housing committee that was needed for the housing development in Lamberts Bay. During the public meeting it became apparent that the ward councillor engaged very well with community residents, encouraging meaningful participation and providing guidance. Interviews with community respondents revealed that the serving ward councillor was very effective in chairing public meetings and enabling meaningful public participation and enabling residents to voice their concerns in Lamberts Bay. Interviews further revealed that, that had not been the case with regard to the former ward councillor who held very few public meetings within the community and most of them ended in violent outbreaks. Such outbreaks initially led to poor attendance in meetings for the serving ward councillor in office, as a result of a lack in confidence in the ward committee system and the council's supposed commitment to public participation. This situation was captured in the following community respondents' assertions:

The former councillor did not host any public meetings, the current council held regular monthly meetings (Community member 16, 2017).

Previous public meetings were very one-sided. However, there has been a twist with the current councillor (Community member 29, 2017).

The above findings are in correlation with research conducted by Khuzwayo (2009), who found that poor attendance in meetings was due to a lack of confidence in the municipality and its failure to respond to the needs of the community. The serving ward councillor stated during an interview that he specifically made public meetings mandatory on a monthly basis in Ward Five to enable participation and provide feedback to the community on development initiatives and gain the community's confidence. Furthermore, during attendance at the public meeting, it was evident that the ward councillor made use of the public meetings to engage with residents and gain community inputs on issues that concern residents.

During interviews with community residents, it was confirmed that they were encouraged to participate and raise their concerns at public meetings. Most of the community respondents pointed out that they felt comfortable asking questions and engaging with others during

public meetings and that the current ward councillor allowed open debates. That confirmed the ward councillor's assertion that he encouraged the 'voice' of community residents and their participation in matters of participatory governance. Residents drew attention to the fact that that was not the case with the former ward councillor. They noted that they were not comfortable in raising community issues and engaging in matters of governance as their questions were generally left unanswered. That was confirmed by the following statements from community respondents with regard to the lack of commitment of meaningful participation and listening to the voices of community residents by the ward councillor:

You ask questions in the public meetings. Sometimes you are not satisfied with the answers and keep quiet when not answered. As I can see, they were not willing to give the answer (Community member 1, 2017).

The people did not receive satisfactory answers before the election (Community member 8, 2017).

Research conducted by Qwabe and Mdaka (2011) confirms some of the sentiments expressed above. Their findings also suggest that the poor attendance at public meetings is due to ward councillors who do not recognise community inputs. It became clear during interviews and personal observation that the serving ward councillor encouraged meaningful participation as envisaged by Chapter 4, Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) through the use of public meetings and enabling residents to give inputs and raise community concerns (RSA, 2000).

4.2.3. Council meetings

At the local government level, council meetings represent a platform where decision-making by the elected Council takes place. Council meetings are open to the broader public (RSA, 2000). The elected Cederberg Municipality Council consists of eleven councillors, namely six Democratic Alliance (DA) elected representatives and four African National Congress (ANC) proportional representatives and one African Democratic Congress (ADC) proportional representative. Council meetings are called by the chairperson of council who, in the Cederberg Council is the Ward Five councillor. Council meetings within the Cederberg municipal area typically follows standard rules of order procedures to conduct the meeting. Cederberg Municipality council meetings are mostly held in the Clanwilliam Council Chambers, although the Lamberts Bay Council Chambers are also used as a venue depending on where the chairperson wants the meeting to take place. Interviews with council staff revealed that council meetings are mandatory and published on the website together with

special council meetings which are meetings called by council on matters that require urgent attention.

The role and responsibility of councillors within the council meeting is to discuss and make decisions on matters which have a developmental and service delivery impact on the community. The Council's responsibilities are mandated by the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 and Municipal Financial Management Act 56 of 2003. Council is obligated to encourage the involvement of the community through setting up mechanisms to ensure participation in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, the preparation of the budget, the Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP), Annual Performance Report and Annual Report. However, there are also other items submitted which have an impact on the council which are not open to the public or administration. These items include motions of urgency which are required to be dealt with solely by council or the administration unit.

During interviews with the councillors it was found that they encourage citizens to attend the council meetings. Observation at a council meeting held in the Lamberts Bay Council Chambers in February 2017, revealed that the meeting was attended by 20 community members, 5 ward committee members, ward councillors and municipal officials. However, the chairperson noted that the community members are afforded observer status only and are not allowed to participate in the meeting, whilst council makes decisions affecting the community. It was also observed that the community members who attended the meeting sat on the side of the hall and the councillors and administration sat around a table. Although this could be viewed as excluding the community in decision-making processes, the community was given other opportunities, such as through their sectors and ward committee representative, or at public meetings, to provide their inputs and comments on service delivery matters and development initiatives.

Regarding ward committee members' attendance at council meetings, interviews revealed that most of them only attended the council meetings held in Lamberts Bay due to lack of transport to the meetings held in Clanwilliam. In this regard, ward committee members noted that they would have to wait for feedback from the ward councillor at the ward committee meeting on council decisions. A similar situation was reported by Penderis (2014) during her research on the Cape Flats within the City of Cape Town when sub-council meetings were alternated between Delft and Bonteheuwel. Although the minutes of the council meetings in

Lamberts Bay and Clanwilliam are made available on the municipal website, not all committee members have access to the internet and as a result are unable to report back to their sectors on decisions made by council.

Interviews with community members and community organisation respondents indicated that they did not attend council meetings as they were uninformed. Citizens noted that the meetings were not formally advertised or the schedule was not made public as per the legislation. That means that they were unable to plan in advance to attend the council meeting. Community members also concurred with ward committee members that they were unable to attend the council meetings as most of the meetings were held in Clanwilliam and there was no available transportation to enable them to attend those meetings.

4.2.4. Integrated Development Planning (IDP) meetings

As noted in Chapter 2, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is used by local municipalities in South Africa as a strategic development plan for the area of jurisdiction of local government. The Municipal Manager (MM) is responsible for the design and implementation of the IDP. During interviews, they concurred that the IDP process in the Cederberg Municipality takes place in accordance with guidelines set out by the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (RSA, 2000). The Municipal Manager noted that in order to comply with the public participatory requisites of the IDP, the methods used by the Cederberg Municipality to engage with the public included ward committee meetings and special public meetings in the form of “roadshows” and stakeholder meetings with organisations in the municipal area. He explained that during the IDP “roadshows”, the ward council representatives solicit developmental inputs from the communities in their wards. Thereafter, the draft IDP, draft Budget and draft service delivery budget implementation plan (SDBIP) is compiled and submitted to council for approval. It is then publicised on the council website for public comment and presented at public meetings organised for the purpose of public comment. However, the municipal manager and the councillors noted that they had serious challenges with the attendance of community members at those meetings. They further noted that most of the community members were not aware of the IDP processes. It is therefore not surprising that there is poor public participation in the IDP meetings and as a result the municipality has difficulty gaining information from the citizens based on their development needs in the community.

In relation to this, it was discovered during the course of this research that the citizens within the case study were not aware of the IDP process and meetings were set up to enable their participation. Respondents indicated that they only attended public meetings which had a specific agenda such as gangsterism, housing and other service delivery matters. Most respondents also indicated that they never received invitations to the IDP public meetings, especially with the former ward councillor. The following two responses bear testimony to this allegation:

They only say that there are such things, but I never received an invite
(Community member 7, 2017).

What is IDP? I do not know what IDP is (Community member 10, 2017).

This reveals that the community respondents were not informed and had no knowledge about the IDP. Similar trends were found in a case study done in Delft, where 98.9% of the community had never heard about the IDP and 99.5% never felt encouraged to provide their input in the preparation of the IDP (Penderis, 2014). This indicates that there is a serious lack in utilisation of the IDP platform for participants to voice their concerns as they do not know what the main service delivery strategic plan of the municipality is. One can thus conclude that if people do not understand the concept of the IDP as a strategic development plan, they will not attend meetings set up to provide community input or participate meaningfully. This indicates that the IDP platform for participation is not an enabling environment for meaningful community participation and is aligned to similar findings by Tshabalala and Lombard's similar (2009) on the lack of inclusive deliberation on IDP matters.

It is for this reason that a community respondent alluded to dissatisfaction with regards to the manner in which the IDP was presented in the community, stating that “my overall feeling is that the people are not informed about the IDP. The IDP must be workshopped with the people for a better understanding on how it works, as it is about the community deciding how the funds should be spent” (Community member 11, 2017). The respondent mentioned that when people do not understand the importance of IDP meetings it leads to a discouraging environment with regard to their responsibility in development initiatives. The above findings suggest that the community is excluded from being involved in the development of their local area through the IDP and in identifying their specific needs as mandated by Chapter 5, Section 29 of the Systems Act (RSA, 2000).

4.3. Extent of participation

In South Africa, as a participatory democracy, participation is institutionalised to ensure that all inhabitants of the country have an equal right to participate in development initiatives (McEwan, 2003). This section provides an overview of the extent of participation in Lamberts Bay.

4.3.1. Participation in developmental initiatives

In interviews with the councillors and the municipal manager it was noted that they were aware of deficiencies in enabling community participation and were working on strategies to improve their public participation approach in the community. One of the suggestions was to increase the scope of participation in terms of inclusivity and include a door-to-door initiative to encourage the community to participate more meaningfully. The door-to-door strategy would represent a new platform for participation other than the normal or traditional spaces such as the public meetings, IDP, council, and ward meetings.

According to a community member, a new platform designed by the municipality to encourage more inclusive participation, was the establishment of an online platform to enable community input. During an interview session, a community respondent mentioned that although he was out of town during the first process of the IDP, he was still able to provide his input through completing an online survey on the municipal website. The website can therefore be seen as a new social platform created for people to engage in expressing their developmental needs.

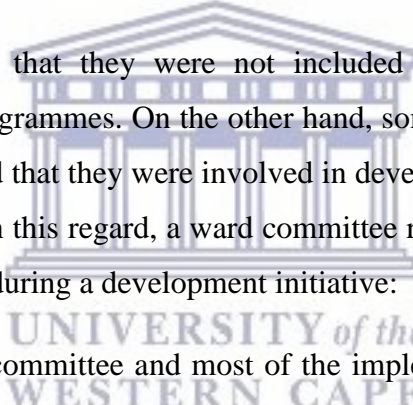
With regard to the extent of participation, development practitioners accept that meaningful participation requires that the beneficiaries of development are involved in the different stages of an initiative, namely problem identification, project planning, project implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of the project (Oliver et al, 2006; De Beer & Swanepoel, 2006).

Interviews with community residents were very informative with regard to their involvement in the different stages of development initiatives. When reflecting on their participation in projects or programmes, semi-structured interviews revealed that most respondents had never participated in projects which they had identified and could refer to as their own project initiative. Most respondents mentioned that they had never been part of any developmental processes where they could voice their development needs, raise their concerns or bring their plans to the table. Respondents further stated that their suggestions would not be taken

seriously by council. In many instances respondents were of the view that the municipality had their own development plans and agenda and appeared to be disinterested in initiatives proposed by community residents. However, interviews with ward committee members revealed that only a few were involved in projects from the identification of the project through to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation thereof.

With regard to community participation, it became clear during interviews that politics plays an important role in enabling meaningful participation. In many cases, it is not about encouraging the community to drive development initiatives, but about a political party needing to score political points. This sentiment was voiced by one of the residents who stated that, “political parties make promises when it is time to vote. If they win the vote, promises are forgotten” (Community member 8, 2017). This is also true in other areas within South Africa where politicians reflect a desire to be involved in projects which give more exposure to the party and strengthen their image.

In general, residents agreed that they were not included or consulted with regard to participation in projects or programmes. On the other hand, some respondents who served on the ward committee mentioned that they were involved in development activities that enabled them to provide some input. In this regard, a ward committee respondent noted the following in terms of their participation during a development initiative:



I am part of the ward committee and most of the implemented activities were successful. We cleaned the graveyard. There is a paving project in progress. The housing project already exists. We start with the cleaning project in March 2017. The EPWP workers are involved in the cleaning project. People provide input as they can see the change (Community member 28, 2017).

Although responses from the interviews indicate that community members did not participate previously in developmental initiatives, the serving councillor encouraged residents to be more meaningfully involved in the different stages of the development process. With regard to the intensity of participation, community respondents agreed that their voices were encouraged and open debates on development decision-making processes were supported more seriously by their current ward structure.

In summary, it can be concluded that that community members do not participate meaningfully as mandated by legislation in the different participatory platforms established

by the Cederberg Municipality. Findings suggest that although the various platforms are established by local government, people do not participate actively in their own development. Participatory platforms were mainly used by the former council to inform their own political agendas and not to enable the community to be part of decision-making and the identification of developmental initiatives. Responses from the interviews imply that the former councillor paid lip service to the community with regard to enabling their participation, thereby marginalising residents in community development initiatives. However, by all accounts, the serving council made far more effective use of participatory platforms within the municipal area, especially with regard to public meetings and had managed to build community confidence in the community.

4.3.2. Meaningful participation

Meaningful participation refers to the facilitated processes in the community, rather than directed processes from above. This means that the community takes the lead in their communities and make informed developmental decisions. Furthermore, meaningful participation refers to community residents having control over development initiatives (Oliver et al, 2006). It allows the community to engage and interact in processes which affect them (Tshabalala & Lombard, 2009).

During the fieldwork stage of the research, it was evident that most of the respondents did not participate meaningfully in the development of their community. Residents noted that they had never been part of any strategic planning sessions on development issues and their inputs were never taken seriously. Most of the respondents noted that officials merely presented their own development plans which were only tabled for the purpose of informing the community. This is reflected by the following statements of community respondents:

Everything you say in the meeting, can we do this. The plans are not looked at. The moment they come in, they already have a plan. They come with their plan, it does not matter what the community say. They have their plan. The things the community say are only noted, but not implemented. The municipality already decided on the plan, seems like we gave it (Community member 5, 2017).

The community did not benefit. Yes, there were some project initiations, but we did not make use of local workers. We have a sewage plant. The local people are only workers there. If they are done with the project, then they go

back and wait for a new project. So there are no real development. Our people are not empowered (Community member 11, 2017).

There is no participation. There is in fact no active involvement between Cederberg Municipality and the NGO sectors (Community organisation member 14, 2017).

I cannot say it is meaningful, because what you say is not being implemented. They do not take your idea, they only make promises (Community member 27, 2017).

Although these responses referred to the former ward councillor, some respondents reflected positively on the serving ward councillor, who they felt tried his best to encourage meaningful public participation processes and engagement with the community. Respondents mentioned that under his chairmanship they were able to provide opinions, inputs and opportunities to make decisions which concerned the community as a whole. This is reflected by the following statement from a respondent in the community:

It is meaningful at the moment as it informs me and allows me to give input. We need each other to think collectively and make collective decisions at the end of the day. I am not involved in the ward committee. To provide inputs in the meeting but not in projects at the moment (Community member 29, 2017).

However, it must be noted that meaningful participation includes the sharing of power and of control in development initiatives. Although interviews revealed that under the serving local authority, there had been good progress including the recognition of the voice of the community, but control over decision-making remained a council responsibility. Although the community provided some inputs, they had no ownership or control over the decisions made. Decision-making was driven by the municipality administrators and council. In such cases, and as noted by a number of theorists, power remains in the hands of local council and development is essentially a top-down activity (Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Nelson & Wright, 1995; Oakley, 1991; Burkey, 1993). True participation refers to the transfer of power in order for transformation to occur and the establishment of a decision-making partnership between officials, planners and the community.

4.4. Evaluation of the levels of participation

This section evaluates the level of participation in Lamberts Bay. Arnstein's (1969) typology of citizen participation is used to determine the various levels and intensity of participation in

Lamberts Bay. Arnstein's ladder, as discussed in Chapter 2, comprises three categories of participation, namely non-participation (therapy and manipulation), degrees of tokenism (informing, consultation and placation) and degrees of citizen power (partnership, delegated power and citizen control). It is only at the top levels in category three, where meaningful participation takes place and power is shared with citizens.

Interviews with the community members in Lamberts Bay indicated that they fall within the first two categories of Arnstein's (1969) participation typology, namely manipulation and therapy. This category indicates that in the case study area citizens were told what to do and what not to do by government officials and council who implemented programmes and projects without enabling meaningful participation and consultation. It was further observed that within the case study area participation strategies by officials and council fall within the second category of tokenism which involved merely providing information, consultation and placation. At this level, residents typically think that they are involved and participating, but are in fact only participating as labourers in the projects and programmes or as recipients of information. The intensity of participation is described in more detail in the section below.

4.4.1. Non-participation

Findings from community interviews suggest that the community was being manipulated by the administration and council. Community residents noted that during meetings the local administration presented their own ideas and development initiatives and only allowed opportunities to community members for questions related to their ideas. It was further stated by respondents that besides the presentation of pre-conceived development initiatives and requests for comments, community residents did not participate in the initiative in any way. Community respondents expressed their frustration as the projects were identified, planned and implemented by municipal officials and the community were only made aware of the end product of the project. This is in contrast with the main objective of participation which is to participate actively in all stages of the development initiative. It is therefore clear that in the case study of Lamberts Bay, officials only paid lip service to the notion of sharing power and did not enable citizens to engage in any way during the decision-making process. This process falls within Arnstein's non-participatory category (therapy and manipulation) as citizens were only presented with project decisions and were forced to accept the end results. Penderis (2012) draws attention to the fact that non-participation during this stage of the development initiative results in the community having no power in the decision-making process which defeats the purpose of participatory development.

4.4.2. Tokenism

When evaluating the levels of participation of citizens in the case study area, Arnstein's (1969) category of 'tokenism' was also observed. This was evident as the administrators consulted the community to give them a so-called 'voice', although in reality citizens had no impact on any decisions as council did not enable the community to raise their own priorities and issues. Council had pre-determined agendas which were presented to local residents at meetings.

During the interview sessions, councillors acknowledged that they were mandated to get inputs from the community and to make the community the decision-makers of their own development. One of the ward councillors asserted as follows:

We have learned from the past that councillors did their own thing. So they forget that they must be accountable to the people. So people must make their own decisions and make the council accountable; they receive their mandate from the people (Ward Councillor 26, 2017).

Another councillor stated the following:

When I have a community meeting, I will take fresh mandates from the community to council and I give feedback. It is important for me to take the community with me with what I do (Council respondent 24, 2017).

Within this context, the current ward councillors appeared to strive to involve the community members in the projects through employment. However, this clearly does not fall within the ambit of participation in any form, according to scholars such as Hart (1992), Pretty (1995) and Arnstein (1969).

When reflecting on their extent of participation, community members also noted that council only allowed the community to be involved when they wanted political gain before the election. It was for that reason that community members were demotivated when invited to meetings in order to participate in development initiatives as they were aware they would not participate in any meaningful way and would be excluded from most of the stages such as project identification, planning, implementation and so forth. They viewed their participation as manipulation and perceived their contributions in decision-making processes as a controlled process by the municipal councillor and officials for their own political or performance gain.

In addition, respondents from the community also indicated that they had never been part of the planning phases of developmental initiatives in the past. It was only under their current councillor where they felt a sense of belonging and viewed their participation as meaningful. In that regard, one of the ward councillors asserted the following:

It is a good thing that the community takes control over initiatives and is involved. People bring initiatives on a regular basis. The initiatives are then taken to the community through public participation processes, where the community decides through collective decision-making and input whether the initiative should be implemented (Ward councillor respondent 26, 2017).

Another respondent from the council mentioned that he would accept initiatives that emanated from the community, if they were deemed sustainable (Interview with Deputy Mayor, 2017). In that regard the respondents clarified, noting that development initiatives should have long-term goals and should create working opportunities within the community.

With that in mind, it was clear that the council understood its role in making the community the decision-makers and the importance of sharing control over decision-making. However, responses from the community showed that in practice that was not the case as they had no control over initiatives. The community was being consulted, voiced their concerns and were labourers in the projects. A respondent mentioned that, “we are not physically involved in projects. There are people who work at projects in Lamberts Bay” (Community member 9, 2017). The community members further noted that they did not get the opportunity to run the projects in collaboration with the local municipality. The projects were put on tender, which outsiders always got with a legal clause that stated that local community members have to work at the project.

In summary, it is clear from the above that despite assurances from local councillors, community residents did not participate meaningfully in their own development, and were merely informed of pre-determined development plans. It was also apparent that during the pre-election period, councillors made some attempts to include citizens but in most cases that was for political gain. It can therefore be concluded that participation in Lamberts Bay amounts to passive participation and is ultimately top-down with decisions made by the local authority officials and residents are only consulted to lend credibility to decisions already made. This finding is aligned to the research findings of other scholars who conducted research within the Western Cape, such as Tapscott (2007), Williams (2008) and Penderis

(2014), who found that participation was reduced to a palliative measure due to legislative requirements or to satisfy donors. Others, such as Mchunu (2012) argue that to merely inform or consult the community is passive participation and does not in any way satisfy the objectives of empowering local citizens and including their voice in development initiatives.

4.5. Development communication

Development communication is described by Mefalopulos (2008) as a process to promote social change through interaction which occurs through consultation and dialogue about matters that concern local people. Moreover, Steyn and Nunes (2007) emphasise that development communication at the national and local level is intended to inform and motivate the local people to enhance development in general.

4.5.1. The role of communication strategies in participation

Communication has a central role in enabling public participation. The processes through which various forms of communication affect participation have significant implications in the promotion of local democracy (McLeod et al, 1999). The different forms of communication are mandated in local government policy to enhance public participation in order for the people to participate in matters of governance. However, local government often struggles to achieve this in an attempt to enable meaningful inclusion of local communities. This is partly due to the ineffective use of communication strategies and local government's lack of understanding of the true meaning of participatory development. Within the Cederberg Local Authority communication strategies are used internally within the municipality through memoranda, letters, informal notes, salary advice slips, pamphlets, notice boards, one-on-one meetings, staff and council meetings, telephone calls, workshops and training sessions. This is done externally through one-on-one appointments, council meetings, ward committee meetings, imbizos, workshops, training sessions, letters, newspapers, pamphlets, flyers, municipal accounts, news media, advertisements, library, e-mail, television, radio, internet, and websites, to inform community members about development processes (Cederberg Communications Strategy, 2010). In this regard, Frank and Smith (1999) note that such communication is used to maintain the momentum of a community development process and effective communication must also take place timeously. Communication is thus a method used to organise community meetings as well as to mobilise the community to ensure maximum attendance.

These insights are also visible within the Cederberg municipality's communications policy of 2010, which acknowledges that community members or community organisations must be

properly informed. This policy also states that people are required to participate and be actively involved in governmental processes which are developmental and that have a direct influence on their lives. Communication strategies are therefore important as they link and connect people to government programmes (Cederberg Municipality Communication Policy, 2010). Steyn and Nunes (2007) confirm this viewpoint, asserting that communication is the steering wheel which guides the required changes by those responsible for national policies, institutions, communities and groups. This means that it is necessary to communicate at the local level to promote participatory governance and encourage and enable local people to interact and engage. However, despite this stated commitment to effective communication strategies, interviews with community members from Lamberts Bay indicated that the municipality did not communicate enough to encourage or enable residents to be involved in the governance of the municipality.

4.5.2. Role of communication strategies in encouraging participation

Local government has a social, economic and political responsibility to encourage and enable local people to participate in their own development. Adedokun et al (2010) state that institutions as well as development practitioners have a responsibility to engage through clear communication to elicit the participation of community members in development initiatives. The reason is that communication promotes the sharing of development ideas and indigenous knowledge from people at the grassroots level. Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) are in agreement with this sentiment, noting that communication deals with the core competencies required to engage actively. In doing so, local government is required to adhere to their communications strategy policies, which guide the administrators and facilitators to encourage and engage with citizens. The communications strategy policy of the Cederberg Municipality focuses on the issues that are shown to impact on the residents' perceptions, quality of service, value for money and efficiency (Cederberg Municipality Communication Strategy Policy, 2010). The communications policy states that the role of the communication strategy is to enhance participation in the community and it describes this role in terms of the impact that it needs to make within the community.

During interviews it was stated by the council and administration of the municipality that they have a social and political mandate to communicate, inform and encourage citizens to take part in government initiatives. This confirms their understanding of the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, Sections 4(c) and 4(e) which mandate the council to encourage the

involvement of the local community and to consult about the level of quality, range and impact of municipal services provided by the municipality, either directly or through another service provider (RSA, 2000).

Respondents from the municipality administration noted that their prime role as administrators is to 'put people first' in accordance with the *Batho Pele*¹ principles. These respondents further mentioned that as a municipality, they must be a "threshold for people and we must communicate with our citizens". Administration respondents understood that by putting the 'people first' as an administration and council, they must serve the people and must include local residents in government initiatives. In doing so, as the administration and council, they must adhere to the communications strategy policy. The respondents added that some of their communications strategies were used to encourage and inform community members about municipal activities. Such strategies included a quarterly newspaper, in-house staff newspaper, local radio messages, tenders, monthly municipal accounts, a website, notice boards, word of mouth, social media and bulk SMSs. One of the administrators noted that it was the community's responsibility to register themselves on their municipal database to receive the bulk short message service (SMS) and other communications such as those on social media. Respondents further noted that the municipality encouraged people to join and share the municipal Facebook page which they viewed as a platform to communicate with the community, but that it was the community's responsibility to do so in order to receive the information.

Community respondents reflected on the communications strategies used by the Cederberg municipality. Most respondents agreed that the municipality made use of flyers, social media such as Facebook, traffic loud hailing, posters, bulk SMSs, website and community meetings. The most common channel of communication used was Facebook, traffic loud hailing and bulk SMSs. However, respondents highlighted that the use of social media was ineffective as many did not have access to the internet or mobile phones and messages via traffic loud hailing did not always reach respondents. Thus, those methods were clearly ineffective communication strategies within the Cederberg Local Authority.

4.6. Effective communication

Effective communication is central to any participatory democracy as it provides an enabling tool for local government to promote and encourage public participation. This is supported by

¹ *Batho Pele* is a Sesotho phrase meaning 'People First'. It is part of a South African political initiative first introduced by the Mandela administration in 1997.

scholars such as Adedokun et al (2010), who view effective communication as a key principle in participatory governance. In theory, the Cederberg municipality's communication strategy policy is aligned to this approach as the policy document acknowledges that effective communication relates to municipalities promoting democracy and encouraging citizens to play a more effective and active role in matters of local governance. The policy document further refers to the responsibility of the local authority to promote public participation and to ensure that citizens have a better understanding of local government (Cederberg Municipality Communication Strategy Policy, 2010:5).

Adedokun et al (2010) provide important insight into the role of public institutions in promoting participatory democracy. They view the role of communication in relation to development, as an interactive process in which information, knowledge and skills relevant for development are exchanged between information providers and community members either through media such as radio, print, telephones and cybernetics or personally. One can therefore deduce that it is required from municipalities to constantly engage, inform and interact with the local citizens.

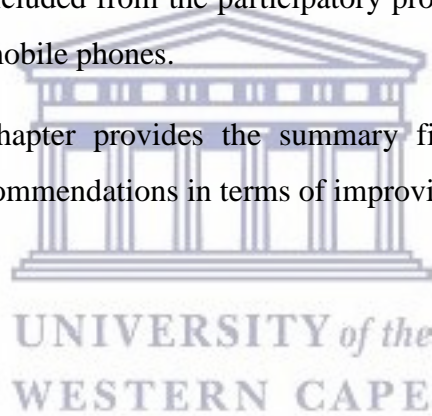
Within the above context, semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents from different areas within the case study area to determine the effectiveness of the Cederberg municipality's communication strategies to encourage public participation.

Respondents mentioned that current communication strategies were not sufficient as the communication channels did not always reach the community. Respondents from the "Kompong" area stated that they are predominantly IsiXhosa speaking and the medium of communication, especially with the traffic loud hailing is Afrikaans. Respondents from the Harmony Park area concurred, noting that not everyone received the messages, especially when a community meeting was called where key decisions took place. Respondents further mentioned that information about some meetings was not communicated through using the loud hailer, but through the bulk SMS system or social media channel, which was a problem as most residents did not have cell phones. Respondents from the other areas of Lamberts Bay concurred that the use of the loud hailer was limited as only certain streets were targeted. One can thus conclude that the communication channels used by the Cederberg municipality did not reach the vast majority of community residents and are thus ineffective with regards to enabling participation in matters of governance and encouraging inclusive decision-making.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter discussed a number of key issues that emanated from the in-depth interviews and from observations done by the researcher. The analysis of the fieldwork data in Lamberts Bay suggests that the willingness of the community to be involved was high and that there were a number of structures such as the ward committee, public meetings and IDP meetings that were put in place to foster public participation in matters of governance. However, the responses from the community members and community organisations highlight that although there appeared to be a commitment from the local authority to encourage participation, there were many flaws that prevented inclusive decision-making and meaningful participation. With regard to the intensity levels of participation, responses from residents revealed that most participation was reduced to passive participation with no sharing of power in any form. Finally, in terms of the effectiveness of communication strategies used by the local authority, the reliance on social media channels resulted in the majority of residents being excluded from the participatory process as they had no access to the internet and did not own mobile phones.

The following concluding chapter provides the summary findings of the investigation, theoretical reflections and recommendations in terms of improving public participation within the case study area.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This investigation examined the role and impact of communication strategies used by the local authorities in Lamberts Bay to enhance participation at the grassroots level. The success of strategies used by the local authority was determined by examining the engagements and interactions between council, officials, local citizens and community organisations within the case study area. South Africa's commitment to a participatory democracy is indicated in the Constitution (RSA, 1996) and mandates government to enable communities to have an active role in their own development. Consequently, Cederberg Municipality officials and council have a critical role to play in ensuring participatory governance in Lamberts Bay. This final chapter provides a summary of findings, theoretical reflection and recommendations to policy makers and stakeholders in the region.

5.2. Summary of findings

The role and impact of communication strategies used by the local authority was assessed through examining the manner in which local authorities communicated with communities within their area of jurisdiction and the nature and extent of public participation as perceived by the citizens. This is discussed below.

5.2.1. Nature of participation

South African legislation has mandated local government to encourage, enhance and promote citizen participation at the local level. In doing so, the Municipal Structures Act (RSA, 1998b) and the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) mandate local government to institute structures and mechanisms to encourage public participatory governance. Research findings indicate that there are various institutionalised structures which are used by the Cederberg Municipality to enable communities to participate in local governance. These include ward committees, public meetings, council and IDP meetings.

The research revealed that the level of willingness for community members to be involved in their own development was high. However, respondents reported that there was a lack of participation in the community. In addition, results from the case study area suggest that the legislated institutionalised structures are not used by the citizens as a means to participate meaningfully in their own development. This is due to the fact that the structures and

platforms used by local government are generally not known to the citizens. Consequently, they are unable to access the institutionalised platforms to give effect to their voices and to give input regarding community needs and priorities. More importantly, the citizens from the case study area are not represented as a whole in structures such as the ward sectoral system in the Western Cape which only represents members of local organisations. It was apparent during interviews that the community and community organisations did not know their representatives or were not represented on the sectoral/ward committee structure. As a result local residents were unable to participate in their own development. These trends which occurred at sectorial and ward level are in concurrence with studies done by Khuzwayo (2009), Madumo (2011) and Penderis (2014) who found that the sectorial system is not functional as a linkage between local government and as a means of communication to enhance participatory local governance at the local level. Findings of the above scholars are mirrored in the case study area due to the poor representation of local residents who did not belong to a sector organisation.

With regard to public meetings, created by local government in an attempt to attract larger audiences for public participation, interviews revealed that citizens were in fact not encouraged to attend public meeting platforms. Although councillors and the local administration appeared to understand their roles in enhancing participation through public meetings, they did not fully drive the process of encouraging citizens to attend meetings. This situation was attributed to the actions of a previous ward councillor who controlled decision-making processes and enforced his own agenda regarding development initiatives. Thus, decisions on developmental initiatives and the sanctioning thereof remained in the hands of council. Although the public meetings were open to the public, respondents indicated that council pre-designed development initiatives and merely presented those to the community attendees who became mere observers without any active input.

With regard to council meetings, interviews with councillors indicated that such meetings were a developmental decision-making hub in which councillors made decisions affecting the community. Although the community was encouraged and invited to attend council meetings, they were merely observers and did not participate in the decision-making process in any way. Inputs from the community took place during ward sector meetings and public meeting engagements and it was the responsibility of the ward councillor to table inputs from community residents at council meetings.

With regard to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) – the five-year strategic plan which maps out development at the local level – interviews revealed that IDP meeting attendance was also minimal in the case study area. It was revealed that community residents were not aware of the role of the IDP or its objectives and were discouraged to attend meetings. These findings are aligned with findings of Penderis (2014) who found that residents in Delft perceived that the IDP platform created by local government to encourage citizens to provide developmental inputs, was not utilised effectively. More so, the residents did not understand the IDP process and were thus excluded from participating in the development of their community.

5.2.2. *Extent of participation*

With regard to the extent of participation of community residents in Lamberts Bay, the levels of meaningful participation as instigated by community people, were examined. Summary findings within these categories are presented below.

Research results indicated low levels of participation in the community with regard to engaging with government in local development decisions. Using Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation typology, the level of participation can be described as non-participation and tokenism. This finding is aligned to research conducted by Tapscott (2007), Williams (2008), Mchunu (2012) and Penderis (2014) who found similar trends in the Western Cape, highlighting situations where citizens were not empowered in any way and only informed and consulted in development processes. Discussions with residents of Lamberts Bay and local community organisations indicate that the projects in the case study area are imposed on citizens through the top-down rather than bottom-up approach used by the local authority. It was further discovered that the community does not engage in the different stages of the development process with regard to project identification, project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The study further concludes that as a result of non-participation, the community is unable to take ownership of any developments, which is required by legislation in South Africa, and that they are manipulated by authorities in making them think that they are part of the decision-making process.

5.3. Theoretical reflection

The people-centred development approach encourages citizens to take a central role in decision-making and advocates a bottom-up approach with regard to developmental

initiatives. The approach has been supported by scholars such as Burkey (1993), Chambers (1994), Mathur (1997), De Beer and Swanepoel (2006), Jennings (2000), Penderis (2012) and Frediani et al (2014). These scholars advocate that the people should be directly involved, take control, command and ownership of their own development initiatives. This approach supports development from below through meaningful participation that enables local residents to effect positive change in their environment (Schenck & Louw, 1995). It is through such participation that people are capacitated and empowered in order to become self-reliant. This will ensure the sustainability of projects (Gultung et al, 1980; Preiswerk, 1980; Fonchingong & Fonjong, 2003). The outcome of any participatory process should be for citizens to learn, share, analyse their knowledge and be given an opportunity in decision-making (Chambers, 1994).

Research findings from the case study area negate the above views of participation. Evidence drawn from interviews reveals that decision-making is top-down and citizens are not given the opportunity to participate in any meaningful way, are not capacitated and are not empowered through involvement in their own development. More so, citizens are not able to direct, control, command and take ownership as participation in the community did not serve as an empowering objective. This finding is attributed to council and administration officials who enforce their own agendas as a performance indicator and for political gain.

5.3.1. Participatory development

Participatory development theorists place citizens at the centre of development projects as they are deemed the core decision-makers in development initiatives which have a direct impact on their growth and well-being. This is well articulated in the work of Schenck and Louw (1995) and Oliver et al (2006). De Beer and Swanepoel (2006) maintain that citizens, as the beneficiaries of change, should be included in decision-making processes which include involvement in problem- or needs identification and assessment, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This, for many scholars such as Schenck and Louw (1995), Penderis (2012) and Theron and Mchunu (2016), is the core principle of meaningful participation as citizens are empowered, capacitated and then able to take control and direct development which leads to long-term sustainable development.

Findings from the case study are not aligned to the sentiments of the above theorists, as residents are merely the receiving beneficiaries of programmes in Lamberts Bay and not in any way initiators of their own development projects. This is due to lack of meaningful

participation in decision-making processes in the case study area and exclusion from participating in the different stages of project cycles as described by Schenck and Louw (1995), Penderis (2012) and Theron and Mchunu (2016).

5.3.2. Development communication

As noted in Chapter 2, development communication is a key process used by governments to promote social change through enabling public participation (McLeod et al, 1999; Steyn & Nunes, 2007; Mefalopulos, 2008). This study found that communication strategies employed by the local authority in Lamberts Bay failed to include and enable residents to be involved in their own development. This is attributed to the fact that communication mechanisms used to reach the community are deemed to be inadequate in terms of reaching their specific target audience. As discussed in Chapter 2, there needs to be clear channels that enable two-way communication which encourages participation by community residents (Adedokun et al, 2010). Kapoor (2002), Steyn and Nunes (2007), Steinburg (2007) and Lunenburg (2010) further conclude that effective communication between all parties at the local level is the leading factor that enables successful participation and encourages citizens to engage and share knowledge.

Despite having a communication strategy and clear communication guidelines, research results show that communication between the relevant parties was not effective which resulted in the low levels of participation. Respondents within the case study noted that they did not receive any communication about the available institutionalised platforms designed to provide a space for mutual engagement. This is despite the legislative mandate to local government contained in the Municipal Structures Act (RSA, 2000), instructing municipal areas to include local residents through participatory mechanisms and despite the strategic guidelines relating to communication methods contained in the Communication Strategy compiled by the local authority in Lamberts Bay (Communication Strategy, 2010). These results are not aligned to the findings of Adedokun et al (2010) who noted that the communication in relation to development is a process in which information, knowledge and skills relevant for development are exchanged between information providers and community members either through media such as radio, print, telephones and cybernetics or personally. It is therefore required of the municipalities to find appropriate communication methods to constantly engage, inform and interact with the local citizens.

5.4. Recommendations

Based on the research findings in this investigation, a number of recommendations are put forward below.

5.4.1. Building community skills

Building local capacity is integral to participatory development and it is recommended that community leaders and members of the public are provided with information sessions and workshops on their roles and responsibilities in participatory governance. One of the purposes of such workshops would be to create a shared understanding of municipal policies and frameworks and the current realities within the case study area. Such engagements between the municipality and residents have the potential to build leadership capacity among residents and will develop the capacity of local people to engage and participate in government decision-making.

5.4.2. Language usage

The municipality should extend their language usage system when communicating with residents in order to cater for the target audiences in the case study area and accommodate all language groups. Interviews revealed that language is seen as a barrier to the majority of African citizens in the community and discourages their participation in development processes. This recommendation is aligned to the requirement of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) which states that a municipality must take into account language preferences and language usage when a local authority communicates information. This recommendation is further supported by the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996) which indicates that local authorities must take into account the language usage and preferences of their residents.

5.4.3. Improved communication methods

Interviews revealed that communication strategies used in the case study area are not reaching its audience. It is thus recommended that local residents be informed well in advance about meetings or other developmental initiatives through a system of diverse channels. Such methods must take into account the specific indigenous context of local residents and must be channelled to communities using a range of techniques and approaches. One such method includes using visible notice boards in all areas within the case study area to advertise municipal activities at central venues such as schools, clinics, local shops and the library.

It is further recommended that the municipality creates a database with all community members' mobile phone numbers, especially those who receive municipal accounts, to

inform and provide regular feedback through the SMS system, to avoid exclusion. Other methods used to advertise important meetings and events could include word of mouth, the municipal website, printed and social media and local newspapers through press releases.

5.4.4. *Street committee system*

The municipality should consider implementing a street committee system in collaboration with the sectorial and ward committee system. Such a structure will not only improve coverage in the municipal area but will also assist in information-sharing as well as the extraction of information from the community at geographical level. In this regard, street committees in other areas within the Western Cape have been found to be successful in terms of enabling participation through collaboration at the micro-level. An example is the use of street committees in the Emfuleni Local Municipality in Sedibeng District, Gauteng where it has been found that the street committee system increases participation of local residents and improves two-way communication between local government and local residents (Dosoudil, n.d). The use of street committees enables local residents at the street level to drive the development process together with ward committees. Additionally, it can augment the role of the sectorial system which is only representative of residents belonging to community organisations.

5.4.5. *Capacitation of officials, ward councillors and ward committee members*

Regular capacity-building programmes should be offered to officials, ward councillors and ward committee members in order to assist them with the performance of their duties and roles more effectively. This could take the form of workshops focused on capacitating officials through improving the requisite technical, analytical, organisational, communication and administrative skills required by officials at the local level. It is further recommended that such workshops offer specific training in communication skills and methods that can be used to interact and engage with community members to encourage and enhance effective participation.

5.5. Concluding remarks

Within the context of South Africa and in accordance with the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000), communication is envisaged to serve as a driver to promote participatory processes within local government. The research conducted within the case study area of Lamberts Bay indicates that current communication strategies and participatory platforms are not effective in terms of reaching the target population and enabling meaningful participation. Data shows that the communities residing within the Lamberts Bay area are only informed of

development initiatives instigated from above and are only consulted after development decisions have been made.

The use of appropriate communication strategies by local government is key to ensuring an enabling and encouraging environment for participatory local governance in South Africa. It is for this reason that the commitment to communicate with the public remains the core driver and enabler for public participation to succeed in municipalities. Effective development communication is an essential tool that can be used to engage with and empower local citizens and encourage them to be involved in their own development. Successful communication strategies and meaningful public participation can play an important role in building a development culture at the local level, enhance trust between all relevant stakeholders and encourage bottom-up developmental decision-making.



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LIST OF ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1

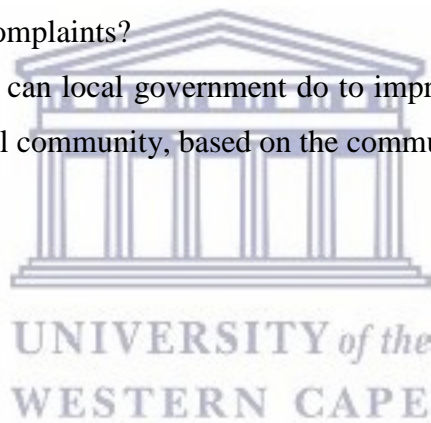
Interview schedule for government officials

1. In which directorate do you work and what are your responsibilities?
2. What role do you play in promoting participation?
3. What structures are used by the municipality to promote citizen participation?
4. Explain the communication strategies that you use to communicate with the residents within the municipality.
5. What is the role and impact of the communications strategies on the broader community?
6. How often do you make use of the communications strategies to communicate with the community (to ensure that all inhabitants of the municipality become active and conscious participants)?
7. Do you think the communications strategy policy is effective in encouraging beneficiaries to take part in developmental initiatives? Motivate.
8. Are there concerns about the quality of communication that you use to liaise with residents?
9. How do you address complaints?
10. What recommendation can you give to enhance the participation of the community of Lamberts Bay in government initiatives?

ANNEXURE 2

Interview schedule for council members

1. Please tell me about yourself (particular work/role in the community especially as it relates to encouraging them in participatory governance).
2. How often do you engage and have community members involved in decision-making processes?
3. What is your view on having the community take control over projects and programmes?
4. Do you think that it is necessary for the community to have a voice in decisions that affect their own well-being?
5. What communication strategies do you use to liaise with residents?
6. Are there ever concerns about the quality of communication that you use to liaise with residents?
7. How do you address complaints?
8. In your opinion, what can local government do to improve engagement mechanisms and encourage the local community, based on the communications strategy?



ANNEXURE 3

Interview schedule for community members/residents and community organisations

1. Could you provide some information about yourself organisation?

Kan u asseblief informasie van u/organisasie verskaf?

2. Are you originally from Lamberts Bay?

Is u oorspronklik van Lamberts Baai?

3. What type of structures or types of meetings are there in the community that you can use to interact with local government?

Watter tipe strukture of tipe vergaderings is daar in die gemeenskap waarvan u kan gebruik maak om saam met die plaaslike regering te praat?

4. Do you attend the different meetings organised in your community? How often?

Woon u die vergaderings by wat aangebied word in die gemeenskap? Hoe dikwels?

Frequency	Community Meeting	Ward Meeting	Integrated Development Plan	Spatial Development Plan	Stakeholder Meeting	Other
Never						
Monthly						
Quarterly						
Bi-annually						
Annually						



5. Do you consider your participation in government activities as meaningful? How do you participate?

Beskou u, u deelname aan die plaaslike regeringsaktiwiteite as betekenisvol? Hoe neem u deel?

6. How would you evaluate the nature of participation and interaction in Cederberg Municipality initiatives?

Hoe sal u die bywoning en kommunikasie van Cederberg Munisipaliteit initiatiewe evalueer?

7. What are the different methods used to communicate with the residents of Lamberts Bay?

Wat is die verskillende kommunikasie-metodes wat gebruik word om met Lamberts Baai inwoners te kommunikeer?

8. Do you consider these methods as sufficient in terms of informing the residents of participation opportunities?

Beskou u die metodes as voldoende in terme van die inwoners in te lig van die bywonings-geleenthede?

9. What in your view is adequate communication from the municipality?

Wat in u mening sal voldoende kommunikasie vanaf die munisipaliteit wees?

10. How often does Cederberg Municipality communicate with residents of Lamberts Bay? *Hoe gereeld kommunikeer Cederberg Munisipaliteit met die inwoners van Lamberts Baai?*

11. What are your perceptions of the ways and means that Cederberg Municipality communications with residents in Lamberts Bay?

Wat is u aanvoeling van die maniere hoe Cederberg Munisipaliteit met die inwoners van Lamberts Baai kommunikeer?

12. Are there any challenges that you can think of in terms of the communication strategies? *Is daar enige uitdagings wat u kan aan dink in terme van die kommunikasie-strategie?*

13. How active is Cederberg Municipality in supporting community concerns?

Hoe aktief is Cederberg Munisipaliteit om gemeenskaps-kommer te ondersteun?

14. What can Cederberg Municipality do to improve their communication strategies to the community?

Wat kan Cederberg Munisipaliteit doen om die kommunikasie-strategië in die gemeenskap te verbeter?

ANNEXURE 4

Letter of consent – Community members/ community organisation/ councillor/ official

I....., have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

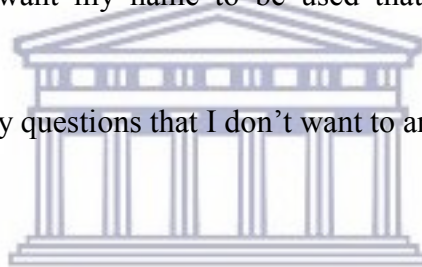
I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to explain myself.

I am aware that this interview might result in research which may be published, but my name may be/may not be used (circle appropriate).

I understand that if I don't want my name to be used that this will be ensured by the researcher.

I may also refuse to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.



Date:.....

Participant name:.....

Participant signature:.....

Interviewer name:.....

Interviewer signature:.....

If you have any questions concerning this research, feel free to call me, **Dmitri Frantz** on **072 789 7161** or my supervisor, **Dr S. Penderis** on **021 959 3858**.

ANNEXURE 5

Information sheet – Interviews

Project Title: The role and impact of local government communication strategies in participatory governance: The case of Lamberts Bay.

What is this study about?

This research project is being conducted by Dmitri Frantz, a student at the University of the Western Cape. You are invited to participate in this study as a community member in Lamberts Bay. The purpose of this research is to determine the role and impact of local government communication strategies in participatory governance. We hope that the research will provide possible suggestions and recommendations for government to encourage participation in communities.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to participate in an interview in which you will be asked to share information, suggestions and opinions on the ways in which Cederberg Municipality communicates, in order to encourage participation. The interview will take 30-45 minutes and it will take place within your community. You will have the opportunity to ask for clarification on any of the questions and for it to be translated into Afrikaans.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

All your personal information will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous, if that is your choice. You will be required to sign a consent form to protect your privacy and confidentiality while participating in this study. The identity of the people to be interviewed will be kept confidential and details of identity will only be provided voluntarily or used only with consent. The information collected will be kept safe and used for the sole purpose of this research project. In the research report, identity of the participants will be protected to the maximum.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no risks involved in participating in this research project. The aim and the objective will be made clear from the start.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research is not designed to help the participant personally. The findings from the research will however provide recommendations for effective and efficient implementation of future programmes to government and all stakeholders.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate and to stop participating at any time you want. If you stop or decide not to participate, you will not lose anything.

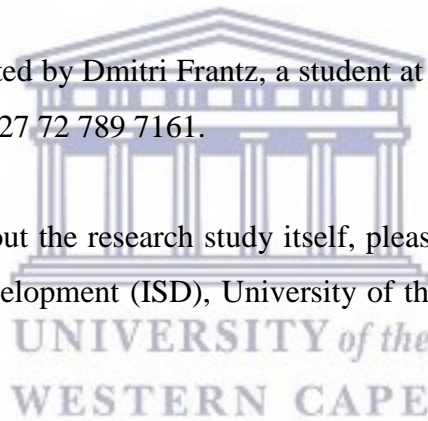
Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

There are no negative effects that could happen from participating in this study.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Dmitri Frantz, a student at the University of the Western Cape. His contact number is +27 72 789 7161.

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr Sharon Penderis at the Institute for Social Development (ISD), University of the Western Cape, at telephone number +27 (021) 959 3858.



Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Professor Julian May
Head of Department: Institute for Social Development
School of Government
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

ANNEXURE 6

Cederberg Municipality: Ward 5 Committee Meeting - Agenda

