

**A MODEL OF SHARED LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT**

by

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I declare that **A MODEL OF SHARED LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT** is my own work and that all the sources that I have quoted and used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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(Dr. SV Bvuma)

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DATE

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## SUMMARY

Most theories of organisational leadership in the psychological literature are largely context-free as emphasis is more on single leader based on the leader-centric and vertical leadership approaches. The context-free leadership approach is attributed to little cross-fertilisation between psychology and other disciplines that practice leadership, resulting into a void in an interdisciplinary approach to leadership as manifested in public organisations. Thus, the aim of this exploratory, descriptive research was to understand the nature of the pluralistic political-administrative leadership of local government (LG) within its context, and develop a model of leadership suitable and logical for the LG of South Africa. The research strategy used integrates case study and grounded theory methodologies with purposive sampling of the LG case organisation that consists of Political and Administrative executive leaders as participants. The constructivist grounded theory coding methodology was used; backed up with multi-disciplinary literature on leadership and shared leadership.

Drawn from the research study findings and grounded in the empirical data, a leadership model was built, namely, the **CCPQ Shared Leadership model of LG**. The CCPQ model's four critical dimensions are: unique **context (C)** of leadership, **co-leadership (C)** by the collective team of political and administrative leaders, **practices (P)** of leadership (distinctive to the collaborative and dualistic leadership context) and the leadership **qualities (Q)** which reinforce the leaders' *we-ness and* context-appropriate qualities. While the CCPQ model and its four interconnected constructs define a fundamental paradigm shift in both the philosophy and practice of leadership in LG; the model further introduces an alternative conception of organisational leadership. Undoubtedly the CCPQ model moves leadership focus away from specificity and descriptions of leader traits and behaviours which lie at the heart of the leader-centric approaches in industrial and organisational psychology into organisational context-determined leadership. In conclusion, it is recommended that IOP research delve more into real-time organisational leadership challenges in SA public institutions, so as to offer valuable guidance for a new era in leadership conceptualisation and practice- such as pluralistic leadership rather than discrete individualistic and context-free leadership approaches and interventions.

*Key terms:* leader-centric, shared-leadership theory, political-administrative leadership, primacy of politics, collective team, co-leadership, servant leadership, context-inherent qualities, servant-self, leadership-boundary negotiation, touch point.

# 1. THE RESEARCH ORIENTATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, thinking and research about leadership considers a single leader (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Raelin, 2003; Yukl, 2002). This line of thinking is founded on the premise that one person is firmly “in charge” while the rest are followers – termed by Pearce (2004, p.47) as “vertical leadership”. While aspects of the individual leader will remain critical in conceptualising leadership, Brookes (2008) and Sinha (2012) state that the real challenge in the public sector organisations is the advancement of a stronger leadership framework that emphasises the collective nature of public leadership. Andreas and Lindstrom (2008) together with Van Wart (2011) concede that in large institutions and political system-based organisations such as government, including local government (LG), leadership is through consultation, collaboration and compromise in decision making between the executive political and administrative leaders that share leadership roles but hold different positions. Hence Choi’s (2009) argument that over-reliance on an individual leader in the public sector, particularly in LG, presents considerable risks in the conceptualisation of context-based leadership. Choi (2009) and O’Leary and Vij (2012) state that such reliance results in neglect of the key cooperative, the collective nature and the critical dynamics of leadership. For this reason, leadership models other than the single-leader model that enhance public sector leadership, predominantly LG organisations, are imperative.

Central to post-traditional leadership theories and models, James, Bowman, and Kwiatkowski (2008, p.73) note that, newer terms such as “shared leadership” are widely used to describe the concept of leadership exercised by a collaborative group of people”. Yet, this collective and collaborative aspect of leadership, as argued by Fletcher (2004) and Haslam, Reicher, and Platow

(2011) is not frequently recognised in leadership approaches and theories and is often mistaken for individual leadership and achievement. It is in this context that this study explores LG leadership in its collective and collaborative nature as represented by two executives – political and administrative leaders – rather than as an individual construct. This chapter provides a background and motivation to the research, which investigates the emerging concept of shared leadership and its nature with the aim of developing a model of leadership for LG. Further the research problem and the research question as well as the contribution of the research to the field of industrial and organisational psychology is discussed. The associated research approach, research strategy, methodology and the study's unit of analysis are discussed. Also, the criteria for the trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations are accounted for.

## **1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

This section provides a background about leadership, specifically from the organisational- psychological perspective and in the public sector.

### **1.2.1 The Concept of Leadership**

Leadership scholars indicate that the concept of leadership is highly diverse and lacks an integrated theoretical framework (Avery, 2004; Chemers, 2000; Hackman & Wageman, 2007; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Humphrey, 2005; James & Collins, 2008). This argument supports Stogdill's (1974) observation cited by Northouse (2013) that there are many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to describe the concept. Humphrey (2005) and Northouse (2012) state that in defining leadership; ideas have been broken down intentionally into smaller components to allow simplicity and understanding of the concept. Such broken down ideas have led to a range of definitions of leadership and seemingly unrelated theories and models. Most of

these theories and models focus on the individual leader in the context of leader-follower and leader and organisation relationships (Buckmaster, 2005; Drath et al., 2008).

### **1.2.2 The Evolution of Leadership Theories**

Graham and Robinson (2002), Pearce (2004) and Northouse (2013) state that, during and beyond the 20th century, leadership fields, including industrial and organisational psychology, have given particular attention to the leader-centric approach that focuses mainly on vertical models. According to Pearce (2004), such vertical models conceive leadership as a single leader who controls and oversees in a leader-subordinate or leader-follower leadership context. Such a context is explained by Ford (2005) and Northouse (2013) as positional leadership, with emphasis placed on the uniqueness of leaders in their being and leadership actions. The uniqueness included components such as the behaviour, mindset and actions of an individual leader in clarifying the real essence of the phenomena that embody leadership. Consequently, many themes on leadership emerged over the years, spanning great man or heroic leader theories into trait-behavioural, contingency theories and many others. This conception of leadership, according to Buckmaster (2005) as well as Kouzes and Posner (2012) share the assumptions that the primary leadership actions and relationships are dyadic and that a single leader has particular characteristics that are a source of wisdom and problem solution within the organisation.

The research carried out in this period focused on leader traits and behaviour and various approaches to leadership, including transformational, charismatic and visionary approaches (James et al., 2008; Northouse, 2013) as they occurred within the vertical model of leadership. Some researchers, however, argued that such traits and behaviour theories and approaches are flawed and limited because they fail to consider other factors that contribute to leadership

(Avolio, 2007, Bennis, 2007; Ford, 2005). Such factors include, among others, an interaction/interdependency framework of leadership and situational factors of leadership. James and Collins (2008), in support of the researchers referred to immediately above; write that a complete theory of leadership should involve more than specifying leadership traits and behaviour, because traits only endow individuals with the potential to become leaders. In attempt to close this gap in leadership theory, Bishop (2013) asserts that adjectives like, situational, transformational, authentic, servant, shared leadership and many others have over the years been applied in an effort to further define leadership.

In pursuance of more complete models of leadership, situational leadership theories, like Perrow's (1970) pure situational theory emerged. Perrow (1970) argues that organisational leadership resides in structural features rather than in leader characteristics (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Hackman and Wageman (2007) explain that Perrow's argument was that traits reflected the mechanisms by which leaders were identified and selected, while leaders' behaviour was constrained by the situations they faced. The framing of the interactionist position between personal characteristics (traits, behaviours, etc.) and situational attributes was done by Fiedler's (1967) contingency model.

The prominence of Fiedler's contingency theory is that leadership depends on the leader matching his or her leadership style to the demands of the situation (Avery, 2004; Lussier & Achua, 2013; Van Maurik, 2001). The implication of Fiedler's (1967) theory is for an individual leader to be placed in a situation that is favourable to his or her style. According to Sinha (2012), although contingency theories explain the appropriateness of leadership styles in conjunction with leader, followers and situations, the link to leadership context is minimal. Dismissive of Fiedler's (1967) view, Lussier and Achua (2013) explain that contingency theories shifted the notion of leadership from an

individual leader's linear influence on others to the point that situational issues within leadership concentrated on other dimensions, such as leader's relationship with the group (Chemers & Ayman, 1993; Vroom & Jago, 2007). Although contingency theory and its models enhance the interaction of leaders' personal qualities (traits, behaviours, attitudes, motives, etc.) and situational contingencies (structural issues, followers etc.), Van Vugt, Hogan, Kaiser and De Vries (2008) as well as Lussier and Achua (2013), argue that qualities and situational issues are commonly focused on separately and within the vertical model of leadership. Yukl (2006) refers to contingency theories as literature and empirical research that contains many useful mid-level theories, but which are not very well connected and do not embrace leadership contexts. As a result other theories like transformational and authentic leadership emerged.

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that creates valuable and positive change in the followers (Gardner, Avolio, & Walumba, 2005; Tonkin, 2013). Even though transformational leadership approach focuses on transforming others and to look out for the organisation as a whole; its focus is still leader-centric (Gardner et al., 2005; Lemoine, 2012; Tonkin, 2013). In transformational leadership, the leader enhances the motivation, morale and performance of his follower group. The most recent leadership theory developed is that of authentic leadership. Tonkin (2013) state that authentic leadership is a somewhat generic term and can incorporate transformational, charismatic, servant, spiritual or other forms of positive leadership. While the popular definition of authentic leadership that differentiate it from the other forms of positive leadership is also leader-centric, Bishop (2013, p.3), describes it as "a process that draws from both positive psychological capabilities and a highly developed organisational context".

Despite rigorous ongoing analysis of the leadership concept and its dynamics, it was only recently that a few scholars challenged the individual-based notion

of leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2002). As a result leadership perspectives like shared leadership were considered (Northouse, 2012; Pearce & Sims, 2002).

### **1.2.3 The Shared Perspective of Leadership**

Pearce and Conger (2003) argue that leadership is an activity that is shared or distributed among members of a group in an organisation. Thus, Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) criticise the field of leadership studies that tend to follow a reductionist strategy. Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) suggest that an individual leader is one element of an interactive network that is far bigger than the leader him- or herself in the organisation. Pearce (2004) conceptualises shared leadership as arising from a collectivist perspective and resulting in dynamic behaviour applied in a collectivist environment or organisation.

Maddock (2008) point out that despite the need for sharing of leadership in many public sector organisations (e.g. LG), the knowledge and incorporation of a leadership model, which explains specific forms of shared leadership practices, still lags behind. The lagging behind on shared leadership models is because many popular leadership theories (trait-, behavioural-, contingency models) and approaches, such as transformational, visionary, and others, contrast with the notion of shared leadership. Similarly, these leader focus models and theories do not explicitly address or explain the setting, context and dynamics of this emerging form of leadership (Choi, 2009; Peck & Dickinson, 2009; Sinha, 2012)

### **1.2.4 The Context of LG Leadership**

In LG a municipality as an organisation develops its own leadership system. This system defines its own logic and rules that include sharing of organisational power and objectives by both the political- and administrative executive leaders. The leadership in LG cannot be conceptualised as LG

municipal leadership having one leader without the other (Dennis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001; Halvey, Chou, & Galinsky, 2011). Avery (2004) argues that such a structure of leadership makes it critical for researchers to look beyond the individual leader and focus on specific aspects of the type of leadership. Raelin (2003) writes that, although leadership scholars and practitioners over time have assumed that ideal leadership is focused around a single leader, emerging forms of leadership in complex organisations like LG are making the idea of a single central leader largely irrelevant. Therefore, the concept of shared leadership becomes pertinent in this research study. In LG organisations, organisational hierarchy (as depicted in Figure 1.1 below) constitutes the social structure for a superior-subordinate role that shapes the hierarchically or vertically oriented perception of leadership (Choi, 2009; Gramsci, 2000).

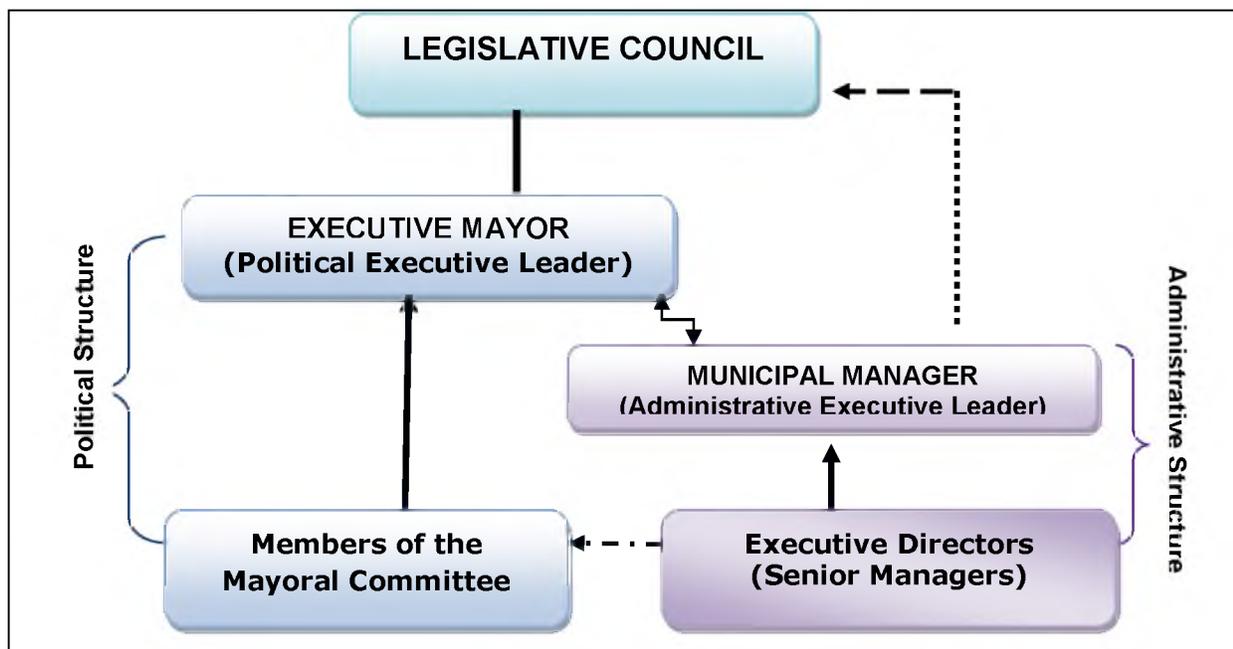


Figure 1.1: LG Leadership Structure

The Local Government - Municipal Structures Act (1998, p.11) defines LG organisational structures as the “structures of both political office bearers and administration of the organisation and the community of the municipality”. In other words, the municipal institution as an organisation consists of political

and administrative structures that serve the people who live in the local area. Executive mayors as political executive leaders (PELs) are properly conceived of as leaders in LG organisation because they are top executives (see Figure 1.1 above). On the other hand, administrators known as administrative executive leaders (AELs) or municipal managers, control, command and direct municipal employees (Choi, 2009; Halvey et al., 2011). However, the hierarchical approach to leadership of the two leaders is somewhat unworkable as leadership sharing is inevitable (Choi, 2009). According to Baddeley (2008), leadership studies have excluded an area where political and management coalesce because it is a complex dynamic that requires a different set of skills.

In the Local government leadership academy (LOGOLA) concept paper of 2004, it is stated that in South Africa, LG leadership has had mixed results, mainly due to a general lack of effective interactive and collaborative leadership between its elected (political) and administrative executive leaders in the organisation. Choi (2009) reiterates Follett's (1918) explicit appeal of 90 years ago for leadership sharing in public organisations. Leadership sharing only began to gain attention in the 1990s but, even so, the concept of shared leadership has drawn little attention in mainstream organisational leadership research (Choi, 2009; Van Wart, 2011), and in model building in the South African public service organisation, more especially in LG.

### **1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

The long-standing conceptualisation of leadership, both among researchers and the general public, is a leader-centric or individual-level phenomenon. The leader-centric approach that simplifies ideas about leadership creates vagueness between leader and leadership concepts (Humphrey, 2005). Therefore, theories, such as trait-, behavioural-, contingency-, and situational as well as positive leadership theories dominate the field of psychology and

assume leadership from the perspective of the leader's persona (Burns, 1978; Rost, 1991; Bishop, 2013). These views overlook other forms of leadership that happen in context, such as LG leadership (Buckmaster, 2005; Sinha, 2012; Van Wart, 2013). Despite the evolving theoretical perspective on shared leadership, models of shared leadership appropriate to the LG leadership structure have not yet been researched or developed. As a result, very little is known about the nature and process of LG leadership, particularly in consulting psychology.

A critical argument by Bennis (2007) is that there has been little cross-fertilisation between psychology and other disciplines that practise leadership such as economics, neuroscience, politics, etc. This void in an interdisciplinary approach to leadership as manifested in LG has led to a lack of substantive contributions by organisational psychology into a shared theoretical framework of leadership. Therefore, a gap exists and it is this gap that this research strives to address.

Apart from the lack in research, my personal involvement with LG leadership structures has led to the realisation of numerous challenges faced by LGs as a result of the duality of their leadership structure. As a consultant in the South African LG organisations (municipalities) in the period 2002 to 2012 I observed major conflicts within municipal leadership in dealing with the state of transition and leadership efficacy. Political and administrative leaders struggle to cooperate in providing basic services, which leads to division and in-fights. As a result, the LG organisations are challenged by an ineffective political and administrative leadership. In my practice as an Organisational Development (OD) consultant it became apparent to me that LG organisations, influenced by political forces cannot effectively operate unless both the political and administrative leaders cooperate in leadership within the municipal organisation. Similarly, Baddeley (2008; Van Wart, 2011) denies any clear-cut

distinction between two separate groups in LG leaders (e.g. political and administrative).

According to Baddeley (2008) supported by Getha-Taylor et al. (2013), there is no clear distinction between a politician who gets on with the formulation and direction of policy and executive officers who have nothing to do with the political arena but get on with implementation. The arguments set out above became the primary motivation for this research. In various projects I was involved in LG; I made the observations that are set out in point form below.

- Firstly, despite the fact that LG organisational structures are hierarchically designed, leadership arrangement should recognise the need for sharing of leadership by both the political and administrative arms.
- Secondly, I realised that the continual tensions between the two forces (administrative and political) emanate predominantly from their infusion of traditional (e.g. single leader's power and authority) conceptions of leadership with a more group and collective leadership context.
- Thirdly, in most of the municipal organisations, poor relations and competitiveness exist between political and administrative leadership instead of those of a successful partnership.
- Lastly, I observed that although significant leadership training and development initiatives were introduced and implemented in South African LG organisations, these were unsuccessful, as focus is on the vertical model of a single leader and leader achievements. Such training and development initiatives are always directed at only administrative leaders and not political leaders. The latter do not generally get trained.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTION**

In this section the research problem statement and the general research question are discussed.

### 1.4.1 The Research Problem

In the preceding discussions leadership as a *single leader* paradigm was referred to as having dominated the field of leadership research and studies (Baddeley, 2008; Lussier & Achua, 2013; Northouse, 2012; Pearce & Conger, 2003) at the expense of other forms of leadership such as shared leadership in public organisations (Fletcher, 2004; Maddock, 2008; Van Wart, 2011). Brookes (2008), Sinha (2012) and Van Wart (2011; 2013) state that the real leadership challenge of the public sector are the definition of leadership and a lack of investigation of leadership as a collective phenomenon. In South Africa, there is a growing emphasis on the development of leadership so as to redress the failures of LG leadership systems. Despite the claims that some organisational failures of LG could be due to the complexities of political, social and administrative leadership dynamics (LOGOLA, 2004), research has tended to focus on LG leadership from a single leader perspective only. Until recently, the study of leadership in public organisations (including LG) as pointed out by Brookes (2008); Choi (2009); Sinha (2012) and Van Wart (2011) has typically focused on the behaviour of the accounting officer-municipal manager and has neglected political leadership and its interfacing administrative relationship.

Interestingly, in the hierarchical perspective (as is the case of LG's organisational structure), leadership comes from the top of the organisation – the PEL augmented by the AEL. Nonetheless, little research in organisational behaviour and leadership studies takes the political leader of LG into account or both aspects – the co-existing political and administrative aspects of leadership. The neglect of co-existence (political and administrative) is despite the fact that in South Africa most of the individuals elected to the position of executive mayor or political executive leader (PEL) have experienced difficulties. The experienced difficulties are more in terms of coping with the psychosocial and administrative complexities of LG organisation and

leadership that involves co-existence of both political and administrative arms. The difficulty to cope with the co-existence challenge has led to accusations of their interfering with administrative issues not directly related to their area of leadership.

Furthermore, attempts to train AELs in models of competence development have been based on traditional top-down/vertical leadership models. These models have been developed in isolation as they are not defined to an interdisciplinary context of LG. The co-existing leadership, which includes both political and administrative leadership, has not been considered in these models of competence. No wonder most of the AELs in LG organisations struggle in their leadership positions. Andreas and Lindstrom's (2008) point out that not everyone can share leadership because leaders who are successful in vertical leadership may not necessarily be successful in LG leadership that requires sharing of leadership.

#### **1.4.2 The Research Question**

Following from the preceding arguments and problem statements, I believe the following research question was appropriate for my study:

**What makes LG leadership effective?**

#### **1.5 RESEARCH AIMS**

Given the specific problem and the broad question to be answered, the primary aim of this study was to obtain an understanding of the nature of the dual political-administrative leadership by exploring and describing the dynamics and essence of LG's organisational leadership. Thus, the specific aims of the study were formulated as follows:

- To explore and describe the context and nature of the dual political-administrative leadership of LG as represented and expressed by the leadership position holders – the PELs and the AELs – so as to conceptualise what really makes LG leadership effective.
- To explore and understand the dynamics of the leaders' (leadership position holders) relational interactions within dual political-administrative leadership and how these impact on the efficacy of the dual leadership.
- To explore and describe the associated leadership qualities that may/or may not exist within the single leader's approach.
- To gain a thorough understanding of the above objectives, this should in turn contribute to the development of a shared leadership model of LG organisations.

In answering the research question and achieving the research objectives I anticipated making contributions towards leadership theories through this study.

## **1.6 THE STUDY CONTRIBUTION**

In my view, conducting an in-depth research of LG leadership in the framework of industrial and organisational psychology is invaluable in bringing other disciplines (e.g. politics, public sector leadership) into the field of psychology. While Pearce (2004) and his colleagues refine the articulation of shared leadership by developing a general theoretical model that addresses unique organisational contexts (including public sector organisations), the concept of leadership as sharing has not been prominent in industrial psychology and organisational leadership research. Organisational psychology has done little to explore the nature, the dynamics and the practices of leadership in South African LG organisations that contribute to the efficacy of its leadership.

Therefore this research makes the following contributions:

- The study advances knowledge of leadership studies by focusing on LG leadership in terms of the nature of its leadership, dynamics and leadership practices. Despite the contribution of some researchers like Baddeley (2008), little emphasis has been placed on the dynamics of sharing of the leadership by both the political and administrative leaders neither in LG nor in any public organisation.
- Typical LG terminology and LG context specific concepts used during data collection and analysis emerge. These concepts further contribute to the development of constructs in leadership competencies and attributes unique yet critical for LG leadership.
- The grounded theory method of analysis used in the research contributes to research in industrial and organisational psychology. In operationalising the use of the grounded theory analysis approach the study offers some direction for others wanting to use the same methodology.
- Pragmatically, the model of LG leadership contributes towards the practice of the shared leadership and to the development of guidelines for identifying leadership (both political and administrative) in LG. The training and development in this form of leadership could be used by institutions that envisage using a shared leadership approach.

## **1.7 PSYCHOLOGICAL GROUNDING OF THE STUDY**

This study was conducted in the industrial- organisational psychology field – which is defined by Bowling, Eschleman, & Wang (2010) in addition to McCormick and Ilgen (1992), as the scientific study of human behaviour in the context of the organisation. The psychological study of leadership has been ongoing for more than 100 years by most organisational researchers, behavioural theorists and leadership specialists (Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). The leadership literature and theories in the field of social psychology and organisational behaviour have mainly concerned themselves with reductionist approaches that have a limited reflection on the full richness of

leadership complexities and the context in which leadership is exercised (Goethals, Sorenson & MacGregor, 2004; James & Collins 2008; Kaiser et al., 2008; Northouse, 2012). The search of context and connectedness to the concept of leadership, its nature and its view as an interdependent concept guided the emergence of a post-heroic or sharing of leadership (Fletcher, 2004). The emerging concepts of sharing of leadership led to a formal attempt by researchers to subject the single leader phenomenon to rigorous analysis with a theoretical basis (Graham & Robinson, 2002; Hassard, Cox, & Rowlinson, 2013; Meyer & Boninelli, 2004; Van Maurik, 2001).

In this line of thinking, Pearce and Conger (2003) argue that leadership is an activity that is shared or distributed among members of a group in an organisation. Subsequently, the shared perspective on leadership led to the formal emergence of the shared leadership theory in leadership studies. Thus, this study's theoretical model of leadership is grounded in the conceptual and empirical work centred on shared leadership. Even though still in its infancy (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Sally, 2002; Lussier & Achua, 2013; Van Wart, 2011) as a theoretical perspective shared leadership falls within the subfield of organisational behaviour, which is the study of human behaviour, characteristics and performance within the organisational setting and draws on the theory, methods and principles taken from such disciplines as psychology, sociology and organisational development (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1996; Hassard & Rowlinson, 2013). Unlike traditional approaches, shared approaches to leadership focus less on individuals and more on social processes that occur in and through social interactions (Buckmaster, 2005). Kocolowski (2010) refers to the importance of recognising the approaches often associated with or synonymous with shared leadership – such as co-leadership, collective leadership and distributed leadership. Similarly, team leadership is commonly associated with shared leadership as the term 'team', coupled with the concept of a process, property, or phenomenon, is a critical dimension in shared leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Shared leadership involves relational interactions between/among team/group members; hence there is a deep sense of a relational “whole” and the relational interactions inherent in shared leadership (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003;). Thus, relational leadership theory, together with co-leadership-, collective-, team- and distributed leadership are viewed in this study to subtend shared leadership. Therefore, the aforementioned concepts (collective, team, distributed) are considered as supplementary theoretical groundings in this study.

## **1.8 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM AND PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

This study was an explorative-descriptive qualitative study assuming an interpretivist paradigm. Locke (2001) concedes that the interpretivist paradigm is distinguished by an interest to conceptualise the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live in it. Rowlands' (2005) view is that in this paradigm the researcher's focus is on particular actors (participants) who construe meaning out of events and phenomena through their processes of interaction with each other; and how actors adapt their behaviour in the light of these meanings and perspectives. Hence, reality is not perceived as being entirely objective but rather as subjective due to its multiple context-specific realities (Locke, 2001).

In this study the ontological position I took is that of idealism, which asserts that “reality is only knowable through the human mind and through socially constructed meanings” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.13). According to Blaikie (2008), idealist ontology allows researchers to be conscious of the nature of social phenomena as a product of social life and of interactions, where participants are both subjects and objects of constructing meaning. In this study, my stance was that the two leaders (PEL & AEL) describe the meaning of political-administrative dual leadership through their own critical incidents that are a result of their leadership experiences. The interpretive approach

assumes that meaning is not standardised from place to place and person to person but is composed through situated interactions (Buckmaster, 2005). Also, the interpretive view presumes that reality is multiple, subjective and mentally constructed by individuals (Salmani & Akbari, 2008).

The interpretivist paradigm proposes the idea of knowledge as residing in interactions as well as in meanings and as a way to study the circularity of social phenomena (Schurink, 2003). The interpretivist epistemological view recognises the fact that the researcher and participants cannot entirely be separated in the research study (Shamir, Pillai, Bligh, & Uhl-Bien, 2006). This means that the researcher cannot stay detached and independent from the research participants' experiences and views as is the case of a positivist epistemological view (Blaikie, 2008). Confirming Schurink (2003)'s statement, Ciulla, Uhl-Bien, and Werhane (2013) say that the researcher cannot keep his or her beliefs, values and emotions separate from the social investigation but rather actively co-constructs the reality. The belief is that the researcher constructs the view of the world based on his/her perceptions of it, while being strongly influenced by his/her interactions with the main research participants and making sense of these interactions (Blaikie, 2008). This epistemological assumption is consistent with the ontological idealism that dual leadership of LG as a real behavioural phenomenon only becomes meaningful when studied in its real context (Blaikie, 2008).

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design of this study includes the type of research, the research strategy and unit of analysis.

### 1.9.1 Type of Research

The nature of this study was qualitative. Qualitative research is defined by Shank (2002, p.5) as “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning”. This means that qualitative research studies phenomena in their natural settings. Ospina (2004) states that leadership scholars seeking to answer questions about the nature, dynamics and meaning of leadership have found the quantitative research approach to be insufficient in explaining the phenomenon being studied. As a result qualitative research has gained momentum. My research study on LG leadership studied the concept and dynamics of contemporary leadership in their natural context. Ospina (2004) and Yin (2011) elaborates that qualitative research also makes sense of and interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings participants bring to them. The advantages of carrying out qualitative research on leadership as explained by Conger (1998) are:

- Flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during research and to explore patterns effectively;
- Sensitivity to contextual factors and social meaning; and
- Increased opportunities to develop empirically supported new ideas and theories through an in-depth exploration of leadership phenomena.

The scope of the research is both explorative and descriptive. Exploratory research was opted for because little is known about the LG dual leadership phenomenon in its context (Stebbins, 2001). According to Seers, Keller and Wilkerson (2003, p.80) the concept of sharing of leadership (in public organisations) has drawn “little attention in mainstream organisational leadership research and theory”. This genre of research is used principally to gain a deeper understanding of sharing of leadership, its dynamics and nature as this form of leadership is envisaged as occurring within LG organisations. Despite the current fervour for leadership development in LG, I hold the view

that there is still much that is not understood about the dual leadership of LG. The limited knowledge regarding LG dual leadership in my view pertains predominantly to the nature of dualistic leadership and the interactive process of the PEL and AEL as positional executive leaders sharing the leadership within the political-administrative context.

### **1.9.2 The Research Strategy: Integrating Case Study Research with a Grounded Theory Methodology**

For this study I combined a case study research and grounded theory methodology as my research strategy (Probert, 2006). Central to the study is the case study research strategy that recognises the aim of the study as being to explore, describe and generate knowledge of the particular phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 1995), namely, the political - administrative shared leadership, within a specific setting or context (LG) and build a theory; namely, LG model of shared leadership. For these reasons - pursuing to build a model grounded in case study data - integrating research case study with grounded theory methodology is an appropriate approach for this research. Andrade (2009) and Reiter, Stewart and Bruce (2010) agree that combining research methods is acceptable within interpretative qualitative research aiming at theory building.

De Vaus (2001, p.6) defines a case as “the object of study, it is the unit of analysis”. Yin (2009) acknowledges a case as an event, an entity, organisation, an individual / a group or even a unit of analysis as the focus of the study. Case studies emphasise the study and contextual analysis of the object of study (case), its various events or conditions and their relationships (Dooley, 2002). The case study of this research is a particular LG municipal organisation that hosts the case or unit of analysis, namely, the political-administrative dual leadership of LG. Contrary to De Vaus’s (2001) view as the object of study, LG organisation as a whole is not the case study but the

particular leadership phenomenon - political-administrative dual leadership which is within and specific to LG municipal organisations.

Patton (1987; 2002) and Yin (2009) assert that case studies become particularly useful where the researcher needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Yin (2009), there are three types of case study research – exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. This study has taken an exploratory descriptive route because the purpose was to explore and describe the nature of shared leadership of LG and develop a leadership model. Therefore, through a case study strategy I intended to understand the complex real-life phenomenon of political-administrative leadership. The ultimate goal of this study was to build a shared leadership model for LG. However, Andrade (2009) in agreement with Dooley (2002) clarify that interpretivist researchers aiming at theory or model building find the case study strategy lacking in detailed methodology.

LaRossa (2005, p. 837) supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) assert that in qualitative studies any number of qualitative research approaches can be used to generate theory. However, interpretivist qualitative researchers tend to rely on a “multivariate non-statistical set of procedures known as grounded theory methodologies.” It is at this point that I chose grounded theory as a research methodology because it has a systemic process conducive to theory building in a combined fashion with case study research. In the complementary nature of grounded theory and case study, while the latter assists the researcher in defining the boundaries of the study, the former focuses on the existing processes from which theory will be ultimately constructed (Dooley, 2002).

### **1.9.3 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis was the phenomenon of political-administrative dual leadership as studied in the individuals - the PEL and AEL. In this study, the case study focussed on a single case of dual political-administrative leadership by the executive political and administrative leaders as a feature and unit of analysis of the study, within a municipal system in the LG as its typical context (Dash, 2005; Yin, 2009). Thus, the dual leadership (political-administrative) of the executive political and administrative leaders was identified in this study as the unit of analysis and the main focus of investigation.

## **1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This phase of the research entailed sampling of the research case study and participants, data gathering strategies, data analysis, findings and model development, trustworthiness and ethical issues of the study.

### **1.10.1 Research Participants and Context**

The study was conducted within a municipal institution of the South African LG. The LG, emerging from 1994, was introduced with a leadership structure consisting of a dichotomy of political and administrative leaders. The leadership structure was established with the intention of political and administrative leadership co-existing and that the PEL (executive mayor) and AEL (municipal manager) should both cooperate in leadership (LOGOLA, 2004). The purposive sampling of the key participants – namely the PEL and AEL was based on the following criteria: The PEL and the ex-AEL were recognised through their contribution to organisation stability and setting up good systems for the identified LG organisation. Both the PEL and ex-AEL were well-known as politically and administratively stable leadership. Their leadership stability was further marked by long tenure of their subordinates.

Their subordinates, namely the members of the mayoral committee (i.e. PEL's subordinates) and senior managers (AEL's subordinates) had an average tenure of longer than six years in comparison with other municipalities with an average tenure of three years. Additionally, the ex-AEL was regarded as an advisor to other municipal organisations of LG on leadership and organisation systems.

The power of purposive sampling, according to Coyne (1997), lies in selecting information-rich cases for an in-depth study of leadership. Coyne (1997, p.624) further asserts that the information-rich cases are "those from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research".

### **1.10.2 Data Gathering**

The data gathering strategy is elaborated on after which the specific data gathering techniques I employed are discussed:

#### *1.10.2.1 Planning on data collection*

Prior to the collection of data a systematic plan on the data collection process was determined. A structured programme was drawn in advance to cater for the following:

- Protocol for the data collection such as data collection timelines, access protocol to the targeted individuals, data capturing and reporting formats, when and how to incorporate field notes into the main data; and
- Pilot run, where the informal data collection started with the pilot run with the executive mayor and municipal manager of a similar LG organisation. The purpose of piloting was to identify ambiguities, helping to clarify the

wording of questions and permitting early detection of critical issues specific to LG.

#### *1.10.2.2 Data gathering techniques*

In the data gathering process, various data collection techniques applied in this study included primary- and secondary data collection methods. These techniques are set out immediately below.

##### *a) Critical incident technique*

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT), based on Flanagan's (1954) work, was adapted to this study as a primary data collection procedure used during interviews with key participants. It is a tool used in qualitative research to capture the complexity of the phenomenon in terms of the phenomenon's social context (Stitt-Gohdes, Lambrecht & Redmann, 2000). In this study, the CIT was adapted into the critical incident interview technique to explore the two political and administrative leaders' critical incidents based on their experiences of the dual leadership within the organisation. According to Blaikie (2008, p.87), a critical incident interview is an appropriate technique to be used in a study based on idealist ontology and constructivist epistemology with the assumption that "reality is created and shaped by human interactions and processes". The use of this technique in this study was to enable expression of focused critical events, thus allowing context-rich data from participants unlike participant observation in which context is developed entirely from the subject's perspective (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Stitt-Gohdes et al., 2000).

##### *b) Secondary data collection techniques*

The secondary data collection techniques included two focus groups- one with subordinates to the PEL and another with subordinates to the AEL. According to Knodel (1995, p.8) "the focus group method is to generate a discussion on

preselected topics of interest to the researcher among a small group of individuals from a target population defined in terms of characteristics relevant to the research topic". This approach was identified as a complementary data collection method (Morgan, 1998) to confirm the occurrence of the themes depicted during the critical incident interviews of the two executive leaders.

The information on general leadership was sourced predominantly from the literature on industrial and organisational psychology and the literature on general leadership and management. The information on shared leadership was gathered from leadership studies on both general organisations and public organisations, with the main focus on government institutions. Furthermore, the shared leadership literature and theory was considered from various fields of studies on leadership like, education, health and public administration literature. The context of LG and South African LG leadership literature was considered critical for this study. Additionally, the literature and documentation pertaining to the targeted municipal organisation was consulted as the another source of information regarding LG leadership practice.

### **1.10.3 Data Management**

The data collected, namely the critical incident interviews and focus group data, were tape recorded with a cassette recorder. All the tapes were then transcribed in their raw form without any interpretation and/or formulation of patterns of meaning (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). The original language and clicks used by the respondents during both the interviews and focus groups were also retained.

### **1.10.4 Grounded Theory as a Data Analysis Method**

The method of analysis followed in this study was grounded theory data analysis. According to Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006, p.8), grounded theory

is a widely used qualitative research methodology “that seeks to inductively distil issues of importance for specific groups of people, creating meaning about those issues through analysis and the modelling of theory”. Grounded theory originated as a data analysis methodology, yet became a research methodology or research strategy in its own right due to evolvement in its foundational epistemological and ontological assumptions. Charmaz (2006, p.2) asserts that grounded theory as a qualitative research methodology consists of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves”.

Traditional grounded theory as originated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is stated by Tierney (1996), Mills et al. (2006) and Silverman (2011), as post-positivistic in its intent in that it is founded on a critical realism view. Charmaz (2006) plus Denzin and Lincoln (2000) acknowledge, that the grounded theory approach has been adapted to fit in with a range of ontological and epistemological positions such as constructivist and interpretivist paradigms as adopted in this study. My epistemological and ontological assumptions align with the proponents of a constructivist grounded theory approach and I thus decided to follow a grounded theory method of data analysis within the case study research strategy that I have presented earlier.

Data were analysed meticulously through grounded theory analytic guidelines, which entailed rigorous data coding. Data coding is the analytical process through which concepts are identified and categories and core themes are discovered in the data (Charmaz, 2000; Franklin, 2012). In this study, three steps of coding, namely, open coding, axial coding and selective coding were used (Charmaz, 2000; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Whereas open coding or initial coding “mine early data for analytical ideas to pursue in further data collection and analysis” (Charmaz, 2006, p.46), axial coding and selective coding categorise the data and build themes respectively (Charmaz, 2006, Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; 2011).

## **1.11 DATA INTERPRETATION**

Data interpretation of the study involves reflection on themes in the context of language use and their underlying meanings based on the data. The themes and sub-themes formulated from the coded data were interpreted from various but specific perspectives in conjunction with various theories, including shared leadership. This approach to interpretation suggests that there are no clear rules and that the researcher's judgment, intuition and ability to highlight issues play an important part in the process.

## **1.12 THE TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ETHICAL ISSUES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.12.1 Trustworthiness of the Study**

Trustworthiness is the qualitative research's quality orientations on its findings that make it noteworthy to audiences (Alteheide & Johnson, 2013; Schwandt, 2001). Trustworthiness that interpretivist studies should satisfy includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Carcacy, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility concerns itself with harmonising realities of the participants and those realities as represented by the researcher (Sinkovics, Penz, & Ghauri, 2008). Dependability is equivalent to reliability and is largely concerned with whether a study can be repeated (Kvale, 1996; Yin, 2003; 2011), as well as the consistency and stability of findings over time (Lee & Baskerville, 2003). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) suggests that the researcher can enhance reliability by outlining transparently how the procedures led to the research findings; by checking through interpretations; by carrying out the fieldwork consistently and ensuring all informants have sufficient opportunity to discuss their experiences. Transferability is about the degree to which the findings can be generalised to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred through the provision of thick descriptions of the study context (Dyson & Brown, 2006). Confirmability is referred to as 'neutrality' (Golafshani,

2003) as it is parallel to objectivity in quantitative research. To achieve confirmability, Devers (1999) and Loh (2013) state that evidence from the participants and context should be produced to corroborate the findings. In chapter 2 I elaborate on particular strategies I employed to ensure that my study adheres to these required quality criteria.

### **1.12.2 Ethical Research**

The research was conducted in an ethical manner characterised by the following of a protocol to access the identified organisation, and the maintenance of participants' privacy and confidentiality. In this study no harm was done to participants as I requested and gained prior consent to conduct the study. Furthermore, the participation by all participants, (i.e. key participants and members of the mayoral committee & executive directors) was free and voluntary. The strategies I employed to ensure an ethical study is covered in detail in chapter 2.

### **1.13 CHAPTER DIVISION**

This thesis includes the following chapters:

- Chapter Two: Research design and methodology:  
The research design and methodological approach to this study are discussed in detail
- Chapter Three: Data analysis and findings:  
The findings of the data analysis and interpretation of the themes are presented in this chapter
- Chapter Four: Theoretical integration and discussion:  
This chapter focuses on the integration of the theory into the developed themes in order to substantiate the four themes.

- Chapter Five: The shared leadership model of LG:  
The chapter discusses the developed model and the integration of the four multi-dimensions that formed the LG's shared leadership
- Chapter Six: The research, conclusions, contributions, limitations and recommendations:  
This chapter highlights contributions, draws conclusions to the study, states its limitations and makes recommendations for further areas of study.

#### **1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This first chapter provided some background to and motivation for the study. It further discussed the research problem, questions as well as the aims of the study. Also, the chapter described the research design and methodology adopted for the study. Finally, an overview of the data interpretation, the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations were given.

## **2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter provides a detailed account of the research process. The process entails the research purpose and approach adopted in the study. The philosophy of science underpinning the theoretical orientation of the study, the research strategy, and methodology and the description of the research design are also described. The data gathering methods, data analysis and the measures applied to optimise the trustworthiness of this study are described as well.

### **2.2 RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The purpose of the study was to explore, describe and generate knowledge of a particular phenomenon (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 2010); in this case political-administrative dual leadership, within a specific environmental context (local government) and to build a LG leadership model. This exploratory-descriptive study intended to investigate the phenomenon of leadership as it occurs in its context (i.e. politically confined local government organisations known as municipalities), with the purpose of describing its dual nature and how it works. Contemporary emergent leadership approaches regard leadership as a meaning-making process in leadership practice (Drath, 2001; Northouse, 2012) or as a set of functions and relationships distributed rather than concentrated around a single individual (Pearce & Conger, 2003). These new theoretical lenses require more qualitative than quantitative research approaches (Ospina, 2004) because the former approach (qualitative) explores a phenomenon in its natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; 2011).

## 2.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Shank (2002, p.5) defines qualitative research as “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning”. By “systematic” Shank (2002, p.5) means “planned, ordered and public”, following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By “empirical”, Shank (2002, p.5) means that this type of investigation is grounded in the world of experience; that is; researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experience. While quantitative and qualitative research represent two legitimate ways to study leadership, Ospina (2004) points out that the approaches differ in the degree of the researcher’s immersion in terms of experiential engagement, direct contact with the participants, and physical involvement in the setting.

Qualitative research involves an “interpretative and naturalistic approach as it attempts to make sense of a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.3). Hence in this study I opted for a qualitative approach to research rather than a quantitative approach. The qualitative approach produces a complete understanding of the LG leadership phenomenon based on rich, contextual and detailed data (Schurink, 2003) rather than quantifying the leadership phenomenon.

Ospina (2004, p.2) states the advantages of doing qualitative research on leadership as:

- Flexibility to follow unexpected ideas during research and explore processes effectively;
- Sensitivity to contextual factors and in-depth explorations of the (leadership) phenomenon;
- Ability to study symbolic dimensions and social meaning; and
- Increased opportunities to develop empirically supported new ideas and theories rather than testing hypotheses.

## **2.4 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE**

This section focuses on the philosophical assumptions and the theoretical orientations that guide the study, as well as the research design and methods applied.

### **2.4.1 Philosophical Paradigms**

According to Schurink (2003) and Silverman (2011), qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position that is broadly interpretivist while quantitative research is embedded in the positivist perspective (see also Mohd-Noor, 2008). Researchers maintain that there is a difference between these philosophical paradigms, as positivism stresses the natural science model through which facts about the social world are collected and then builds up an explanation of social life by arranging such facts in a chain of causality (Mohd-Noor, 2008). Conversely, interpretivism is concerned with how the “social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced” Schurink (2003, p.3). Denzin and Lincoln (2005; 2011) consider interpretivism to fall under qualitative research, hence Williams (2000) asserts that “interpretivism” and “qualitative research” are sometimes used interchangeably. Connole, Smith, and Wiseman (1993) including Silverman (2011) argue that there is a difference between interpretivism and qualitative research; however, qualitative methods are central to interpretive research. Other researchers make a distinction between “interpretivism” and “constructivism”, alluding to their similarities, although their ontological and epistemological assumptions and methodologies differentiate them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Schwandt, 2001).

According to Carson, Gilmore, Perry, and Gronhaug (2001) a positivist ontology hold that there is a single, external and objective reality to any research question regardless of the researchers’ belief. Therefore, positivist

research takes a quantitative approach characterised by a controlled and structured way of conducting research. Also, the process starts by initially identifying a research topic, constructing appropriate research questions and hypotheses and ends by adopting a suitable research methodology (Carson et al., 2001). As a result, proponents of the positivist paradigm believe in a single reality that emphasises the universal laws that build conceptual models (Blaikie, 2008). Unlike positivism, interpretivist ontological reality is not a rigid thing; instead it is a creation by those individuals involved in the research (Vine, 2009). Similarly, Proctor (1998) and Franklin (2012) ascertain that reality within interpretivism does not exist within a vacuum. Rather, a composition of the reality is influenced by its context, such that multiple constructions of reality are therefore possible (Franklin, 2012; Proctor, 1998). Therefore, an interpretivist ontological position is that reality is relative and multiple because there can be more than one reality and more than a single structured way of accessing such realities in the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interpretivism rejects positivism's ontological assumptions of realism, objectivist and dualist epistemology and a methodology that is experimental, manipulative and centres on the verification of hypotheses (Shamir, Pillal, Bligh, & Uhl-Bien, 2006). Rather, interpretivist ontology assumes that reality as we know it is constructed inter-subjectively through the meaning and understanding developed socially and experientially (Guba, 1990; Vine, 2009).

Furthermore, interpretivism acknowledges that, even though absolute truth cannot be established, there are knowledge claims that are still valid in that they can be logically inferred (Locke, 2001; Silverman, 2011). Accordingly, an epistemological position in interpretivism assumes a subjectivist view of knowledge rather than an objective 'reality' or 'truth'. 'Realities' are constructed by social actors in social interaction; they are subjective, multiple, mutable, and context dependent. Additionally, a researcher and participants mutually influence and co-construct the data to interpret the meaning. So, interpretivism

presumes the constructivist epistemological view that recognises that the researcher and the participant/s in the study are linked, such that who we are and how we understand the world is a central part of how we understand ourselves (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

According to Carson et al. (2001) positivist epistemology, on the other hand, maintains that the researcher should remain detached from the participants of the research. It is important in positivism for the researcher to remain emotionally neutral; to make clear distinctions between reason and feeling as well as between science and personal experience (Carson et al., 2001). Further, positivism claims that a clear distinction between fact and value judgment is important, while rational and logical approaches to research are objectively and consistently used (Silverman, 2011). According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the constructivist epistemological view advances interactive monism more than positivistic subject-object dualism and objectivism. This view recognises interactivity between the researchers and researched, and that the values of the researcher are inherent in the research process; namely, the research problem, research strategy and choice of the research settings.

In following the earlier discussions, the objectivist and subjectivist positions on an axiological dimension are that the social world should be free of values (objectivist) and that values should guide social research (subjectivist) respectively (Ciulla et al., 2013; Miller, 2002). Furthermore, Miller (2002, p.28) categorised values as epistemic and nonepistemic:

Epistemic values provide guidelines for research by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of theories. They help to ascertain a theory's reliability, validity and so forth. The epistemic values are quantifiable while nonepistemic values on the other hand are vague and unquantifiable in that they are very human centred, involving emotions, ethics, morals, spirituality and the like.

Positivism emphasises that scientific methods must be strictly adhered to in order to guard against research being contaminated by a researcher's values. The researcher must always strive to separate him/herself from his/her research and to put aside all nonepistemic values in order to attain the goals of value-free inquiry. The interpretivist line of thought assumes that even if it were so wished, it would be impossible to separate values from research (Miller, 2002). Miller (2002) backed up by Altheide and Johnson (2013), clarify that nonepistemic values in interpretivism are inherent to research because values are so imbedded in human thought and action. Thus, it is impossible for inquiry to be free from the influences of human nonepistemic values.

#### **2.4.2 The Theoretical Orientation to the Study**

In this study, through an interpretivist qualitative research approach, I seek to explore the dual political-administrative leadership as it occurs in its context (LG environment). It is apparent that traditional theories – such as trait-, behavioural-, contingency-, situational, transformational, - and authentic theories – do not fully account for the type of LG leadership – dual or shared leadership. The shift towards the shared leadership scholarly paradigm can be explained by gaps within the leadership theory in the early 1980s. Such gaps caused some disillusionment because most models of leadership and measures in research accounted for a relatively small percentage of critical dimensions (Avolio et al., 2009; Northouse, 2012). Thus, Pearce and colleagues (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce & Sims, 2001) advanced the concept of shared leadership theory to address this conceptual gap (Avolio et al., 2009). The key factor driving the need for shared leadership is mainly that leadership is a group or team activity because of the complexity of the job in an organisation (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007).

Pearce and Conger (2003) assert that, the shared leadership perspective differs from traditional, hierarchical, or vertical models of popular leadership

theories. According to the shared leadership perspective, leadership is broadly distributed within a group or a team of individuals sharing power rather than localised in an individual who serves in the role of a leader (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009). Pearce et al. (2009) state that a number of scholars who studied shared leadership found that in order for the shared leadership dynamic to properly emerge, preconditions such as team influence and team members' interdependence must be met. Along the same line, Carson et al. (2007) expanded on the above-mentioned requirements by describing a leadership framework that includes the context in which leadership occurs and the quality of interactions amongst the members in leadership. As a result, in this study, shared leadership is not the only theory or approach to account for a reframing of the LG leadership study. Some concepts and approaches that subtend shared leadership with the intention of substantiating the above-mentioned dimensions within shared leadership are: the theories of (i) distributed leadership (ii) collective leadership, (iii) co-leadership and (iv) relational leadership. Common across all these leadership perspectives is the idea that leadership is not the monopoly or responsibility of an individual leader but a shared social process (Carson et al., 2007; Choi, 2009; Sinha, 2012).

## **2.5 THE RESEARCH STRATEGY: INTEGRATING CASE STUDY RESEARCH WITH A GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY**

From the preceding discussions, it is made clear that the research approach to the LG leadership study was a qualitative research approach. The specific qualitative research design I opted for in my study is the integration of the case study and grounded theory strategies. Through case study research, I can answer the questions that lead to an understanding of the nature and complexity of the phenomenon and processes taking place (Fernández, 2004), as well as build a theoretical framework (Yin, 2003; 2011) of LG leadership.

This study used a case to achieve the purpose – to explore dual political-administrative leadership and grounded theory to build a shared leadership model for LG.

### **2.5.1 Case Study as a Research Strategy**

Laws and McLeod (2004) and Punch (1998) identify characteristics that determine among others the use of the case study as a research strategy as:

- The nature of the research questions and ensuring the specific focus of the study;
- Facilitating the clear identification and description of boundaries so as to determine the unit of analysis;
- Using multiple sources of data collection; and
- The desired end product or outcome – theory testing or theory building.

Andrade (2009, p.44) affirms that instead of seeking answers to questions such as “how much” or “how many,” case study design has demonstrated its appropriateness to generate a well-founded interpretative understanding of human interaction in its natural social setting. Also, from an interpretivist perspective, case study strategy enables the researcher to attain adequate information from the selected case(s) for subsequent data analysis to answer the how and why research questions (Andrade, 2009). Mohd-Noor (2008) accentuates the use of the case study as an instrument to probe into the true psycho-social meaning and constructs underlying the variables of study without control of the variables. Franklin (2012) and Patton (1987) agree that uncontrolled variables’ data lead to the discovery of rich information and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing of the variables.

According to Dooley (2002), cases and case studies differ in many ways and resemble each other in other ways. Yin (2003, p.13) offers a more technical

definition by equating a case study with an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” It is highlighted in the previous chapter that the case study strategy is not envisioned as a study of the entire social setting - LG organisation, but the political-administrative dual leadership confined within the LG municipal organisation. Yin (2009; 2011) further supports the suitability of a case study as a bounded system and an imperative strategy for the study of leadership phenomenon. In this study, the LG municipal organisation, although outside the bounded system (political-administrative dual leadership), was the setting within which this form of leadership occurs and its features impact on the bounded system under investigation.

In this case study the boundaries between the phenomenon (political-administrative dual leadership by the two leaders) and the context in which this form of leadership occurs (LG – municipal organisation) seems difficult to draw. That is why Stake (1994) and Yin (2011), write that the most essential element of the case study strategy is the identification of the case –which in my study was the identified LG municipal organisation. In support of Stake, Laws and McLeod (2004) concur that the most single important characteristic distinguishing case study design from other forms of qualitative research (ethnography, phenomenology, action research and grounded theory) is in delimiting the object of study (political-administrative dual leadership) as a bounded system. Hence the case study was an appropriate research strategy to investigate the form of leadership within this dynamic context because the exploration of the unit of analysis would represent what is more important in this case. Dooley (2002) states that researchers use a case study research strategy because of their interest in a specific phenomenon (like dual leadership in this instance) and their desire to understand it completely, not by controlling variables but rather by observing most of the variables and their interacting relationships. Yin (2011) explains that little control over events or

the case being studied occurs when the object of study is a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context. Equally, non-control of events is acceptable when boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear and it is desirable to use multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003; 2011). It is critical to distinguish between cases that are treated as “a whole” and cases that consist of various levels of components. According to Yin (2009), there are holistic and embedded levels of case study design. A holistic case study is a “whole” case that consists of a number of components; namely, leadership in an institution as an entity with different characteristics such as type of organisation, structure of the leadership, philosophy of leadership, a set of rules, practices of leadership. An embedded level means that the same case study involves more than one unit of analysis and may exist within the holistic level (Pandit, 1997; Silverman, 2011).

In this study, dual political-administrative leadership by PEL and AEL was treated as a holistic and “whole” unit (i.e. the actual object-case study) within its contextual setting-the municipal system of LG. This case study consisted of a “whole” dual or shared leadership structure that entails both political and administrative leadership, in which facts are gathered from various sources of the contextual setting (organisation) and conclusions drawn from these facts (Dash, 2005). Andrade (2009) emphasises that since case study strategy is conducted within its natural setting with the intention of comprehending the nature of the phenomenon and its processes within a little studied area (South African LG) this design allows the researcher to grasp the holistic understanding of the phenomenon (shared leadership) under investigation.

A frequent criticism of case study strategy is that its dependence on a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalisable conclusion (Pandit, 1997). Siggelkow (2007) provides a compelling argument for the appropriateness of the case study design even from a single case. Siggelkow (2007) clarifies that a case study contributes to a deep understanding of the

phenomenon being studied. The single case is therefore not sampling research (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2011) but selected as a bounded system, being the “whole” area of interest (shared leadership), so as to identify and understand the case’s richness in information and complex real-life activities within its social context (Dash, 2005; Mohd-Noor, 2008). Yin (2003) presents Giddens’ (1984) view that considers case methodology as microscopic because it lacks a sufficient number of cases. Hamel (1993) and Yin (2009; 2011), however, forcefully dispute that the comparative size of the sample, whether 2, 10 or 100 cases, does not transform multiple cases into a macroscopic case. Rather, case study designs rely less on comparing cases than on an exhaustive analysis of an individual case (Andrade, 2009; Yin, 2011). Only the aim of the study should establish the parameters and, in this way, even a single case is considered acceptable, provided it meets the established research objectives (Yin, 2009; 2011).

This study applied a qualitative exploratory-descriptive case study approach to thoroughly inquire into the phenomenon of political-administrative dual leadership, and construct and interpret collected data (Franklin, 2012; Pandit, 1997) for building a framework or model of LG leadership. Yin (2003), notes that a case study can be used for both theory testing and theory building as research outcomes. Yin (2003), however, made no distinction in describing the process steps even though the theory testing and the theory building start and end at different points (Lynham, 2002). Macpherson, Brooker, and Ainsworth (2000), state that, when a case study is perceived as theory testing or building, questions about the purpose, meaning and implications of the study are raised.

Creswell (2003) mentions that the case study design’s main contribution is for assisting the researcher in the definition of the unit of analysis to be studied and provides a significant contribution to theory building as well. From a positivistic view, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) stress the worth of the case

study strategy for building a theory emanating from empirical research. This assertion is also applicable for interpretivist research as the theory emerges from the data (Andrade, 2009; Yin, 2003). Aiming for a theory building research outcome, De Vaus (2006, p.9) indicates that the researcher “selects case/s to help develop and refine the propositions (intentions) and develop a theory (model) that fits the case/s being studied”. Alluded in the previous chapter is Andrade’s (2009) and Dooley’s (2002) assertion that interpretivist researchers aiming at theory building find case study guidelines inadequate. Apparently, the case study guidelines’ inadequacy is due to both the reduced data gathering processes and the lack of detailed procedures (Andrade, 2009; Dooley, 2002) in both data gathering and analysis. It is for this reason that grounded theory methodology is used to augment case study gaps.

### **2.5.2 Grounded Theory as a Research Strategy**

Grounded theory is a specific methodology developed for the purpose of building a theory from data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Franklin, 2012). According to Charmaz (2006, p.14), qualitative research’s advantage over quantitative is that new pieces to the research puzzle can be added “while we gather data – and that can even occur late in the analysis”. Charmaz (2006) clarifies that grounded theory methods increase the data collection flexibility, while it gives the researcher even more focus on what is happening during data collection without forfeiting the detail of enacted scenarios. In addition grounded theory methods allow shaping and reshaping of the data collection, yet refine the data collected (Charmaz, 2006).

Stemming from a symbolic interactionist perspective, the grounded theory method is appropriately located within the interpretivism paradigm and as:

One of the variants inside symbolic interactionism shares space with other research approaches (like ethnography and case

studies), whose emphasis on understands the phenomenon as it emerges from data and not basing it on the researcher's concepts and theories. (De Carvalho, Leite, De Lima, & Stipp, 2009, p. 574).

The nature of grounded theory – a form referred to by Mills et al. (2007, p.72) as “traditional grounded theory” – has been debatable as a result of the differences that grew between the developers Glaser and Strauss in 1967. According to Moghaddam (2006, p.53), Glaser has a more positivist perspective (traditional approach) “of an objective and external reality, whereas Strauss's later work is based on the assumption of an interpretivist paradigm and subjective reality (Tan, 2010). Like Strauss, Charmaz (2000; 2006) alludes that many scholars have moved grounded theory from the positivist methodology to interpretivism, hence referred to it as constructivist grounded theory. Charmaz's (2000) constructivist grounded theory approach is deemed best suited to achieve the critical purpose of this study – to build or construct a theory (Tan, 2010). Bryant (2002) and Charmaz (2006) advocate a constructivist approach to acknowledge the resulting theory as a co-construction of meaning between the researcher and the research participants.

Mills et al., (2006, p.9) assert that constructivist grounded theory explicitly reshapes the interactive relationship between the researcher and the participants in the process of data collection, “bringing the centrality of the researcher as author to the methodological forefront”. Therefore, a constructivist grounded theory was deemed an appropriate combination with case study strategy because it provides a method that allows for the researcher's interpretative view while the researcher collects the data that will result into building a theory (model) from the study. In qualitative research, myriads data collection techniques can be adopted within a grounded theory perspective because it has the additional advantage of containing explicit guidelines that show researchers how to proceed with data gathering until data

indicate theoretical saturation point (Charmaz, 2006; Franklin, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Such data collecting techniques are discussed later in the next section.

## **2.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology section entails the case study and participant sampling, data collection methods and techniques, data management and analysis and trustworthiness and ethical issues of the study.

### **2.6.1 The Research Case Study and Participant Sampling**

Sampling procedures in the social and behavioural sciences are often divided into probability and purposive groups (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). According to Meyer (2001), the logic of sampling case studies and participants is fundamentally different from statistical sampling. Probability sampling techniques apply in quantitative research and involve “a random manner where the probability of inclusion for every member of the population is determinable”, as the aim is to achieve representativeness (Meyer, 2001. p. 713). However, purposive sampling techniques are used in qualitative studies and are defined as selecting units (such as individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study’s questions. (Meyer, 2001; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Maxwell (1997, p.87) clarifies purposive sampling as a type of sampling in which “particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that other types of sampling cannot.”

In this study, the case study context (LG organisation) and the key participants (PEL & AEL) were identified and selected using a purposive sampling procedure. The purposive selection of the LG municipal organisation as the case study is because: (i) it is associated with the actual context of

dual/shared leadership; and (ii) it will enable the study to answer the research purpose and questions on LG leadership as executed by both the PEL and the AEL. Whereas quantitative sampling concerns itself with representativeness, qualitative sampling seeks information-rich cases and selects the cases purposefully rather than randomly to study in depth the case and participants from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Meyer, 2001; Patton, 1987). Furthermore, the participants were identified on the basis of recommendations by other informants as a result of the specific case organisation's leadership stability and efficiency as compared to other organisations within the LG. The two main participants were selected for the following reasons:

- The PEL and AEL represent the dual or shared leadership in this type of an organisation. At the time of the study, the organisation had only one political leader who had held office over two terms (eight years). In terms of the administrative leadership, the first administrative leader had completed his tenure over a year prior to the study. In order to ensure consistency of the dual leadership (unit of analysis), the prior administrative leader together with the current leader were considered the main participants in the study.
- Ultimately, the two participants who agreed to participate were the PEL and ex-AEL. They showed to be information rich as proven by their reputable track records pertaining to the phenomenon being studied;
- The two leaders both had popularity beyond the specific organisation settings and had national and international accolades; and
- They had both been referred to the study on the basis of their political/administrative expertise and maturity, with political awareness in the context of the phenomenon as well as within the environmental setting.

In order to enhance and validate the data collected from the main participants, an additional 20 secondary participants were identified for focus groups. These were ten direct reports to the former and current administrative leader (known as executive directors) and ten direct reports to the political leader (known as members of the mayoral committee). Both groups were identified on the basis of their reporting directly to the key participants and their number of years within the identified organisation as a context. Further recruitment criteria of participants in the focus groups included their tenure of not less than four years in the same organisation, under the leadership of the PEL and both the ex-AEL and current AEL.

## **2.6.2 Data Gathering Strategies**

The data collection strategies used in this study were:- the critical incident interview and focus groups. Organisational document relevant to understand the context in which the phenomenon occur were also reviewed.

### *2.6.2.1 Critical incident interview technique*

The Critical Incident interview technique (CIT) developed by Flanagan in 1954 is a tool used in qualitative research to capture the complexity of the phenomenon (i.e. dual or shared leadership in this study). The epistemological process underlying CIT is that descriptive data are provided about the real-life episodes within the environment of occurrence (Di Salvo, Nikkel, & Monroe, 1989). CIT evolved over time from a positivist perspective into a commonly used investigative tool in organisational analysis from within a grounded theory perspective (Cassell & Symon, 2004). Further, organisational psychologists revised the CIT technique to assume a phenomenological approach that employs both interview- and observation techniques within qualitative research to obtain in-depth analytical descriptions of an intact scene (Stitt-Gohdes et al., 2000). In this study, the CIT was adapted to explore the PEL and AEL's experiences, interactions and outcome incidents of their dual/shared

leadership as it manifests in their work setting – within a LG municipal organisation.

The basic premise of the CIT is that human experiences and behaviours are expressed in a context and an accurate understanding of the outcomes of such experiences and behaviours requires understanding of the context in which they occur (Mason, 2002). The CIT allows focused and context-rich critical events data from respondents, thus giving first-hand evidence of the relationship between context and outcomes of dual/shared leadership by the core leaders. This technique allows for the development of ideas and research assumptions, which ought to be tested and examined beyond gathering facts and statistics through the data (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Stitt-Gohdes et al., 2000; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Hettlage and Steinlin (2006) and Stitt-Gohdes et al. (2000) include three main features of the CIT, and these are:

- A description of the specific situation/incident;
- An account of the action/behavioural incident as experienced by the key player (respondent); and
- The outcome or result of the incident.

CIT is resource oriented as it generates honest profound answers in many cases with the possibility to hide behind ‘general’ answers being limited (Hettlage & Steinlin, 2006). In contrast to observations and surveys, CIT provides the researcher with answers that are longer and more detailed information can be gathered (Flick, 1998; Stitt-Gohdes et al., 2000). According to Charmaz (2006) and Franklin (2012), the quality and credibility of the data collected within the study is dependent on the depth and scope of the data. In order to base this study upon rich data the focus group technique was further implemented.

### *2.6.2.2 Focus group technique*

A focus group is a qualitative research method designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment by a selected group responding to views, experiences, ideas, feelings and perceptions (Krueger, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1998). The purpose of a focus group is defined by Smit and Cilliers (2006) as a means to gain information, perspective and empirical field texts about a specific research topic. A central feature of a focus group is that “it provides the researchers with direct access to the language and concepts participants use to structure their experiences and to think and talk about a designated topic” (Smithson, 2007, p. 358). According to Morgan (1998) a focus group method can be used in conjunction with another method, such as individual interviews or survey questionnaires. Morgan (1998) further advises that the combined use of a focus group with another method is that each method contributes something unique to the researchers’ understanding of the phenomenon under study. In this study, a focus group technique was used for two reasons: (i) as a complementary data collection tool both to confirm the occurrence of the themes identified during the CIT process (Morgan, 1997); and (ii) to get the groups to provide detail and depth on themes identified from the key participants on dual/shared leadership’s success and failure in LG.

A focus group typically consists of four to twelve participants (Marshall & Rossman 1995; Morgan, 1997; 1998; Silverman, 2011). Although the size of a focus group is offered as an important factor, Morgan (1998, p.6) argue that “this exclusive criteria is mostly a matter of a degree”. In this study the size of the focus groups in each session (political and administration sessions) was taken as a critical variable as it would influence the diversity of the respondents and complexity of the responses contributing to the original data (Silverman, 2011; Smit & Cilliers, 2006).

### *2.6.2.3 Document Review*

Charmaz (2006, p.19) asserts that interpretivist qualitative methods mean entering research participants' worlds. In order to enter these worlds, Charmaz (2006) alludes to the researcher asking him- or herself questions like: do I have enough background data about participants' processes and settings to be able to collect relevant data? Andrade (2009), Charmaz (2006), Eisenhardt (1989) and Franklin, (2012) state that own experience and acquired knowledge through a document review assists researchers to form a theoretical base for the approach to the phenomenon to be studied. This view departs from the traditional grounded theory that emphasises that the bulk of documents and the literature review are conducted after the emergence of substantive theory. Glaser's (1998, p.67) pronouncements about traditional grounded theory are that: "Do not do a literature review or documentary reviews in the substantive area and related areas where the research is done; and when the grounded theory is nearly completed during sorting and writing up, then the literature search in the substantive area can be accomplished and woven into the theory as more data for constant comparison."

Allan (2003) clarifies the idea of starting fieldwork before conducting a literature search (or related documents review) as a misconception of Glaser and Strauss's original idea. Also, Urquhart (2007) cautions that it might be a wrong assumption and serious misunderstanding that the grounded theory process means entering into the fieldwork without having reviewed the literature or having collected enough background data about the phenomenon and participants and context. Probert (2006) claims that there are distinct phases to this process. Dick (2005, p.401) cites that the prudent yet pragmatic stance appears to be "to access relevant literature as it becomes relevant". As suggested earlier, Strauss and Corbin (1998) highlight that the literature be used to formulate the research question, as a secondary source of data collection, and as comparisons and data collation, enhancing sensitivity and

extending a theory under certain circumstances. In this study I used literature to refine both the research topic and the research question. I also reviewed context specific organisational documents to enhance the richness of the data. However, pertinent to data collection the detail is discussed under 2.7.5.

### **2.6.3 Pilot Study**

According to Charmaz (2000), grounded theory studies start off by being open to what is happening in the studied context. In the case study approach, Yin (2003) emphasises the need to commence with fieldwork and data collection prior to the final definition of the study questions and hypotheses. This is in line with the grounded theory procedure that emphasises the need to first have an understanding of the research situation (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser, 2003), so as to have contextual information about a case and an understanding of causal processes when the actual case study is conducted (Patton, 1987). It is on this basis that I conducted a pilot study. The primary reason for the pilot phase was to discover and identify broadly emerging shared leadership dynamics and concepts that are specific to LG dual leadership.

According to Yin (2009; 2011), the use of a pilot protocol is strongly suggested as a tool for ensuring that the exploration is following some investigative assumptions of the phenomenon to be studied. In contrast to a pre-test study, the pilot study is conducted for formative purposes so as to assist with the refinement of the research question and for providing conceptual clarification of the research design (Mason, 2002; Silverman, 2011). Strauss and Corbin (1990), argue that the use of borrowed concepts to define the phenomenon of interest in any study can have grave disadvantages as these may dilute the emergence of theory. In order to avoid such bias influenced by popular leadership concepts in leadership theories, the pilot case study was used to pilot test the shared leadership within its context and to understand what is happening in LG leadership and how the leaders (political and administrative)

manage their roles (*cf.* Charmaz, 2000). Finally, the data from the pilot case study phase was used to concretely define and confirm the core sample (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998) to be studied as well as get clarity on concepts related to shared leadership.

#### **2.6.4 Data Analysis from a Constructivist Grounded Theory Perspective**

The data analysis carried out in this study used the grounded theory method. The prominence of grounded theory is its flexibility to allow the researcher to simultaneously be scientific in data collection and creatively guide data analysis to generate theory instead of testing it (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Bryman and Burgess (1999) supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) as well as Henning et al. (2004), concede that grounded theory is meant to be an iterative process whereby theoretical categories are developed from an analysis of the raw data collected and broken down into concepts that end up being grouped into categories that form theoretical themes. In grounded theory, the data is analysed using three basic coding steps – open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These steps are explained as follows:

- Open coding examines the data to distil, sort and depict what each segment of the data means so as to comprehend it and then be able to name and categorise phenomena by giving conceptual labels (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The emphasis of the data at this level is more on what is happening in the scene when data is coded.
- Axial Coding emphasises the “set of procedures whereby data from open coding is put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.96). During axial coding, numerous comparisons are made to gain an analytical grasp as the data takes a particular form. Analytical notes called memoing about codes (Charmaz, 2006; Franklin, 2012) are formulated so

that analytical categories and relationships are drawn between various categories to provide a conceptual handle on the studied experiences.

- Selective coding integrates categories to formulate core categories that will inform the formulation of a theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) or a model. Selective coding entails the researcher explicating the storyline, matching categories into core categories, validating these relationships against the raw data while filling in gaps on categories that may require further refinement (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In addition, the researcher integrates identified categories to formulate main themes that eventually generates a grounded theory model or framework of the phenomenon studied (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Overall, the most critical aspect in the analysis technique of grounded theory is that any existing concept through grounded theory must earn its way into the analysis of the data rather than being based on preconceived concepts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Henning et al., 2004).

## **2.6.5 Trustworthiness Criteria and Ethical Research**

Trustworthiness and ethical research refer to the noteworthiness and moral principles that need to be ensured during the conducting of any study and these are discussed as follows:

### *2.6.5.1 Trustworthiness criteria*

Unlike quantitative research in the positivist paradigm that is judged against reliability, validity, generalisability and objectivity, the interpretivist research paradigm emphasises trustworthiness of the qualitative research (Altheide & Johnson, 2013; Carcary, 2009; Healy & Perry, 2000). While the theoretical discussion of what the trustworthiness criteria entails is discussed in this section, the strategies I employed to ensure the trustworthiness of this study

are referred to, but will be discussed later in the chapter. Trustworthiness as a quality-related criterion is regarded as the validity of the study, which refers to the soundness or truth value of the study (Carcacy, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Guba in (Shenton, 2004, p. 64) introduced four criteria constructs that correspond to the criteria employed by the positivist researcher, namely; (i) credibility (in preference to internal validity); (ii) transferability (in preference to external validity/ generalisability); (iii) dependability (in preference to reliability) and (iv) confirmability (in preference to objectivity).

a) Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. The credibility construct is concerned mainly with the truthfulness of the data collected and promotes confidence that the study accurately captures the pertinent and core issues of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). Shenton (2004) confirms specific requirements that enhance the credibility of the study. These requirements include an adoption of research methods well established both in qualitative investigation; an early familiarity with the culture of participating organisations before the first data collection takes place and random sampling. In this study I employed the pilot interview before conducting the actual study (see section 2.6.3) so as to enhance the credibility of this study. Finally, the data from the pilot case study phase was used to concretely define and confirm the core sample (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to be studied as well as get clarity on concepts related to shared leadership. The detailed involvement on the conducting of the pilot study is discussed in section 2.7.1. Preece (1994) and Shenton (2004) agree that qualitative research involves purposive sampling; yet, they argue that a random sampling approach negates charges of researcher bias in the selection of participants as it ensures unidentified influences. According to Dyson and Brown (2006), the study is regarded

credible if its particular findings are true from the perspective of the participants and have truth value (Marshall & Rossman, 1995) within the research context.

Additional requirements that enhance credibility are triangulation and member cross-checking. Triangulation is a qualitative research technique that involves the use of different methods especially observation, focus groups and individual interviews in data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). In this study, I used three data collection methods- interview with the key participants, focus groups with the subordinates of the key participants and document review on pertinent documents of the case organisation so as to ensure rigorous data collection. Lincoln and Guba (1985) clarify that the use of different techniques compensates for their individual limitations and maximises their respective benefits. McCormick and White (2000) state that if a researcher is using himself or herself as an instrument for the interpretation of the data, the credibility of the study may be enhanced or diminished. Therefore, another aspect of member checking should involve verification of the researcher's emerging themes and inferences as these are formed during the interviews (Shenton, 2004). In this study both a professional transcriber and member checking strategies were employed to minimise subjectivity while enhancing credibility of the study data and themes. (See detail discussion in section 2.8.1).

#### *b) Transferability*

The transferability and applicability of findings to another setting or group of people is parallel to external validity or generalisability of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Transferability is about the degree to which the findings can be generalised to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred through the provision of thick descriptions of the study context (Dyson & Brown, 2006; Stake, 1994). The inability of qualitative research to generalise

often comes as the major criticism of the interpretivist qualitative research paradigm. To meet this requirement the researcher ought to ensure that critical conditions of the study match other similar settings. Another way to meet this criterion, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is to incorporate working themes with thick descriptions of the data. This would enable the reader to judge whether transferability was probable or not. Altheide and Johnson (2013) clarify that even though each case could be unique it is also an example within a broader group; hence the prospect of transferability should not be immediately rejected. The critical conditions during the study that supports transferability is accounted for in section 2.7.2, while in section 2.8.3 the strategies employed in this study to ensure transferability are discussed.

c) Dependability

Dependability refers to the rigour associated with the process of inquiry (Schwandt, 2001). Marshall and Rossman (1995) state that, dependability is viewed to be equivalent to reliability and emphasise the consistency and stability of findings over time. In accounting for the issue of reliability, Shenton (2004, p.71) indicates that the “positivist uses techniques to show that if the research study were repeated in the same context with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained”. Guba and Lincoln (1998) advocate the use of an audit trail as a means of ensuring dependability. An audit trail is a technique whereby the reader is taken through the process of the study, step-by-step, so that he or she can determine whether the process and conclusions of the study are trustworthy (Altheide & Johnson, 2013). The detailed accounting on the natural evolvement of the study in section 2.7 in this chapter demonstrates the dependability of my study.

#### d) Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability is the degree to which the data and interpretations of the study are based resolutely on data collected rather than the personal constructions of the researcher. Equally, in positivist research confirmability is equivalent to objectivity. Patton (in Shenton, 2004) states that objectivity in science is the use of instruments that are not dependent on human skill and perception. Shenton (2004) clarifies that Patton (1987) recognised, however, the difficulty of ensuring real objectivity because even tests and questionnaires are designed by humans – meaning, intrusion of the researcher’s biases is unavoidable. Confirmability, also referred to as “neutrality” (Golafshani, 2003) is parallel to objectivity in quantitative research. Altheide and Johnson (2013) as well as Denzin and Lincoln (2005; 2011) argue that the post-positivist and interpretivist approach to qualitative research includes multiple voices, views and standpoints to augment the confirmability. In my study I confirmed my findings with the research participants by doing participant checks. I conducted three and two telephonic interviews with the AEL and PEL respectively to confirm my understanding of their first interviews and clarify some unfamiliar concepts gathered during the first interviews.

#### 2.6.5.2 *Ethical research*

Although ethics are a cornerstone to conducting effective and meaningful research, the nature of ethical issues in qualitative studies is different from those in quantitative research (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Despite differences, ethical issues in both quantitative and qualitative studies involve amongst others, consent to access to participants/organisation, confidentiality, participants’ voluntary participation and researcher/participant relationships (Ciulla et al., 2013; Orb, et al., 2001). All participants in the study were given a clear picture of what the study was about and what they were required to do. In addition, it was indicated to them that their participation in the study was a

voluntary participation and they had the freedom to withdraw (Refer Appendix 1 & 3).

- Consent

Consent involves the procedure by which an individual may choose whether or not to participate in a study. The researcher's task is to ensure that participants have a complete understanding of the purpose and methods to be used in the study, the risks involved, and the demands placed upon them as participants. The participant must also understand that he or she has the right to withdraw from the study at any time (Wiles, Heath, Crow & Charles, 2008).

- Confidentiality

Silverman (2011) and Wiles et al. (2008) assert that the concept of confidentiality is closely connected with anonymity. Yet, Wiles et al. (2008) argue that anonymising the data does not always cater for confidentiality concerns. Similarly, Kaiser (2009) argues that qualitative researchers can avoid confidentiality dilemmas that might otherwise lead them not to report rich, detailed data through carefully considering the participants and by re-envisioning the informed consent process. Confidentiality also means not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee, deliberately or accidentally, in ways that might identify an individual (Orb et al. 2001). In the study confidentiality was ensured by not revealing the identity of the participants (see tables 2.1 and 2.2). The manner in which I obtained informed consent, confidentiality and freedom to withdraw in this study is specifically explained in section 2.9 below and it is evident in section 2.7 below where I depict the natural account of how the research evolved.

## **2.7 AN ACCOUNT OF THE STUDY'S NATURAL EVOLVEMENT**

The process I followed to formulate a research problem and question (emanating from a pilot study), to gain access to the identified case study organisation, obtaining a study sample and carrying out the data collection techniques is described below.

### **2.7.1 Conducting the Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted in a different LG municipal organisation with a different pair of participants from those in the identified case study. The two leaders were the political leader (executive mayor) and the administrative leader (municipal manager) in a different municipal organisation. The two broad questions posed to the pilot study participants were open ended and structured as follows: "How is the LG leadership structured? "How come is it structured the way it is (i.e. having two leaders in the same position of power)"? Through the pilot study I intended to gain better insight into what real LG organisations' leadership is and whether its leadership is truly dual and/or shared before I embarked on my actual study. After the interview of the two pilot participants, and through a broad data coding process I made analytic sense and gathered potential themes critical to this type of leadership.

The most critical results of the pilot study were:

- Reformulation of my research topic and main study question.
- Refinement of data collection methodology and techniques.
- Insight into basic issues pertinent to this type of organisations, such as protocol to gain access to the case study organisation (Yin, 2009; 2011) and some of the dynamics within the arrangement of the executive leadership (political and administrative intertwine but are unequal); and
- Refinement of the types of supplementary data collection techniques such as focus group and identification of participants. Also, the pilot

study helped me to focus on the specific organisation's documents for review (e.g. annual reports; records on the case study organisation's successes).

Overall the pilot study provided a good foundation for the actual study.

### **2.7.2 Gaining Access and Purposive Sampling of Participants**

Bryman and Burgess (1999, p.xv) highlight that “when qualitative research is being conducted within a case which is relatively closed to outsiders, access to the setting has to be secured”. Bryman & Burgess (1999, p.xv) further state that, such access is generally “preceded by long and complex negotiations with the gatekeepers who want to clear any risks to the organisation”. Aligned to Bryman and Burgess's (1999) statements and knowledge gathered during the pilot study regarding the case study organisation, the following steps were taken:

- I prepared two formal letters to the case study organisation's main leadership (a letter each to the political and administrative leadership) requesting permission to conduct the study in their organisation (see appendix 1). Each letter outlined the study purpose and the required participants. My promoter and I co-signed the letters prior to submission to the relevant leadership. The letters were hand delivered to the organisation.
- The ex-executive administrative leader who is currently employed outside the main organisation was contacted via telephone and he indicated no need for a formal letter request. He eagerly accepted the request to participate in the study. On the other hand, the current executive administrative leader (to whom one of the letters was addressed) requested further explanation to support the rationale of his participation in the study, which was done via email. He agreed to participate pending

his availability. However, he eventually did not avail himself and I respected his decision not to participate; hence I discontinued pursuing him after two follow ups.

- The PEL agreed to the study unconditionally and advised through his personal advisor that this would be tabled formally at the Council meeting to gain the support of the secondary participants (members of the mayoral committee) and executive directors.
- Although three core executive leaders were initially sought for the study as key participants, the main criteria for selecting the key participants based on purposive sampling were that: they must have worked in the same or similar organisation and should have shared the leadership role (political and administrative), over a period of not less than four years, and be willing to participate in the interview over a number of sessions until sufficient data had been gathered by the researcher. Having reviewed my selection criteria requirements, I realised that while the current administrative leader was reluctant to participate, he had also been in his position for only a year; hence he did not fit the sample selection criteria. Subsequently, I did not pursue him as a key participant after two follow up requests failed.
- Selection of the other participants was based on their being direct subordinates to the PEL and AEL, having occupied their role for a minimum of four years.

### **2.7.3 Conducting the Interviews**

In conducting the interviews, I met with each executive leader at different times. The ex-AEL's interview was three months before that of the PEL. Prior to conducting the interviews, the key participants (PEL & AEL in separate interviews) were welcomed and thanked for their willingness to participate in the study and assured of the confidentiality of the findings of the study. Over and above the face-to-face critical incident interviews, both key participants granted me permission to contact them telephonically.

The purpose of the telephonic interviews was to fill in gaps on specific incidents discussed during the main interview if gaps existed. Subsequently, three successive telephonic clarity interviews with the administrative leader and two similar interviews with the political leader were conducted. The differences in the follow-up calls were mainly due to the level of data saturation in my analysis of their respective initial data sets. The first critical incident interview was conducted with the ex-AEL at a neutral venue that was accessible for him in terms of his work proximity, while the case study organisation premises were used for the political leader's interview as per his request. Even though it was challenging to fit into the PEL's schedule, considerable efforts were made from his office to ensure his participation in the first critical incident interview. Whereas the interview was scheduled for an hour, the political executive leader was keen to extend by over 45 minutes.

The purpose of the critical incident interview as set out in the invitation was as follows (see appendix 2):

*The purpose of this interview is to gain insight into local government's type of leadership. As the leader in local government, your insights will assist me in gaining a deeper understanding into the essentials of leadership successes and or failures in the local government organisations.*

In an effort to establish rapport with each participant, I opened the interview with a broad opening statement and question (see appendix 2):

*You are an expert in this field; hence I would like to know more about you. I am interested to understand how you work in your leadership and how you relate with your administrative/political leader. May we start off by you telling me about yourself?*

The subsequent questions were narrowed and more focused on successful and non-successful incidents in the context of their leadership within the case study organisation. To direct the recounting of the incident, the questions were posed as follows (see appendix 2):

*With the background you have given me I would like to know more about your work and how you carry it out? Think and talk about four real life incidents; two of which you were proud of as successes as an administrative/political leader of this organisation and two in which you were unsuccessful. Please relate in each account:*

- *What was the incident and what led to it?*
- *How did you do what you did that was successful/ unsuccessful and what was the outcome?*
- *Why is this incident very helpful to you to define your success or non-success as a leader?*
- *What are the lessons learned from the unsuccessful incidents and in the future how differently would you handle a similar incident?"*

A general and closing question asked in addition to the critical incident interview was: *Who do you identify with as your role model and what is outstanding about this person that attracts you?*

As indicated earlier, at the end of the first interview with each participant it was pointed out that follow up interviews would be scheduled either face-to-face or telephonically, depending on what could be more suitable for them as participants. During the telephonic sessions, emanating and salient themes from each participant were explored for better insight and clarity. At the end of the telephonic interviews each participant was asked to give a closing statement. In closure, both were thanked for their participation and were informed of the process pertaining to focus groups to be conducted with their direct reports.

## 2.7.4 Conducting the Focus Groups

On completion of the critical incident interviews with the key participants (PEL & AEL) I conducted focus groups with the direct reports – namely, the executive directors reporting to the AEL and the members of the mayoral committee reporting to the PEL. The focus groups were conducted two months (for executive directors) and four months (for members of the mayoral committee) after the key participants' interviews as a result of availability challenges. The arrangement and the process followed were exactly the same for both groups, as all the focus groups were conducted on the case study organisation premises. Seven of the ten executive directors confirmed participation in the study. The study eventually included six participants in the executive directors' focus group. One participant was called out for an urgent meeting during the session and she had to be excluded from the focus group. Although I requested the participants to sign the attendance register (see appendix 3) as part of consent to participate in the study, anonymity on some demographic details as indicated in Table 2.1 was withheld because of confidentiality issues.

Table 2.1. Executive directors' (senior managers) focus group composition

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total no of years in organisation</b>
Participant 1	Exec. Director	COO's Office	Female	6 years
Participant 2	Director	Legal & Governance	Female	8 years
Participant 3	Executive Director	Planning & Infrastructure	Male	4 years
Participant 4	Director	Internal Audit	Female	5 years
Participant 5	Director	Central Strategic Unit	Male	8 years
Participant 6	Executive Director	Emergency Management Services	Female	6 years

Coordination of the members of the mayoral committee’s focus group session had challenges despite formalisation of the study rationale and the approval of their participation by their PEL at the Council meeting. Some of the challenges identified were:

- Two of the ten members of the mayoral committee demanded individual interviews as they felt they would be more comfortable in such a setting than in speaking up in a group session.
- Four of the ten indicated that the nature of their work and pressure were unlikely to award them the opportunity to participate in a group session.

Eventually a group of six out of ten members of the mayoral committee (excluding the two that preferred a one-on-one interview) participated. Although attempts were made to incorporate the outstanding four it was to no avail; hence six members of the mayoral committee participated in the study, as shown in Table 2.2. The difficulty to get a minimum number on the focus group is highlighted by Morgan (1997) as he states that in practice; groups tend to be based on availability rather than representativeness of sample.

Table 2.2. Members of the mayoral committee’s focus and interview groups

Participants	Designation	Division	Gender	Total no. of years in organisation
Participant 1	Member of mayoral committee	Transport Services	Female	6.5 years
Participant 2	Member of mayoral committee	Environment & Corporate Services	Female	4.5 years
Participant 3	Member of mayoral committee	Community Dev. Services	Male	7 years
Participant 4	Member of mayoral committee	Infrastructure & Planning Division	Female	6 years
Participant 5 <sup>1</sup>	Member of mayoral committee	Finance & Planning	Male	6 years
Participant 6 <sup>2</sup>	Member of mayoral committee	Health & Emergency Services	Male	4 years

<sup>1</sup> Participated in group interview

<sup>2</sup> Participated in group interview

Logistically, a formal boardroom at the case study organisation was secured and booked for three hours for each group. An audio recorder was placed at the centre of a semi-oval table as the participants seating was arranged in a manner that permitted them all to be audible and be recorded as they speak. The participants were welcomed to the focus group, thanked for their voluntary participation and assured of anonymity and confidentiality in the study (see appendix 4). In order to establish rapport, I allowed all members of the focus groups a brief formal self-introduction. After the introductions, the purpose of the focus groups was stated (see appendix 4):

*The purpose of the focus group is to verify the information/data already gathered from your leaders – the AEL/PEL. Your honest response to questions will assist me to gain a broader understanding of leadership in this type of organisation.*

In facilitating the focus group sessions, the first question posed to each group was about generic issues such as: *How long have you been with the organisation and what attracts you to this type of an organisation?* The discussion starter question was phrased as: *What have been the most striking issues/things about your political/administrative leader for the past four to five years?*

Ten minutes after the starter question I introduced the first substantive topic in the form of a theme. This entailed theme-based questions extracted from each leader's critical incident interview. Seven and six "presumed themes" from the ex-AEL and PEL respectively were shared with the executive directors and members of the mayoral committee in the form of questions. Such theme-based statements were presented as: *One thing I heard the political/administrative leader mention is "working as a collective". I wonder what the rest of you have to say about it.* A back-and-forth tracking on issues was used as a follow-up and clarity-seeking approach. Both groups were

enthusiastic and highly participative in the sessions. I had, however, to control some of the overly talkative members to allow everyone an equal opportunity to talk.

The end of each session concentrated on reflections on the leaders' developmental areas and focus group participants were very willing to give inputs about both leaders' areas of development. Although the focus group session with the executive directors was planned to last two hours and thirty minutes it lasted three hours thirty minutes due to the participants' keenness to converse about their leaders' leadership. Some of the participants did, however, express the fact that such sessions are rare and that this may take longer than planned.

Four out of the six participants expressed gratitude towards the researcher and indicated that they would welcome an opportunity to talk more about the unique leadership of their organisation. For the MMC focus group, only four arrived on time for the scheduled session while the other two at the end of the session called me to apologise for failure to attend the session. The members of the mayoral committee focus group session lasted two-and-a-half hours as scheduled. Owing to the smaller sample and data not being saturated, a group interview of two outstanding members was conducted two weeks after the first focus group. The session was split into a morning and an afternoon session, with each lasting two hours. I thanked both members of the mayoral committee and they expressed gratitude for having been awarded the opportunity to speak despite the availability challenges they had experienced.

### **2.7.5 Document Review**

In this study, the documents of the organisation (two annual reports, a documentary booklet and the long term strategy – 2030) were reviewed as secondary sources to data collection so as to gain enough background and

better understanding of this context and the dual leadership. These documents comprised an important source of information as they were seen to be the outward manifestations of the participants' leadership outcomes that could be of assistance to me to gain better knowledge about this distinctive leadership. The documentary booklet on the other hand confirmed some of the themes built from the data (e.g. the context and the structure of leadership). In this respect, I found these documents useful as they were not influenced by my presence but captured a true reflection of the “what” and the “how” of LG leadership.

## **2.7.6 Data Capturing and Analysis**

In this section a detailed account of data capturing and analysis is outlined.

### *2.7.6.1 Data capturing and transcription*

Both the critical incident interviews and the two focus groups sessions were tape recorded with a cassette recorder. All the tapes were then transcribed in its content form (Franklin, 2012; Henning et al., 2004; Mason, 2004) by a professional transcriber I had contracted. The main emphasis in transcribing the taped data was the content in the context of language and words used by participants plus the sequence of incidents. Content data processing entailed the transcriptions of the critical incident interviews from the key executive leaders' reflections on their leadership successes and non-successes. Outcomes of the focus groups (themes and hypotheses identified from the critical incident interviews exactly as articulated by the participants) were also transcribed. This implies that the data was transcribed in its 'raw' form without any interpretation and or formulation of patterns of meaning (Henning et al., 2004). I requested the transcriber to retain the original language and clicks used in the interview and focus groups so as to retain the originality of the data. The process of preserving the data and meanings on tapes combined

with transcription is argued by Franklin (2013) to greatly increase the efficiency of data analysis.

In this qualitative study, it is critical to note that data collection and analysis was done hand-in-hand to uphold the emergence of superficial topics gathered during the pilot phase that led to substantive themes grounded in the critical incident interview empirical data. These topics were confirmed through focus group sessions and organisational documents and reports. As a result, only the critical incident interviews transcriptions were imported into a spreadsheet format, which ensured logically structured and organised (numbered) data. This data was then analysed meticulously through grounded theory analytic strategies. The focus group data was further added onto the spreadsheets as to link thick descriptions with the already identified categories and or themes.

#### *2.7.6.2 Data analysis*

In this study grounded theory was used to determine the discourse that framed the language action, participants' sense of the terms they used, including how the discussions were generated and maintained within their situational context. This process is discussed below.

##### *a) Grounded theory analysis procedure*

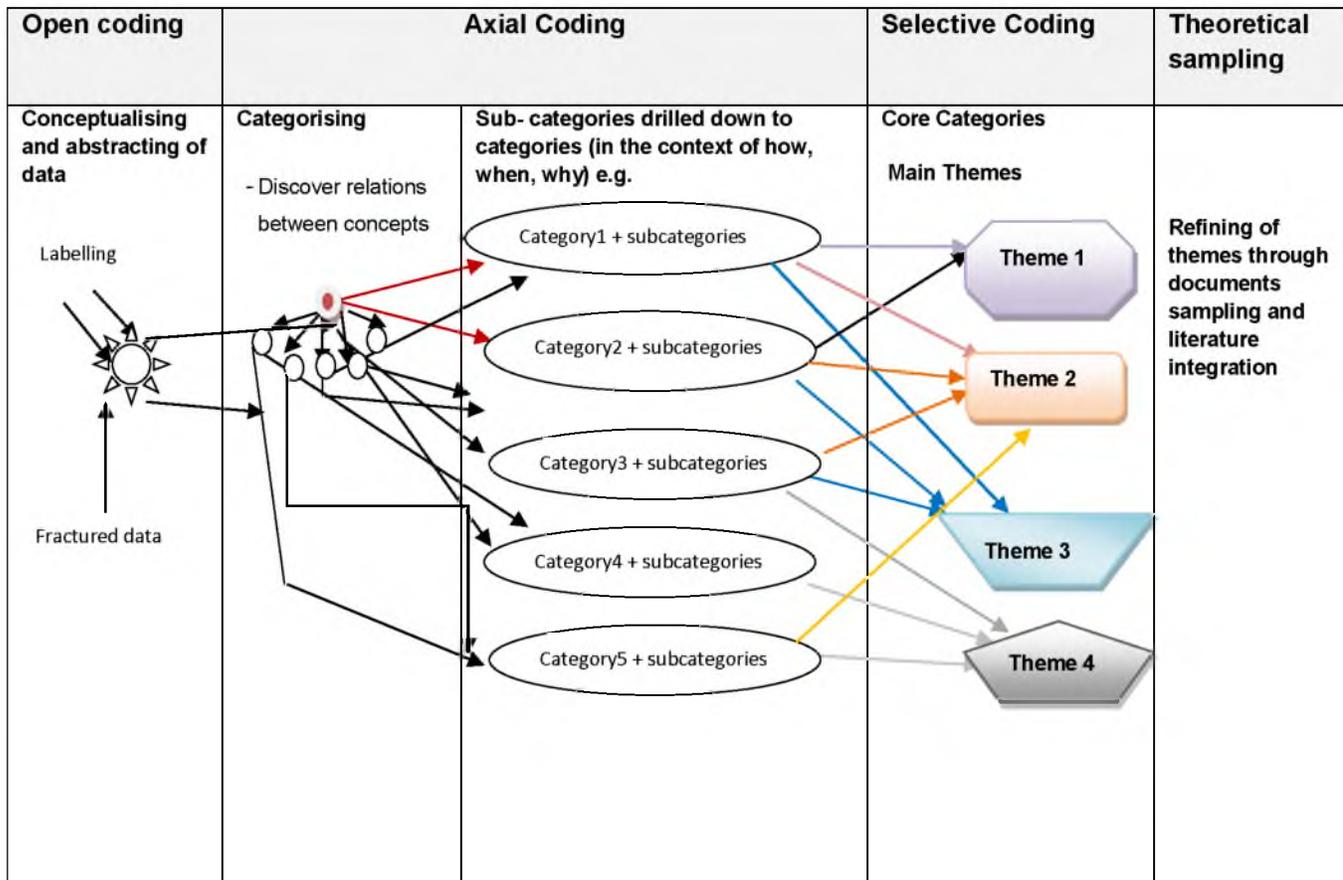
At an interpretive level I read through the transcribed data and constructed categories originating from the key participants' data prior to formal coding. At a reflexive level of processing I became aware of my role and possible influence I may have on the analysis of the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that the interplay between data and researcher during both data collection and analysis may not be objective as the researcher does react to and work with the data. As such I consciously brought in my previous data-coding experience while I forced myself to adhere to the constructivist

grounded theory analysis approach. It was a daunting experience at first as I became aware of the intensity, detail and focus required in this technique. I therefore made notes in every paragraph reading of the critical incidents interviews. The same process but less intense was followed during the focus groups' data analysis. The intention was to capture all reactions that could not be captured by means of the tape. These notes reflected the systemic aspects that could have an impact on the other data or the aspects of the phenomenon being studied. These notes were further referred to during the coding process.

b) Data coding

Data analysis of this study was done as per the schematic analytical sequence depicted in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3. Direction and analytical sequence in data coding



**Open Coding process:** The data from the transcribed and imported critical incident interviews was read sentence by sentence to gain an understanding of the participants' lives and related issues in context. Concepts and meanings specific to these participants' language, statements and actions were underlined and notes were made next to these so as not to lose the concepts later. I repeatedly read the transcribed data in comparison to the audio tapes to ensure that the original meaning of the data was retained. The preliminary line-by-line data analysis, which is an open-coding process, was done to generate the concepts of main focus. This was followed by paragraph coding to generate categories and these were named accordingly. The codes at an early stage that were most outstanding related to context (LG organisation context) and the purpose of the organisation categories (service to the people). Owing to its persistence throughout the data, I translated the category into a theme. Also, the most important codes that were selected during the coding process related to the political-administrative intertwines, which linked back to the context but brought forth new concepts, like dualist categories of leadership. These were followed by unfamiliar (to me as a researcher) concepts and leader characteristic categories (e.g. *we-ness*, *etc.*) first in the context of required leadership qualities. With paragraph coding done throughout the entire spreadsheets, identifying and labelling key concepts in each paragraph, more concepts that included role differentiation, leadership boundaries, variable expertise, interactive relations, situational context started to be clear from the data. These concepts were then classified into similar dimensions that were formulated into specific categories.

**Axial Coding:** These categories were further drilled down to uncover relationships. Thus the categories were rearranged in their relational forms, aligned to conditions, consequences/outcomes, results, impact and paradigm. This rearrangement of data elicited the "how", "why" and "what" of leadership. The reworked categories through axial coding were grouped with sub-categories that indicated some form of relatedness or link. In creating the sub-

categories, data were reread several times to uncover deeper meanings and to make interpretations based on language used by the participants, as well as the categories uncovered from the analysed data. Some categories were then changed to adhere to prominent terms used by participants to retain the originality and the line of thought on concepts-based categories (e.g. dualistic, collectiveness, primacy of politics, service first, *we-ness*, etc.).

**Selective Coding:** Throughout the categories and sub-categories, seven and eight core categories of executive political and administrative leaders respectively were further analysed and selected through selective coding. Finally core categories were discovered from both the PEL and AEL, and these are set out as Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Key participants preliminary core categories/themes

No of Themes	AEL	PEL
1.	Exposure to context (LG) is critical for leadership, learning through exposure	Leadership is embedded in context
2.	Reluctant leadership- learning from context exposure	Learned leadership vs. natural leaders
3.	Serving political leadership – thankless role	Serving Others – mission of responsibility
4	Leadership Roles’ “touch points” – boundaries of leadership	Role Clarification and differentiations – within and between boundaries
5	Balance of strategic and operational roles: a “make and or a break” of leadership	Separation of powers as “make and break” of leadership
6	Political savvy – political and administrative relations core to leadership success	Primacy of politics is “what political leadership says goes” and a relational mainstay
7.	Self of the leader: “best fit” into local government	Collective and team collaboration is local government leadership
8.	Leadership practices: e.g. balanced leadership (performance management, political-administrative teamwork assist operationalisation of leadership	Passion and appreciation of local government context as “leader fit” into local government
9.		Leadership “walks the talk” of service

To create depth from the core categories/themes set out above I used these to systematically gather verifying data on each category through focus groups for further coding. Some of these categories (where similarities existed) were merged into one statement (e.g. themes 1, 7 & 8 of AEL and PEL respectively, etc.) for confirmation and verification of themes and to acquire data saturation of the main themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). Furthermore, theoretical sampling through specific documents and reports of the case study organisation, as well as follow-up interviews were referenced to refine the final themes. Denzin & Lincoln (2005; 2011) clarify theoretical sampling as a way of helping the researcher to identify conceptual boundaries and pinpoint the fit and relevance of constructed themes. The final themes' consistency as refined through focus groups and sample documents resulted in four merged themes and these are depicted in Table 2.5 below. These themes are discussed in detail as research findings in Chapter 3.

Table 2 5: Main study themes

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Theme 1:	Leadership in LG is determined by context
Theme 2	Leadership qualities required for ensuring efficiency and fit within the LG context
Theme 3	The dynamics of the LG leadership
Theme 4	Leadership practices

## **2.8 STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

In this section I discuss strategies employed to enhance the research trustworthiness.

### **2.8.1 Credibility of this Study**

In this study I adopted the constructivist grounded theory method embedded in the interpretivist paradigm. In order to gain familiarity with the concepts of the

LG organisation and its dual/shared leadership I conducted a pilot study first within a similar organisation. Although random sampling is emphasised to ensure credibility of the study, in this study I adhered to purposive sampling of qualitative research because participants selected are very specific and were accurately identified and described in the context of the case study. Additionally, I used a combination of data collection techniques; that is, methodological triangulation, which included critical incident interviews, focus groups and document review to assure completeness of data, verification of themes and reporting on study findings. In order to diminish data analysis subjectivity, I allowed one professional transcriber to transcribe the original data. In addition, two professional coders cross checked my coded themes by giving them raw data to do high-level coding with. Two meetings were held wherein comparisons were done to cross check identified themes and about seventy percent of similarities were identified. The coding certificate confirms data analysis (coding) credibility proof (see appendix 5).

### **2.8.2 Dependability of this Study**

In this study, the reasons for and the processes used in collecting and analysing data have been made explicit and were accounted for in the study's natural evolvment section 2.7.6 above. The constructivist grounded theory as research method, data gathering techniques, research procedures and the grounded theory's meticulous data analysis process are made explicit in this study. Although I based the data analysis process on the literature, I reconstructed my own mental picture on the study's data analysis (see table 2.3) so as to have a vivid step-by-step analysis process specific to this study. This implies that should the study be repeated and use the same step-by-step analysis process as discussed in section 2.7.6, there is a likelihood to come up with similar themes/ results. I do acknowledge however, that the final themes' construction has been influenced by my knowledge of the LG environment through my consulting experience within the LG organisations. In addition, a

detail account on the natural evolvement of the study from the beginning, namely, conducting the pilot interview, formulation of the study topic and the research question, preparatory work to gain access to the case organisation and identification of the participants is accounted for in section 2.7.1 and 2.7.2 above. The actual conducting of the research - conducting interviews (see discussion in 2.7.3), two focus groups – (see discussion in 2.7.4) and document review (see discussion in 2.7.4), data capturing and analysis (see discussion in 2.7.6) and the process followed to formulate the final themes (see discussion in 2.7.6) are clearly elaborated on as an audit trail of what I did in this study.

### **2.8.3 Transferability of this Study**

In this study, the case study organisation is similar to all other organisations of LG such that the findings of this study are easily transferable to all other similar LG organisations. My study is transferable because I explained in detail and defined the research context (as explained in section 1.2.4, & 1.11.1) as well as the research participants in section 2.7.2. In addition I did the pilot study to gain a good understanding of the LG context prior the actual conducting of the main study. The interpretations of themes in the following chapter are backed up with thick descriptions (i.e., direct quotes from the data) of the data in order to support the reported findings (see chapter 3). In some instances, original concepts from the participants' (e.g. primacy of politics, servant self, core collective) expressions are used so as to keep the meaning and the emphasis as articulated by the participants. In reflection, this form of reporting on findings (e.g. political concepts, contextual leadership rather than characteristics/personality of leaders) was a challenge for me as a psychologist because it required me to have a complete mental shift on data interpretation. Also, my interaction with the literature on shared leadership from other disciplines; I experienced the need to adapt my thinking from a pure into cross-disciplines (e.g. public administration and political sciences) concepts and outlook; wherein I had to balance data interpretations with that of

my discipline background. In this way, although difficult at first, I managed to provide the research findings as more of the participants' leadership view merged with my consulting psychology background knowledge.

#### **2.8.4 Confirmability of this Study**

To satisfy the confirmability criterion, the degree of interpretations that led into the formulation of themes and the development of the LG leadership model are firmly based on the data. Furthermore, while analysing and coding the data I ensured that themes were based on data. Additionally, the findings in the next chapter are grounded in the data and inferences made draw more strongly from the data collected than from leadership theories.

### **2.9 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE ETHICAL CONDUCT**

The primary ethical considerations centred on case study sensitivity and confidentiality pertaining to all participants as well as issues of privacy of the participants. As part of the protection and ethical considerations, I did the following in the study:

- I gained formal written consent to both conduct the study within the case study organisation and to interview/conduct focus groups with identified participants. The letter addressed to the Ethics Committee was provided by the case organisation to this effect.
- Protection of privacy and confidentiality of those that participated has been partially ensured by withholding the biographical information.
- With some participants, some of the information/data provided during the interviews were withheld by skipping the recording as per the participant's request not to disclose. Consequently, such data were not recorded, disclosed or used in the analysis.

- Trust, respect and mutual consent between the researcher and participants was a primary consideration.

## **2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 2 began with the description of the study purpose, research approach, philosophy of science and my theoretical orientation. This was followed by the research strategy, methodology and measurement adopted for the study. The measurement included the data collection methods and the research procedure in which the identification of the case study setting and identification of participants based on the qualifying criteria were discussed. This process highlighted the steps to access the case study and all participants, data collection processes and description of data analysis procedure. The trustworthiness criteria that impact on this study as qualitative research were discussed. In discussing the trustworthiness of the study I highlighted credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Finally, a detailed account of the study's natural evolution was given. In conclusion of the chapter the strategies employed to ensure the study's trustworthiness and ethical considerations pertaining to the study were described.

## **3. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I present the findings on leadership in LG as reflected upon by key participants, which were the PEL and the AEL of the well-performing LG, as well as their subordinates. Firstly, I present key leadership themes and sub-themes emergent from data derived from interviews with the two key participants as well as through two subordinate focus groups. The subordinates to the AEL include executive directors and the PEL subordinates include members of the mayoral committee. These themes are discussed together in an attempt to clarify the research question of what makes LG leadership effective. In the discussion on each theme, segments of the participants' actual data in the form of quotations<sup>3</sup> are used to provide useful explanation and substantiation on how well the themes are grounded in the data. Furthermore, references to the literature are included to show the literature's support of the analysis based on themes. The chapter is concluded with the four themes linked together as elements that make LG leadership.

### **3.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

A summary of the identified themes, related sub-themes and their categories are presented in table 3.1.

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<sup>3</sup> All verbatim data excerpts (quotes) are italicised

Table 3.1. The research themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
<b>Theme 1</b>  <b>Leadership in LG determined by Context</b>	<b>1.1 Government: A macro context that determine LG leadership</b>	
	<b>1.2 A specific organisational context determines the nature of leadership</b>	a) Intertwined political/administrative organisational context b) The nature of LG leadership as shaped by entwined political-administrative context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dual leadership: Separate yet interdependent</i></li> <li>• <i>LG collective leadership: A team activity</i></li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2</b>  <b>Leadership qualities required for ensuring efficiency &amp; fit within the LG context</b>	<b>2.1 The life-long learning leader/s</b>	
	<b>2.2 A collective self</b>	
	<b>2.3 A servant first</b>	
<b>Theme 3</b>  <b>The dynamics of the LG leadership</b>	<b>3.1 LG leadership structure &amp; role clarification</b>	
	<b>3.2 Primacy of politics</b>	
	<b>3.3 Interdependent AEL-PEL relationship</b>	
<b>Theme 4</b>  <b>Leadership practices</b>	<b>4.1 Collective practices of Leadership in LG</b>	a) Collaborative functioning b) Participative decision making c) Consultation as collective practice
	<b>4.2 Servant leadership</b>	

### 3.2.1 Theme 1: Leadership in LG determined by Context

Participants drew my attention to the fact that contextual dimensions are imperative in understanding the concept of leadership. The significance of context in any leadership study was strongly argued by the PEL: *Unless the leadership aspect is looked into in its overall context, leadership as a concept may be meaningless.* The ability to make sense of the context in which leadership occurs, therefore, seems a critical step to interpret and understand leadership as a concept from a holistic perspective. The PEL further clarified

context as *that of a team and collective... a municipality – both at political and institutional levels*. The leadership emphasised in this study is clearly that of LG (municipality). The data presupposes that LG leadership is uniquely defined by various interactive constituents. The constituents that emerged as sub-themes in explaining the LG context are:

- The government as a macro context;
- LG as an organisation (municipality: the unique political/administrative structure; and the entwined political/administrative nature of leadership, uniquely constructed by its context as:
  - dual leadership
  - collective leadership

These sub-themes are depicted in Figure 3.1 below.

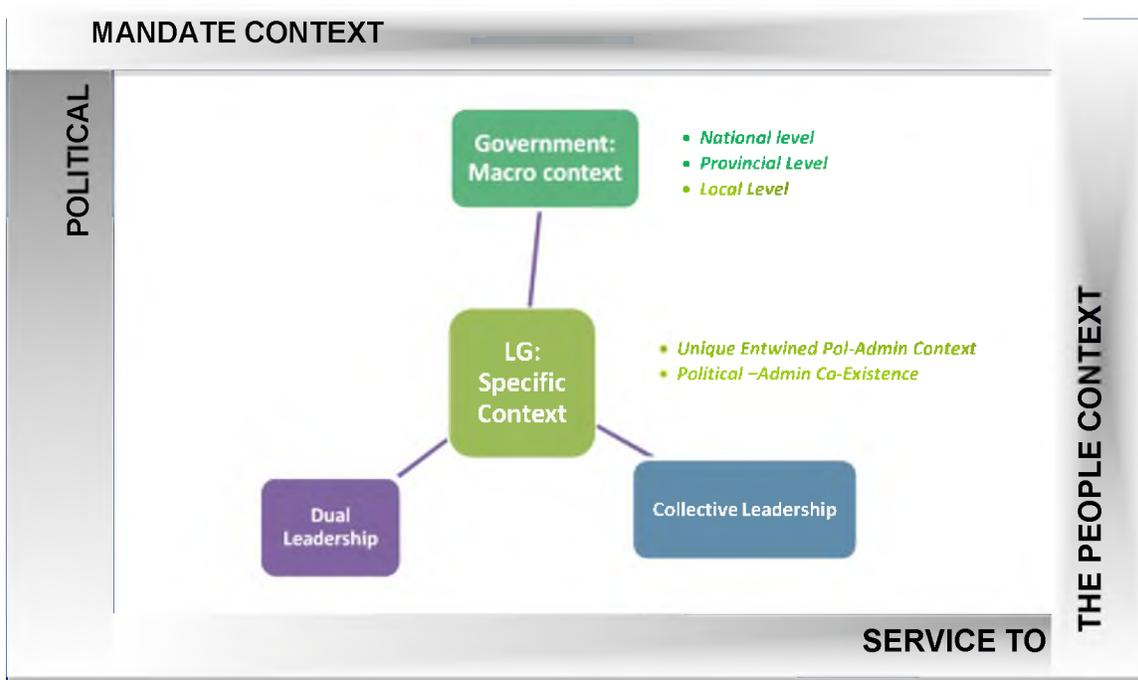


Figure 3.1: Leadership in LG determined by context

### 3.2.1.1 Government: A macro context determining LG leadership

Incipient from the data is the sector context that was identified as a broad government context. The need to recognise and acknowledge the broad government sector was further directly and indirectly emphasised and insisted upon by most participants, who claimed that government as a setting was different from the private sector. Confirming the differences between government and private sector (Van Wart, 2011) were focus group participants FG2-P3 and FG1-P1, who respectively echoed: *you see, this environment (government) is not a corporate environment like a corporate bank, where some would look at the PEL as a CEO or something like that. The issue is, those analogies do not work as you cannot compare the private sector with government – specifically local government. The AEL also distinguished government from the private sector with his allusion to the levels of government sectors: National government prior to my appointment at the municipality, gave me enough exposure to the simple to complex administrative issues, understanding of the flows between national and provincial governments.* Clarified by the excerpt is that government consists of three levels, national, provincial and LG (municipality). A discrete differentiation of government from the private sector is the PEL's *service to the people*, which he clarified as the fundamental agenda permeating across all levels of government. Supporting the research participants' view, Goodwin (2006) and Van Wart (2011; 2013) confirms the main distinction of government from the private sector as the emphasis on delivery of outcomes as the value measure to the public as compared to the private sector's output measures against customer expectations.

Evolving from the data is a flow of LG from provincial and national government, whereby LG is inherently influenced by government's policies of service to the people. In addition, some of the participants viewed the political mandate as a significant and distinguishing factor of the LG context.

The significance of the political context in LG was highlighted by FG1-P5 who indicated that: *The distinguishing factor about us (LG) from other departments of government and how we function is that while there's a clear mandate of what LG should do,.... there is also a clear mandate politically....I think you do not find it everywhere in government.* What can be inferred from the excerpt is that even though LG extends from broad government as a sub-sector, its political mandate spells out functional differences. The functional difference of LG from its parent context (national and provincial governments) was affirmed by the PEL's statement: *When I came into XYZ organisation, I came to work for LG being from the provincial government. The first thing that I thought was a bit odd about LG was the way it works as an institution.*

The nuanced picture surfacing from the data is that of LG being an operational arm of government carrying out specifically its political mandate. This means that all levels of government (including LG) are embedded in a political environment as confirmed through the AEL's account: *It is my view that there will always be a ruling party that drives government and its policies for the period of the term... and the political mandates of LG at its specific municipalities are mainly to serve the communities.* Kinsella and Mansfield-Schieffman (2006, p.27) confirm the distinctive factor of LG's organisational context from its parent government as the transformation of government policies "into practical offerings that diverse interest in local communities will appreciate."

From the preceding discussion, two critical issues that build towards clarification of the nature of LG leadership emerged. Firstly, the government as macro context places LG at a specific hierarchical level because government consists of three levels – national, provincial and local. As such LG becomes the operational arm of the driving national and provincial government context. The Australian Public Service Commission -APSC (2004), report emphasises the importance of viewing leadership in its

organisational context rather than as a phenomenon independent of that context. Secondly, unique to government as a macro context is its “service to the people” drive and its political mandate. As the operational arm of national and provincial government, LG is uniquely positioned to operationalise the government’s mandate of service to the people. Moreover, LG as an institution is uniquely structured to effectively balance its operations within the particular political mandate of the time. Therefore, LG leadership must operate within and according to these unique yet critical constructs in order to be effective. Subsequent to these viewpoints, a further analysis of the organisational context (LG) to have an insight into the nature of LG leadership was pursued.

### *3.2.1.2 LG: A specific organisational context determining the nature of leadership*

Linked to the previous empirical data, the unique dimensions of government – service to the people and the political mandate that impacts on LG – are more specific and unique LG characteristics, commonly referred to by participants as *entwined political and administrative factors*. These unique characteristics in turn shape the form and nature of LG leadership. Emerging from the research data are constructs referred to by participants as *critical aspect of dual leadership (FG1-P2) and working as a collective (PEL)*.

#### *a) LG Dual leadership: Separate yet Interdependent*

Apparently the political mandate dimension is regarded as overarching, such that LG organisations known as “municipalities” operate *...at both political and institutional (administrative) levels*, (PEL) yet as one and in an entwined political-administrative setting. In confirmation of the findings, Baddeley (2008) and Mawhood (1993) write that a political-administrative entwined setting of LG is to be viewed as a joint factor because focusing separately on the political or administrative aspect but not on their combined dynamic may overlook the

unique contextual feature of leadership in the public sector, specifically in LG. In clarifying the ambiguity of LG's political and administrative intertwined context, the AEL gave this analogy:

*if you draw two prisms, the one prism is the superstructure – your Council with the Mayoral Committee (political leadership team), then this huge part of the other pyramid at the bottom represents administration with points of interaction for both administration and political, that is your touch points.*

In this extract, the political and administrative features are presented as two separate yet continuous structures with a converging tip referred to as the *touch point*. This touch point area is considered as the political-administrative interface. Equally, this interface or touch point is deemed critical to defining the entwined political-administrative context of LG organisations.

SOLACE (2005) commission and Thornhill (2008) interpret the political-administrative interface context as a grey area within which politics are to be distinguished from administration by a particular LG institution's leadership. Emanating from both the data and literature it seems that, although the political-administrative interface is a critical component of LG's organisational context, it is still not clearly defined nor understood because of its complexity. The PEL remarked: *...drawing a line between administration and political structures is a bit of a challenge in itself,* hence each LG's individual organisations (i.e. municipalities) have to define their own boundaries and functioning within the political and administrative intertwined context. FG1-P4 substantiated the comments set out above by stating that:

*.... structure from XYZ is different from other municipalities. At least half of the XYZ structure is not under the direct control of the AEL, as much as the AEL is not within the direct control of the political leadership*

*structure. Hence there is that critical aspect of dual leadership and reporting to the same shareholder. How this is managed has defined successes or breaks of XYZ.*

Interestingly, the empirical data endorses the fact that various LG organisations have to further define the co-existence of the political and administrative context as that of an institutional structure. Making sense of the political-administrative structure framework, firstly, it emerged from the data that touch points are intended to mark boundaries between the political and administrative aspects. It could be argued from this perspective that there is no neat prototype that clearly characterises the intertwined political-administrative structure. According to the data, XYZ organisation is said to be different from other municipalities, that is, each municipality is different from the other.

Despite the unclear prototype, it was evidenced by the empirical data that the political-administrative setting is the primary determining factor of the LG organisational context because it influences the construct and meaning of entwined political-administrative leadership. I am of the view that how each municipality makes sense of this specific context probably shapes the form and effectiveness of its leadership. As such, the AEL cautioned LG organisations to be thorough in how they define their political-administrative touch points. Secondly, while it is clear that the intertwined political-administrative dimension is distinctive of LG organisations, it seems to be a dimension that is critical to the understanding of the nature of LG leadership. In the preceding discussion, the political-administrative interface is suggested as the main guiding factor in intertwined political and administrative leadership and is referred to as “dual leadership”. Evolving from the data, the PEL contextualised dual leadership as:

*...ensuring that the departments (administration) do what they need to do with minimal political interference, while at the same time there is a*

*sound relationship and working together between the political and the administration executive people. I will even move on to say that the administration executive and the managers should not play a political role and the roles must be clear.*

On the basis of the data, dual leadership in LG is about both political and administrative executive leaders working together, yet without interference into each other's roles. FG2-P6 explained dual leadership as *a combination of political focus and specialists' skills to be able to achieve our mandate*. This implies that dual leadership is a blending of the two leaders' responsibilities so as to achieve organisational objectives. The AEL clarified that dual leadership in XYZ was *not about me (AEL) or him (PEL), nor was it personal but entailed a full participation from both sides – political and administration*. According to FG1-P2 there was *no rift between the administration and political leadership*. FG1-P6 added that a dual leadership is most evident *... where the PEL is trying to deal with the strategic issues ... I mean like where he is trying to take the institution forward. This is where he has to work closely with the AEL*.

In support of the data, Schiffman (2005) explains a dualistic kind of leadership as the political-administrative entwined and interfacing process unique to LG leadership, which entails power-sharing by both political and administrative leadership. A common understanding expressed by the AEL is that dual leadership is a pursuance of a dual agenda:

*We had two agendas; at an executive management we had a very strong strategic agenda and at a senior level we invested a lot in designing our agenda which was operational (line departments) as well as the integrated one for the organisation as a whole, about its future and where it was going. Thus there was a lot of investment I've put into working with the leadership structures (political) of the organisation.*

This means that dual leadership's double agenda entails running the administrative operations and concurrently support the political strategic agenda. Concluded from the data is that the specific organisational context influences the nature of leadership, which in this study is LG's dual leadership as opposed to the traditional single leadership approach. Thornhill (2008) and Van Wart (2013) mentions that in LG organisations, dual leadership emphasises the point where political values and administrative realities have to be reconciled. Surfacing from the preceding discussions was an emphasis on dual leadership made up of political and administrative dimensions. Characteristically, these are two separate yet interdependent roles determined by an organisational context as per Figure 3.2 below:

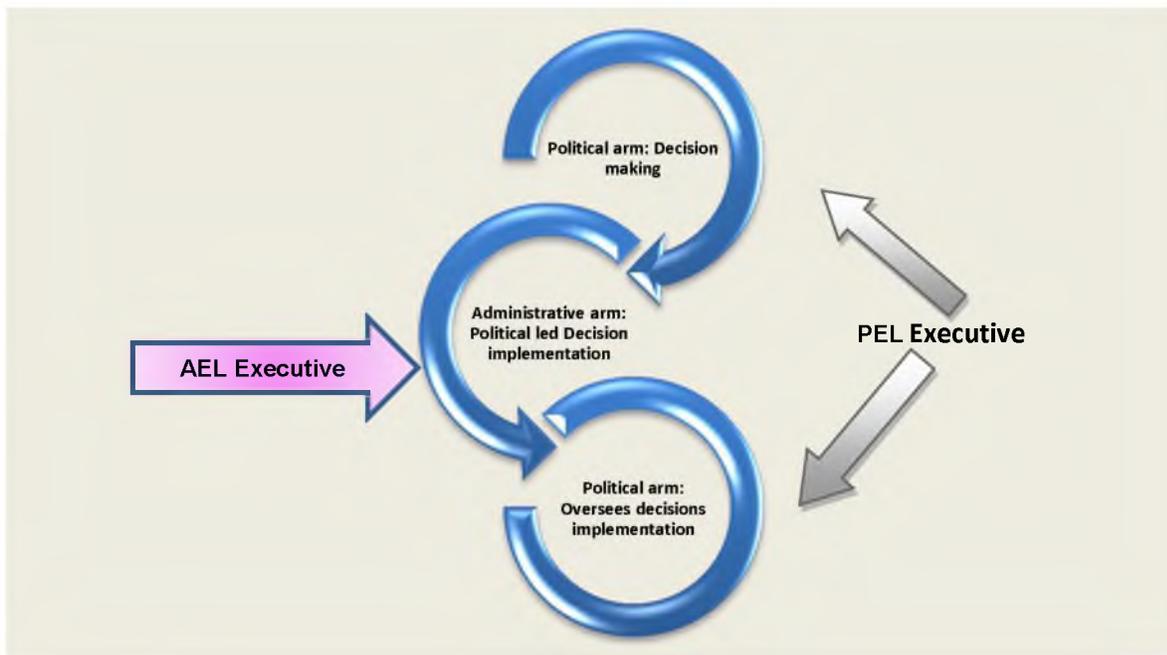


Figure 3.2: Political-administrative roles – overlap and process

In clarifying the differences between the depicted two roles, the PEL said:

*The roles between the head of the administration departments and the political arm were clearly defined; such that the political arm oversees the*

*functioning of departments and the administrative arm is responsible for the implementation of resolutions.*

Even though the PEL explained the given knowledge about dual leadership roles, the AEL argued that these two roles are *not clinically defined in the system... and they need to be negotiated while they evolve*. Confirmed by one of the administrative focus group participants, FG1-P4 was the fact that:

*... where in the system they've been successfully negotiated one can see the consequences in terms of good (leadership) results; and where they haven't been successfully negotiated the political leadership interference in administration is observed; and this creates problems.*

As can be evidenced from the data, the significant issue is that the AEL takes cues from and is also accountable to the authority of political leadership within the dual leadership. The dual-leadership dynamics caution us to recognise the political setting as a critical determinant of the overall leadership of LG organisations. I deem the dual leadership aspect key to this LG leadership study because it confines the actual conceptualisation of leadership. Secondly, while there is no clinical differentiation of the political-administrative interface, there is a strong indication that both political and administrative leadership run concurrently and complementarily, resulting in leadership that is shared and dual. On the other hand, the non-clinical demarcation of dual-leadership roles suggests that, beyond given knowledge of separated political and administrative powers, there are interferences of both into each other's space.

Shown in the data is the potential conflict of the two powers, which in my view may perpetuate deviation from contextual dual leadership. This could mean that the organisational context may be restrictive to leadership options, unless

leadership roles and powers are shared to ensure leadership effectiveness. Consequently, in the context of LG, separate functioning of political and administrative leadership is not an option; hence the need to negotiate co-existence. The two executives specified that in dual leadership collectiveness is important because LG leadership is a shared team activity.

b) LG Collective leadership: A team activity

When the key participants were asked to clarify the dual context of leadership in an administrative-political interface, the AEL participant emphasised: *at XYZ, it was team work. In this context, I am referring to the PEL and the Mayoral Committee members – as these are political leaders, together with the administration team that lead as one combined core team.* In agreement with the AEL, the PEL stated: *....having a team at a political executive- as well as administrative executive levels was a critical accomplishment.* Drawn from both key participants' statements, the AEL and the PEL with their subordinates, executive directors and MMCs respectively formed the core team. In this study, the core team establishment was perceived as crucial to the success of the LG leadership. Giving perspective to this emphasis, the PEL elaborated:

*Yes, I believe that individuals are important and do matter, and they do add an important element in the overall contribution of leadership. For me, being a leader is about me working together with others, building teams and also ensuring that not only do we have a team at a political executive level but at an administrative executive level as well. Yes, we were a team both at political and administration levels as we began to move together towards the right direction; and if you work very well with each other you eventually become a family.*

Emerging from the excerpt are two types of teams: the independent yet interdependent political team and the administration team, which, all the same, converge to operate as an integrated team. Smith, Borgvalla and Lif (2007) refer to this form of inter-team as a “collective”. Sinha (2012) describe a collective as two or more teams that interoperate in an environment defined by a common set of collective mandates and objectives, where each member of the team fulfils a different but complementary role. Such an inter-team was referred to by the AEL and the PEL as the *core* or *family* respectively. While FG1-P2 pointed out: *the PEL and the AEL were willing to work together as a team so as to achieve the objective of the organisation*, FG2-P6 confirmed inter-team functioning as *the source of our organisational stability*. In the same vein, the AEL accentuated team functioning at both AEL and PEL level and at the level of the bigger team (members of the mayoral committee and executive directors) levels as he related:

*....and the sitting arrangements, I like making these table analogy; it was almost like I am sitting here on the side of the table with him on my left (as he always sat on the left physically), and we (AEL & PEL) are holding everyone to account. Literally they came in pairs (SMs and their MMCs) when we get individual performance management done and this would be supported by the panel....*

Evolving from the data, leadership is less of an individual context and more a collective and shared activity. This accords an interactive engagement between political and administrative leadership with an intention to work as an inter-team or collective as opposed to two separate teams. Thus, the PEL’s emphasis on collective functioning as he stated: *as a person I work in the context of the collective*. In support of the PEL’s assertion FG2-P4 articulated that *we are a collective, we know what he wants - to work as a collective*. The preceding statements confirm that political-administrative context shape the

leadership practice of LG organisations into an inter-team, which is collective in nature. Furthermore, it implies that both AEL and PEL form an executive collective team at the apex of LG leadership, while they also continually reinforce the bigger team that is inclusive of their subordinates, so as to build the organisation's broader collective core team. This collective leadership formation and practice could be interpreted as having a pluralistic standpoint (van Wart, 2011), which, in my view, is a cumulative leadership dispersed between political and administrative leaderships so as to enhance effectiveness of the LG leadership.

On the basis of the analysis, it is indicative that the LG leadership concept and its meaning are explained by its specific context. By implication LG, with its unique contextually determined leadership, demands a particular nature or qualities of leaders to function effectively within its context. The findings suggest that organisational context is likely to influence the leadership attributes and process required for leadership of a particular organisational environment. As the preceding theme discussed in detail the definitive context of LG leadership and the form of leadership (dual and collective), the next theme focuses on the nature of the executive leaders and their fit into LG organisation's context.

### **3.2.2 Theme 2: Leadership Qualities required for ensuring Efficiency and Fit within the LG Context**

From the data it was evident that the process of emerging as a leader in the LG context and leaders' critical qualities determine the goodness of fit between the leader and the LG leadership role. Therefore theme 2 focuses on the qualities of leaders that are required for fit within the LG leadership. This theme with its sub-themes – lifelong learning, a collective self, and a servant-self – is depicted in Figure 3.3.

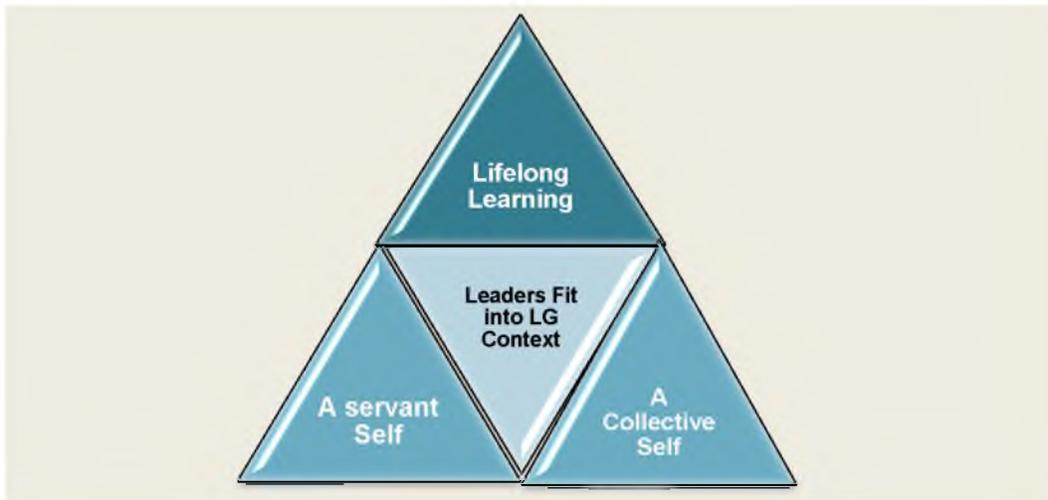


Figure 3.3: The leader's nature as a good "fit" for LG leadership

### 3.2.2.1 The lifelong learning leader(s)

In discussion with both executive leaders about their leadership I noted with keen interest their self-expressions as being less than a leader or still learning and growing into their leadership roles. In this regard, the AEL said:

*I am a reluctant leader, because I always couldn't define myself as a leader. When I say a leader by accident it's because I have always seen myself as a turnkey, someone who would do a bit of research, sit behind the scenes, run around and make kings of the few people that would make key decisions. I actually found myself occupying a position of the head of administration in XYZ.*

Similarly, the PEL emphasised that:

*there are instances where you find leaders who have natural ability, who are outstanding and whose leadership is acknowledged and accepted.....the Mandelas of this World and so on. But in relation to many of us, we learn leadership and we tend to attain it over a period of time.*

Emanating from the data, the key research participants – the PEL and AEL – emerged as LG leaders because of their intentional and unintended continual learning about leadership. While the AEL saw his being in an LG executive leadership role as unintentional, the PEL asserted that it is through his continual learning of leadership that he is in the role rather than his inherent qualities of leadership. The PEL's statement on continual learning was confirmed by both administrative and political focus groups when the FG2-P2 in particular said:

*When he says he is learning, he means it. That willingness to say I like the idea, can I learn more about it, is so evident in him. At work and outside work situations, during informal interaction like we are now, should you say to the PEL, I have read this book or I have this CD about this issue; he thinks nothing of saying to you, 'will you or could I use it', you know.*

Fischer (2000) explains this incessant learning as a lifelong learning, which entails a continuous engagement in acquiring knowledge and skills with the intention not to grow in a separate place, but to become integrated in the workplace. It is obvious that neither the PEL nor AEL rose to their executive positions by virtue of being born leaders but that they worked their way up through knowledge and skills acquired during their lifelong learning.

Seemingly, the key participants' learning was influenced by the government context in which they faced political- and community-related challenges and then later in their careers they got exposed to LG. They used their various work settings as learning opportunities in order to acquire government-, and consequently, LG knowledge and skills. The AEL stated: *exposure at different levels made it safe enough for me to work in the municipality, to understand and have an appreciation of what gives the municipality a good stance.* What is emerging from the AEL's comments is that exposure to different levels of the

government context empowers an individual with learned knowledge of the setting, sense making and understanding of organisational dynamics. In addition to the AEL's statement, the PEL stressed the importance of being prepared to want to learn when joining government, specifically the LG setting, so as to develop a passion for LG work. He stated: ... *to work for government and LG can sometimes be a painful effort and task.... so people must have passion and want do the work at LG level.* Comparing the PEL's assertion with that of the AEL one can deduce that pre-exposure to a government and/or LG context provides an individual with an opportunity to learn and make sense of government institutions. However, not only does exposure to government, particularly LG, provide a learning opportunity to individuals but also a character patterning that can withstand challenges of government, specifically LG. Some of the characteristics to be learned from the government setting are self-motivation and passion for LG work.

According to Soni (2012), lifelong learners are not defined by the type of learning in which they are involved but by the personal characteristics that lead to such involvement. This suggests that individuals or leaders that accept involvement in LG should be distinguished as self-motivated and passionate lifelong learners. These characteristics in turn enhance adaptability to the LG setting as well as readiness for institutional leadership, which are dual and collective leadership. To this effect, the AEL emphasised:

*When operating at an executive level you need to believe in the policies and its direction to be able to implement. I feel if people do not believe in such policies they shouldn't even apply for such positions because you have to subscribe in them maybe subscribe is a harsher way of putting it (laughs); but that's my stance.*

One can infer from the statement set out immediately above that once in a LG leadership role such a leader must have conviction in LG's political vision as

articulated in its policies and subscribe to or change its organisation's norms. Linked to the data is Motshekga-Sebolai's (2003) assertion that lifelong learners are characterised as people with vision who are adaptive to change because change is viewed as a challenge and an enabler of problem solving. This implies that leaders who choose to participate in LG leadership should have an unwavering belief in LG's norms and values yet, through continuous learning (lifelong learning), resolve problems brought about by the context while adapting to its changing demands. Furthermore, as a result of continuous (lifelong) learning the key participants acquired context-specific leadership skills and attributes that prepared them for dual leadership in which they were to work as a collective. In that regard, the AEL said:

*The early building blocks and the lessons I picked up from ABC were huge ...On the social side I think it taught me what it means to look after the needs of the people,.....on the other hand I had to understand how budgets are being put together, how decisions around limited resources are taken....It gave me exposure to policy issues at a macro level. My role fortunately had got a lot to do with municipalities as I had to put together some form of infrastructure....I gained good exposure re: negotiation skills, policy architecture and how the bureaucracy of government works.*

What is indicated in this extract is that the administrative leader's qualities were gained in the process of his lifelong learning and resulted in his emergence into the leadership role. In this regard, the acquired context-relevant qualities were: budget management, altruism (serving others), decision making, being a government policy architect and learning its administrative dynamics. Seemingly these qualities enhanced the AEL's effective administrative leadership in LG's dual leadership role. In the same vein, the PEL passionately articulated how he has built others by encouraging them to learn continuously. He said:

*I can talk about what I can do to build others and the organisation but how I had a long tenure, others are better positioned to relate to that. I allow them to make mistakes but do make improvements from what they have learned. For me that's how people in the workplace should be. I want people that are able to adjust; that are what people should be and they must learn from here what I offer them. I would want people to be better or improve their lives and their careers.*

What can be deduced from the PEL's statement are the leader's humility and empowerment of others. The PEL stated: *sometimes people grow into being passionate about what they do, such that we were looking into those kinds of characteristics, eagerness to learn so that an individual learn all the time, be open to being influenced positively and influence others as such.* Also, FG1-P4 highlighted that the leadership (the AEL in particular) was open-minded and willing to learn from them whilst empowering them.

*For me there was an attentive and embracing of ideas but not without asking a lot of interrogating questions. Hence I'm saying he (AEL) had an open mind in term of inputs. He didn't however accept concepts/ ideas on face value. As long as you were showing the value add that you could bring into the organisation he would give you a listening ear. For me he had an open mind in terms of new things.*

The PEL was keen on continuous improvement, as he stated: *What is also critical for me in leadership is the ability to think and engage at level of ideas and make things happen.*

In summary, what can be inferred from the data is the notion that, firstly, the traits of leaders are certain in leadership. Yet, individuals' voluntary engagement in lifelong learning during their exposure towards various work environments contributes significantly to the development of leadership

qualities. Such qualities augment leadership readiness and effectiveness within a specific leadership context. Secondly, lifelong learning within a specific context like government and LG provides those learning to lead with the opportunity to contextualise the setting and emerge as leaders that fit the context or an environment. I assume that making sense of the environment may not be valuable without patterning one's character to fit such context. Consequently, the PEL's emphasis on readiness and passion to adapt to the context – government and/or LG – is critical for LG to be effective. Thirdly, from the study it is deduced that context-specific lifelong learners (both political and administrative leaders) have particular characteristics patterned by the setting so as to enable their good fit into LG's (specifically) dual leadership. These characteristics are:

- Self- motivation: namely, self-directed learning within the context with the intention to understand and master the context dynamics and its leadership complexities;
- Passion towards leadership context: passionate about the context of leadership and willingness to belong;
- Political vision: unwavering belief in LG's unique characteristics and willingness to implement according to its norms and values; and
- Adaptability to change: flexibility towards changing demands of the context and through continuous learning acquires problem-solutions as demanded of the context changes.

Fourthly, the data identified learned qualities specific to each leader (political and administrative) as a result of their lifelong learning. The administrative leader's learned qualities that befit LG's administrative leadership within dual leadership are: budget management, negotiation skills, cognitive thinking (comprehension of government complexities and decision-making processes) and altruism (serving others).

Similarly, the political leader's lifelong learned qualities that enhance effective political leadership in LG are: altruism (although not evident in this theme but prevalent in themes 1, 3, 4), empowerment of others and humility.

### 3.2.2.2 *A Collective self*

Contrary to relational self-identities, which emanate from relationships with significant others, collective social identity does not require personal relationships among members (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011). Instead these relationships come from identification with a group, an organisation, or a social category. At the collective level, identification implies a psychological 'merging' of self into a group that leads an individual to see the self as similar to other members of the collective, to ascribe group-defining characteristics to the self, and to take the collective's interest to heart (Haslam et al., 2011; Van Knippenberg, 2006). Extracted from the preceding data and discussions is the AEL's self-description as a *turnkey* and a *leader by accident* while the PEL described himself as a *leader in learning*. The AEL's self-conception is extended more to supporting and serving significant others than self: *...I've always seen myself as someone who would ....sit behind the scenes, run around and make kings of the few people*. Similarly, the PEL's self-conception emphasised the collective self and a learning leader.

Actually, both leaders displayed a collective identity, even though it was more evident with the PEL. Notably, both leaders' self-perception was marked by collective identity, humble opinion of themselves and low self-importance in their leadership roles. Interestingly, then, collective identity seems to be an integral part of the LG context and its leadership. Peck and Dickson's (2009) attribution to the emerging collective self is that context exposure influences self-concept of who emerges as a leader that is to fit the specific setting, its leadership dynamics and practices.

### 3.2.2.3. A servant first

Servant leaders portray a resolute conviction and strong character by taking on not only the role of a servant but also the nature of a servant, which is demonstrated by their total commitment to serve other people (Jaworski, 1997; Northouse, 2012). According to Autry (2001) the servant nature in leadership is characterised by humility, integrity, accountability and vulnerability. This type of character is evident in both the PEL and AEL statements: The PEL stated:

*What is critical in my tenure is improving the communities' lives (says with passion) for these people to find meaning and comfort from services rendered by XYZ as part of local government serviced delivery mandate. This keeps me awake at night. I will only have peace when most of the XYZ areas are confidently pronounced service delivery area by this institution (expression of sadness).*

In the same line, the AEL attributed his valuing of people to political environmental exposure that shaped him into a 'servant first' character. In this regard he said:

*on the social side I think it (ABC organisation) taught me what it means to look after the needs of the people, and have empathy towards them. It taught me that it is not just about mutual settlement of problems or helping the recipients of service but putting people first.*

Whereas the AEL's experiential learning shaped his behaviour towards serving others, the PEL's beliefs and values about work and leadership in government were anchored in a passion to serve others.

Further emergence from the data is the willingness to be part of the LG setting so as to be able to serve others. The PEL pronounced: *I did need people who*

*want to serve... because for me people must love what they do. With this I mean I needed to ensure that the well-being of people was a core priority.* Additionally, both executive leaders identified with role models that are unreservedly committed to serving the needs of others. AEL and PEL both valued and identified with altruistic and egalitarian role models as confirmed by their respective statements. Whereas the AEL stated: *I tend to gravitate towards such people... people that serve others' needs and even beyond;* the PEL added:

*my role models are people that did work behind the scenes and their impact goes beyond what we can see, their ability to grasp the fact that the life of people especially poorest of the poor deserves attention by us.... and being able to give without expecting anything in return.*

An interesting observation is the significance of how the PEL encrypted the above qualities into his leadership and organisational goals in his statement:

*I must emphasise that I wanted my political team – MMCs - to be clear that needs of the people are well met. The question of service to others was to determine the way we work with the intention to meet the needs of the communities. What is critical in my tenure is improving the communities' lives (says with passion); for these people to find meaning and comfort from services rendered by XYZ as part of LG service delivery mandate.*

Meanwhile the AEL had assimilated altruism and egalitarianism into his behaviour as he described his leadership role as less than that of a leader but a *chauffeur* to his political leader. He articulated:

*Being an executive leader in administration is a thankless job and you need not seek rewards. However, when there are problems and work to*

*be done it is the AEL that has to move and do the job, but when there are awards, it's the PEL who receives the award; ..... but most of all, I am proud of my contribution to the organisation.*

His self-conception as a *chauffeur* affirms his internalisation of being a servant towards the political leadership as well as the organisational goals and priorities. Halligan (2004) warns that in some respects the notion of leadership in a public sector might be considered antithetical to the fact that administrative leadership serves the political leadership in helping them realise their policy programmes.

As stated earlier, it is noticeable that the PEL incorporated serving others as his leadership mission and organisational goal; whereas the AEL's servant-self is anchored as a source of his leadership success through which to support his counterpart – the PEL. According to the PEL, all other organisational goals except serving others are peripheral, as FG2-P5 highlighted:

*One of the things in terms of the service, it is the PEL's constant reminder both in formal and informal meetings or interactions that everything else is peripheral; but the wellbeing of the people is key, irrespective of other issues that might be going on. His ability to constantly focus the collective on the wellbeing of the people is particularly useful to us.*

Also, emerging from the data is both the administrative and political executive leaders' emphasis on integrity and professionalism. Whereas the PEL highlighted these as critical and compulsory qualities to be possessed by any LG employee, the AEL prided himself for having lived these values to the end of his leadership tenure, as he cited:

*You know I took pride that I ran multi-billion rand procurement processes without hitting the front pages of the newspapers...It's fine. I can be on*

*the front pages of the newspapers for not billing properly but not for having awarded a R500 million project without having followed due process.*

Affirming both leaders' characteristics, FG1-P3 stated:

*The AEL tirelessly contributed to the organisation's stability without compromise of his integrity. This is still a challenge to most of the leadership in LG. The good thing is that the PEL actually reinforced integrity, ethical behaviour and accountability to both administration and political leadership.*

Incipient from the data is that both leaders' qualities are highly esteemed behavioural attributes. FG2-P2 said:

*One thing that made the PEL even with the previous AEL was the PEL's incorruptible value system. It is so strong that even if he receives 5 cents he registers it. He is a man that is very clean; you can put him through the eye of the needle. That's what makes me want to work for him.*

In the same vein, FG1-P4 stated: *As my colleague has said, yes we are a proud team as we had been led by a selfless AEL, who gave himself to the organisation for no extra gain.* Also, the AEL's appreciation of others is confirmed by FG1- P1: *During MP's (AEL) term in particular we felt appreciated. He could interact with us at a social level. He valued our inputs although during reviews you would see a different MP – hard and unreasonable at times.*

Similarly, FG1-P5 affirmed:

*The issue of the PEL being a person of integrity, people generally respected. At the same time people knew that even when he pushes hard he is trying to push the collective to achieve the common outcomes. It is also about his humility, integrity and collective leadership that have built up into people's minds in terms of his image and how we experienced him from time to time.*

The distinguishable servant's first characteristics (humility, altruism, egalitarianism, integrity, diligence and trustworthiness) of the executive team (PEL & AEL) were experienced by their subordinates as unifying factors of the collective. Secondly, both leaders' value systems and qualities are exemplary to their subordinates and evidently heightened respect towards their leadership. Some of the qualities identified from the data such as integrity, honesty and altruism are confirmed by Russell (2001) as core leadership characteristics. Lastly, identified in the data is both executive leaders' commitment to building a relationship of trust with each other. Kouzes and Posner (1987; 2012) explain that trust is unquestionably of greatest importance in establishing leader credibility and it is at the heart of fostering the collaboration of the team members.

#### *3.2.2.4 The Leaders' nature and "fit" into LG leadership*

Based on the analysis thus far, it can be seen that the LG leadership concept is explained by its specific context. To this end the data analysis spawned the idea that the personal qualities of the political and administrative executive leaders emerged as a response to the demands of the dualistic and collective nature of LG leadership. Picking up further on the leaders' sense of self is their readiness to accept a leadership role that further shapes their fit into administrative-political dual leadership. Ospina and Schall (2001) argue that

leadership emerges when a leader makes sense of events in a context and invents its activities into the sense of self. Linked to Ospina and Schall's assertion is the AEL's sense making of political demands in his statement:

*I do not want to use the word "political appointments" but in this environment, there'll always be one or two appointments that go through the cracks and its either you fight it and make your work difficult or you accommodate it and work around it; and hopefully that you can build that person to be at a level that you would want him/her to perform at.*

Associated with these arguments is the fact that the AEL's nature influenced optimistic interactions with the PEL and enhanced the AEL's readiness towards a LG leadership role. Inferred from the data is the AEL's learned behaviour to compromise to the benefit of leadership success within the dual leadership. On the other hand, the PEL's nature is inferred from the data as that of servant leader. FG2-P2 acclaimed that:

*No matter which setting you see the PEL in, his absolute humility really suggests that he fits in with my own view of servant leadership. I would agree that whenever there are difficult decisions to make, controversial decisions; the PEL's view is always – let's take it to the collective and let's bring the collective wisdom on this issue.*

What can be deduced from the extract is that the PEL's nature accentuates a collective view and servant leadership in order to serve others. Similarly, his thoughts, feelings and behaviour evolve around the belief of leadership being service to the people. He said: *It is important that we commit ourselves to the improvement of lives, make a better future and be able to look back and appreciate what we have done for others.*

Altogether, the LG context requires sharing, collective and servant leadership qualities in order for its leadership to be effective. To this end, the AEL and the PEL have displayed willingness to share the leadership as a collective as opposed to working as separate individuals. Meanwhile, both the AEL and the PEL have embraced servant leadership characteristics that have enabled them to fit into the required LG context and mandate of service to the people. Taken from the discussions on this theme, it is apparent that there are critical and specific qualities that best fit LG, such as a desire to learn continuously from and in LG leadership, a collective self and being servant first. However, how the nature of both leaders unfolds and enhances effective LG leadership permeates the broader dynamics of leadership and specific LG leadership practices as demonstrated in themes 3 and 4 respectively.

### **3.2.3 Theme 3: The Dynamics of LG Leadership**

From the preceding discussion it is concluded that the macro and the unique organisational context influence both the nature of the leadership (dual and collective) as well as leaders' qualities that enable them to fit into this specific LG leadership context. Building on this conceptual analysis, the third theme that emerged from the data is: the dynamics of the LG's dual- and collective leadership. This theme includes three sub-themes that emerged as a framework of the LG dual and collective leadership dynamics, and these are:

- LG leadership structure and role clarification;
- Primacy of politics; and
- Interdependent political-administrative relations.

A conceptual model of the theme with its sub-themes is presented in Figure 3.4.

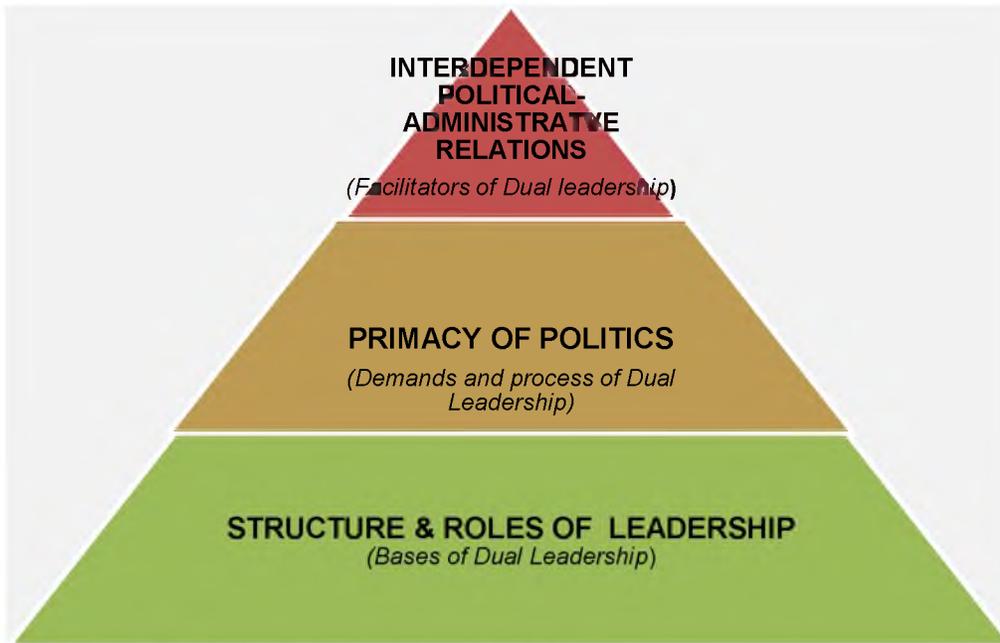


Figure 3.4: The dynamics of LG leadership

### 3.2.3.1 Leadership structure and role clarification

As discussed in theme 1, LG leadership functions within a unique overlapping political-administrative structure. In order to understand the process of overlap that is marked by the actual operationalisation of the dual leadership by the collective team, the PEL stressed the importance of clarifying political and administrative role structures, as these structures can be the main driver of or disruption to leadership execution in LG. The PEL stated:

*Role clarification is one of those things XYZ (organisation) achieved much earlier than most... as these are the makes and breaks of a municipal environment and leadership. When other municipalities were still grappling with interference by political powers into administrative issues like councillors clashing with the administration managers, we had already passed that phase as we made sure that we clarify roles at the establishment of the organisation. That was our breakthrough as an organisation.*

This statement from the PEL emphasises two points. Firstly, it highlights the importance of distinguishing the political structure (councillors) from administration (management) so as to ensure an absolute separation of the two. An unambiguous differentiation of political and administrative structures curbs intrusion of political and administrative leaderships into each other's roles, and minimises conflicts and power struggles between the political and administrative leadership. Secondly, succinct role clarification ensures co-functioning between political and administrative leaderships. The co-functioning further enhances effective operationalisation of the dual leadership by the collective, resulting in organisational success.

In distilling the LG leadership roles the PEL contended:

*If you take into account an administrative level, the AEL is legally speaking, the accounting officer of the organisation. The overall responsibility of the accounting officer is the implementation of the decisions by the Mayoral Committee (led by the PEL).*

From the data, the administrative leadership's role is clarified as that of an accounting officer - who runs the institution and ensures implementation of resolutions and decisions from the political leadership. Similarly, FG1-P1 explained the political leadership's main role being, *giving a very clear political direction without compromise*. Linking the excerpt with the previous data, the political leadership's typical role is to provide political leadership, organisational decision making and overseeing the functions of the administrative leadership. Additionally, the AEL said:

*In my instance, I had a very strong PEL, ... who would want nothing to do with administration. So anything that was administrative was my problem. He wouldn't want to take any accountability on administrative issues, and*

*that helped me as I understood his style. Also, those initial attempts that people can lobby political issues from the administration fell apart.*

This statement illustrates not only the importance of role clarification between political and administrative leadership but recognition of role demarcation and leaders' needs to function within the confines of their roles (Getha-Taylor et al., 2012). Also, a firm political leadership stance on functioning within the role boundaries seems critical in safeguarding against the likelihood of administration mobilising political support, which would result in interference in political issues (Van Wart, 2003).

The preceding discussions suggest that it is critical to timely and concisely demarcate political and administrative role structures within the context of LG. This implies that 'make or break' issues between political and administrative leadership roles are dependent on the defined role structures that each of the two leaders work by and that form their world view from which they are to operate. This means that the administrative leadership has to constantly conceptualise the leadership role from the point of view of both political and administrative standpoints. Equally, it is anticipated that the political leadership should assume positional direction (Haslam et al., 2011) and demonstrate role confidence within the dual leadership without interfering with administrative roles. I deduce from the data that what makes LG leadership effective and enhances its operationalisation is highly dependent on:

- The clear demarcation of political and administrative structures and the succinct definition of the roles and responsibilities;
- Both the PEL and the AEL's recognition and respect of role boundaries; and
- Both the PEL and the AEL executing their functional responsibilities through cooperative functioning with each other.

Besides clarified roles of both political and administrative leaderships, the PEL warned about the contextualisation of leadership roles in dual and collective leadership. Apparently, effective operationalisation of the clarified LG leadership roles is guided by a “primacy of politics” and this leads us to the second sub-theme of the dynamics of the LG leadership.

### 3.2.3.2 *Primacy of politics*

The PEL explained “primacy of politics” (PoP) as:

*if you work in a government institution, there is what we call “primacy of politics” over everything else. What I mean exactly is, what your political principal says goes. If you do not do that; there’s going to be collision sooner rather than later.*

This statement is indirectly indicative of primacy of politics as awareness through recognition of political supremacy and being sensitive to its directives.

The PEL further clarified:

*In running a government institution, it’s very easy to come to the conclusion that ‘I am in charge’, especially if you work with people who do not want to be macro-managed. It’s very easy for you to come to the conclusion ‘I am in charge’ because I am the accounting officer and even do as you please.*

Emanating from the earlier discussions, the assumption about political and administrative leaders’ role clarification may easily imply that in practice, leadership operationalisation is an orderly process. Linked to the actuality of primacy of politics that determines the meaning of being in charge by the administrative role, there seems to be underlying challenges of execution even after clarification and recognition of role boundaries. The PEL cautions against

the administrative leadership's assumption of being in charge. He postulates that it is not uncommon for the accounting officer (AEL) to assume being in charge to mean being in authority.

Inferred from the data is the indication that the AEL may overlook the political supremacy (what your political principal says goes), which among others is the fact of 'being in charge' but under the power and authority of the political leadership. This points out that the practical execution of dual leadership may cloud the distinction of who holds the power and the leadership authority. For example, failure of the administrative leadership to yield to the overlapping political authority and its directive may be interpreted as a lack of political astuteness evidenced through a disregard for the political supremacy, which lack could impede dual leadership. It seems, however, in this study that the AEL participant recognised political authority as he saw his leadership role as that of uplifting the political leadership by accepting the centre of power and authority as that of the political leadership. In this respect he acknowledged:

*A successful administrative executive is the one that chauffeurs the mayor (PEL)... and should be able to anticipate, put things on the table and come up with a range of options. This should not be applicable to the mayor as an individual but to the mayoral committee as a whole. At the end I should be able to say, it is your decision as the political executive but these are the options. I then learned to say... Yes Mr Mayor.*

From the AEL's statement, it is evident that success of dual leadership is augmented by the administrative leadership's recognition of political supremacy as the centre of power and authority. Consequently, the AEL dared to humble and submit himself to political supremacy and translated the 'in charge' role to mean serving the political leadership. In the same vein, FG2-P1 argued that:

*...in a political environment if you consult and take decisions on the basis of a collective, once you've honoured those principles you can't go wrong. That I think he (the PEL) does very well to the point that at times we feel it's too much.*

This means that even though the PEL gives political direction and makes critical decisions, he is also obliged to recognise the collective political leadership as the critical overall authority of the LG leadership. Evidently it is vital for both political and administrative leaders not to be oblivious of the overarching political authority and its landscape because obliviousness can be the primary breaking point ('collision' sooner or later) of dual leadership in LG. The AEL's cognisance of and sensitivity towards the political landscape and authority is affirmed in the data. In clarifying the preceding verbatim statement by the PEL on primacy of politics, FG1-P1 confirmed:

*...the distinguishing factor of us at XYZ in terms of political context, our administrative leadership had insight into this context. This elevated him (AEL) above the constant conflicts between political and administration as it is the case across LG as well as other departments of government.*

This means that absence of political awareness by the administrative leadership may be regarded as lack of primacy of politics, resulting in a negative impact of the administrative leadership within dual leadership. On the other hand, FG2-P1 stated that political leadership, by: *giving a very clear political direction without compromise ensures cohesion between political and administrative leaderships*, which emphasises the required political astuteness of the PEL as well. Political astuteness is further contextualised by FG1-P4:

*...because it is a political environment and a reality of the job, if there is lack of political savvy along the administrative leadership to influence at a high level, then there is a challenge. Administrative leadership has to*

*have political savvy, so as to understand operations within the political space. That doesn't mean though that you must go operate actively within that space because then it becomes very dangerous. That type of thing does happen. What made XYZ work was that those things were managed and it wasn't overtly done.*

Seemingly, political astuteness empowers the administrative leadership to influence the political supremacy, hence enabling the AEL to effectively co-function within the political space of dual leadership while being conscious of parameters of operation. Ensuing from the preceding discussions is that both successes and obstacles of LG leadership are embedded in the primacy of politics, which is political supremacy and astuteness. Apparently, the administrative leadership's familiarity with primacy of politics, that is being politically savvy and upholding political supremacy of power and authority, enables effective dual leadership in LG. Therefore, recognition of the political leadership's power and authority by the administrative leadership is through submission to the political supremacy, which marks political awareness or astuteness. Equally, the political leadership's political astuteness is demonstrated in recognition of the collective landscape of politics prior to decision making. In summary, primacy of politics means political astuteness, which is the awareness of and sensitivity towards the interplay of politics with organisational purpose. I infer therefore that primacy of politics is the leadership ability of both the PEL and AEL to conceptualise and respect the political leadership as the supreme authority whose power lies in the collective team. This means that political astuteness of both the PEL and the AEL contributes to effective operationalisation of dual leadership of the LG institutions.

Stewart (2006) emphasises that significant to both role clarifications and political astuteness is mutual understanding of each other's roles and teamwork in the form of a collective. However, Sinha (2012) and Van Wart

(2011) note that we should not expect this to be achieved intuitively but through good relations between the political and administrative leadership (Stewart, 2006). Therefore, the relationship between the administrative and political executives is the next sub-theme that defines the effective operationalisation of LG leadership.

### 3.2.3.3 *Interdependent PEL and AEL relationship*

When both the PEL and the AEL were interviewed about their relations with each other, they acknowledged that although they both had a broad and common understanding of working together as the organisation's leadership they had multi-faceted challenges. The AEL articulated succinctly that: *Our relationship - I and the mayor didn't start just rosy but we both worked hard at it..... I think it was tough for the first two years or so.* This previous statement confirms that the early phase of the political and administrative leadership was not a natural, easy evolving relationship but something they both had to work hard at, with challenges and strains along the way. The AEL acknowledged the source of strain from his side due to his poor judgment that led to him transferring his previous working relations into his new leadership role. He articulated his poor judgement as follows:

*Remember, I described this close comrade working relationship; in fact I used to call it the triangle relationship in my previous life before I became the AEL. I misread the changes in the political dynamics and I did not realise that the triangle was not going to work. It worked very well for me before I was the AEL. The previous three of us – head of caucus, head of political executive and I – related very well and we understood each other as individuals. We always said to each other that, wherever there are gaps at any part of the triangle there are problems! We used to live and swear by that triangle.*

*I think I took the same triangle when I became the AEL. My relationship, however, was not that strong as the one before the AEL.*

On the basis of this extract, the AEL did not allow the natural evolving of the relationship between himself and the PEL, but transferred the triad relationship dynamics into the dual leadership. He affirmed that his application of the previously successful relational triangle model between himself and the then political counterparts proved to be a misinterpretation and poor judgement of his administrative leadership role and the political landscape within this role. The poor judgement led to a strain into the dual leadership. He stated:

*It took a different form as it wasn't anymore about me going to address the caucus but it was replaced with the PEL's style and I working with him directly, while including the close knit people that were working at the mayoral committee around him. There were a lot of engagements. Me being MP with text-book solutions, I had worked out in my book how it was going to work; but it was a bit of a let-down. I felt shut out and thought "why doesn't the mayor trust me"? I think it strained the relationship. I don't know if he felt the same strain but I felt a bit frustrated.*

Clearly, an unwitting imposition of the triangle relational model onto the dual leadership relationship caused a disconnected administrative-political relationship. The PEL confirmed the strained relationship by stating; *I must say at times it was a strain*. Subsequent to the relational disconnection was a sense of rejection and mistrust that resulted in both the PEL and the AEL being frustrated. Equally, the PEL indicated that political-administrative relationships are formed on a certain level of mutual interdependencies of the dual leadership and not necessarily reliant on the previous personal relations. In this regard he said:

*I knew AEL before we came to XYZ..... His appointment was before mine and when I came in, it was not like I was to work with the stranger. Working together we both had a broad common understanding of what needed to be done. However, there was one thing that took him long to understand..... It took him a bit of time to understand that politics comes first.*

Evidently, the PEL advocates that previous relations contribute to common understanding of work to be done but good working relations with each other requires AEL's political astuteness or sensitivity towards political supremacy. In order to allow a political-administrative working relationship to evolve, the PEL encouraged sensitisation and orientation of the administrative leadership so as to inculcate political astuteness as well as insight into LG's leadership supremacy. He cited that:

*The AELs in LG need to be taught that they are operating in institutions that are within the politically led and influenced environment. Also, they are to be sensitised that their roles include being macro-managed one way or another.*

From the data, it is assumed that AELs' orientation and sensitisation into their administrative leadership roles within the LG political institution, will augment their understanding of the meaning of being 'in charge' while being macro-managed. I am of the view that with the broadened understanding of their leadership role within a politically-led institution, relational strains will be minimised. While preceding analyses drew our attention to some of the administrative leadership's relational strains, the data further alludes to the need for relationship investment by both the political and administrative leaderships as this contributes to the 'make' of dual leadership in LG.

Whereas the AEL echoed: *we needed to invest in getting this relationship and engagement right*, the PEL emphasised: *... we worked on the relationship, problems occurred here and there but really I mean we worked really hard, hence we were able to do many things together*. Emergent from the data is that over and above the administrative leadership's enhanced understanding of the politically inclined LG, both the PEL and the AEL had to collaborate on building a working relationship. In this sense both the political and administrative executives devoted themselves to developing a mutual relational connection in order to co-lead the institution. Some insights shared by the AEL are acknowledgement of personality differences and concerted effort to communicate expectations of each other whilst building relational trust. He said:

*I must be frank to say that unfortunately there isn't a text book solution, as relationships are driven predominantly by personalities. The fact that we acknowledged that we were two different personalities; and we asked what we expected of each other; I think with time we did build a relationship of trust. He could trust that what I could put on the table is being driven by the type of politics that are governing us.*

Through collaborative effort both executives demonstrated commitment to co-create and formulate sound relations anchored on trust and resulting in a strong working relationship. Similarly, the PEL in his responses reinforced the essence of open and frequent solution-driven communication. The efforts evidently were sustained despite constraints experienced during restoring of their relationship. In this regard the PEL stated:

*When the lapses happened it was problematic but we would talk about them openly, discuss and work a solution together. That I must say at times it was a strain. It took time but we both tolerated each other, though at times it was hard for me.*

The statements set out above demonstrate resilience and emotional maturity by both executive leaders and how they ascertained that their administrative-political dual leadership would hold. What is clear from these comments is that both the AEL and the PEL had a shared need to want to build a working relationship that would enhance their co-leadership. On that note FG1-P4 affirmed:

*We have made progress in this organisation because both our political and administrative leaderships could relate to each other as professionals, each with a clear mandate of operation. Although interferences are there at times from political leadership – that is MMCs – these are manageable because AEL and PEL are willing to work together as a team to achieve the objective of the organisation. This is in fact one stride that this organisation has made ahead of almost all the municipalities in the country. This is also the source of our organisational stability.*

Evidently, the PEL and the AEL's concerted efforts and willingness to build an interdependent relationship despite negative interferences were observable, as they were both committed to establish organisational stability. Also, the interdependent relations are anchored by both leaders' perseverance, as the AEL reiterated: *It's an issue of personalities. Any other person would have packed his bags and left and said: "You know what? I am not going to work with this person."* On the other hand, *...any other mayor would have fired me and said that this fellow had not been accountable.* Emanating from the excerpt it is clear that building interdependent relationships between the AEL and the PEL was not an automatic process, but a result of endurance and tolerance of each other. Noticeably, attainment of political-administrative interdependent relationship leads towards appreciation of one another as evidenced by the PEL's articulation:

*People come in with much strength. What I learned is that despite these challenges MP came in with considerable strengths. MP is inclined to being innovative, he had good ideas and so he would be able to say: I was in such a country... there's a way there that they deal with this kind of issues and I think this idea would be useful in XYZ...Mr. Mayor, how about this and that..... that about him I found to be very useful and for me I learned that we had someone who is receptive to influence, who is excited about new ways of doing things because he is open to new influences. He also influenced me positively. He is not rigid and this was very useful for me. He was like that; (says with enthusiasm) he is like that and that helped us build on challenging relations between us as both executive leaders.*

The outcome of successful political-administrative interdependent relationship is further confirmed by the AEL's previous verbatim extract in theme one (*At the seating arrangements, I like making this table analogy; it was almost like I am sitting here on the side of the table with him (PEL) on my left – as he always sat on the left physically, and we were holding everyone to account*) whereby he commended the united front and collective unity they both demonstrated in holding their collective teams (both political and administrative teams) accountable. In this instance, not only does the AEL acknowledge their unison, but the oneness in the dual leadership as a result of a strong connection and co-dependent relationship.

In summary, the political-administrative leaders' relationship is at the core of making the dual LG leadership work. Notwithstanding inevitable tensions due to different views and ideologies of political and administrative perspectives, dual leadership candidates are forced to acknowledge each other's personal differences yet rise above these to pursue formation of interdependent relationships that make dual leadership of LG effective. I am of the view that, with such rooted relationship, inevitable tension that exists between administration and politicians will be manageable, as dual leadership becomes

seamless. Interestingly, Thornhill (2008, p.507) writes that “as soon as the two teams (political and administration) are brought into relation to each other, the separation fades away.” The holding of the dual political-administrative leadership and leaders’ relations, however, seem to be further judged on leadership practices demonstrated by both leaders during their leadership tenure. I now turn attention to the LG leadership practices – theme 4.

### **3.2.4 Theme 4: LG Leadership Practices**

Discussed in theme one is that LG as the political setting represents a distinct set of contextual factors that have an important influence on how dual leadership must be practiced. Incipient from the data were two main leadership practices’ as sub-themes that contribute to LG leadership being effective. These are collective leadership and servant leadership and are discussed below:

#### *3.2.4.1 Collective practices of leadership in LG*

In the preceding arguments, dual leadership indicated the nature of leadership practice as a collective phenomenon within the LG setting. Driskell and Salas (1992) and Linden (2010) explain collective orientation as the capacity to coordinate, evaluate and use task inputs from other group members in an interdependent manner with the belief that the team’s goals have higher priority than the goals of individual members. In this study the collective orientation of leadership is inferred as the intent around which political and administrative leaderships coalesce into dual leadership to ensure they work as a team to jointly achieve the set organisational mandate and goals. Emerging from the data is a set of activities that authenticate collective practices of leadership in LG, namely; collaboration, participative decision making and consultation.

a) Collaborative Functioning

According to the Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, Boone, and Kwiatkowski (2004) collaborative functioning occurs when members of the teams cooperate and join forces to work towards the achievement of a common objective. From the research data, collective practices of leadership embrace collaborative functioning between political and administrative teams. FG1-P5 highlighted:

*If the political leadership didn't understand certain issues, AEL would lobby them individually and in groups. So, by getting the political leadership to understand the benefits of new concepts without undermining them he was able to influence both sides and in that way, he made it easy for ideas to be accepted in the Mayoral Committee.*

Observed from the data is the AEL's concerted effort to actively involve the political team with an intention to ensure political-administrative cooperation and building consensus that in turn will simplify decision making at a mayoral committee level. Equally, the PEL fostered cooperation with the administration by endorsing the AEL's contributions. To this effect FG2-P5 stated: "*PEL allowed the AEL to give his input as a leader of officials as he consistently believes in the collective.*" Inferred from the data is that involving others, consensus building and acknowledgement of each other's contributions add up to cooperation, which in my view it is political-administrative collaborative functioning.

Although the data portrays collaborative functioning between the PEL and the AEL, it is highlighted further that extra effort is required in accomplishing such collaboration. Confirmed by FG2-P3 was that:

*At first it was difficult for us to cooperate with administration, but PEL made us account as Councillors. He always emphasised that tensions*

*will be there but these should not interfere with rendering of services or achieving what we need to achieve as a team*

Evidenced in the data, collaborative functioning develops when co-operation, co-accountability and relational maturity are embraced by both administrative and political teams at an executive leadership and subordinate (executive directors and members of the mayoral committee) levels. Similarly, the AEL highlighted disadvantages of non-collaborative functioning between political and administrative teams as he said:

*I have witnessed a lot of shapes of tables at a boardroom level, where you'd have a three-cornered table with these three people being the strongest without a chair or with a strong chair. I think that kills discussions, in most instances I know that this is unscientific because I haven't done the study; but in the public service you have a very strong executive individual either in the form of a president, or mayor and the rest of the team operate in the way that it relates to the principal kind of format. They don't relate to each other as colleagues and that skews the table for me.*

According to the data set out immediately above, the boss-servant type of interaction caused uncongenial relations, which obstruct collaborative functioning. However, promotion of collaborative work by executive leadership in LGs' dual leadership seems to enhance subordinates' confidence and encourages their openness to new and hybrid ideas. In this regard FG1-P2 stated:

*I think we had a platform where we can present our projects to executive leadership and show the value that we could add to XYZ. This was accepted by the AEL in particular. I think the political leadership was able to accept any new ideas coming from the officials, because there was no*

*rift between the administration and political leadership. You could see that you would be able to lobby.*

Markedly, both the AEL and the PEL participants intentionally promoted collaborative functioning, as they recognised that political and administrative teams cannot achieve organisational goals as separate entities but as a collective. Additionally, the key participants witnessed collaborative functioning that inadvertently changed the political-administrative dual leadership into a complementary view of collegial and family bonding. Herewith the PEL alluded: *If you work very well with each other you eventually become a family; and, yes, we were a team both at political and administration level, as we began to move together towards the right direction.*

Preceding the discussions it means that collaborative functioning within the collective practice firstly enhances cooperative functioning between political and administrative leadership. This cooperation further fosters political-administrative consensus building and co-accountability. Also, political-administrative interdependent leadership as opposed to boss-servant interaction is accentuated through collaborative functioning of the two leaderships. For these reasons, I conclude that collaboration in collective practices of LG holds and makes the dual leadership effective. Such leadership effectiveness is sustained through mature interdependent yet lasting political-administrative relationships, strengthened by mutual commitment, a sturdy sense of joint ownership and reciprocal engagements at multiple levels (executive and subordinates –members of the mayoral committee and executive directors).

*b) Participative decision making*

Linked to collaboration between political and administrative teams is participative decision-making. FG2-P5 noted:

*PEL allowed the AEL to give his input as a leader of officials, as he consistently believes in the collective. The interesting thing is he referred all major decisions including those that are presented to the broader collective, to gain input of the administration team. Yes, but as you know, he cannot consider all, mainly from the administration he was very consistent with his interaction with the AEL so that from time to time they are both part of the decision making.*

Participation is shown by the political leadership through soliciting opinions and suggestions from the administrative leadership before critical decision making. This means that “participative” in this context is inclusion of the counterpart so as to ensure political and administrative interaction that informs joint decision making. Additionally, FG2-P4 indicated that the PEL *would tell us that leadership is about presence and participation*. In giving perspective to the above-mentioned statement, FG2-P3 said:

*PEL takes us (political team) out with our officials (administrative team) into the inner city. He shows us papers lying around, he makes us account on the spot. He holds us accountable, while at the same time he trusts us enough to manage.*

On the basis of the excerpts, the political leadership involved his administrative leadership counterpart and actively enforced engagement of both the political and administrative subordinates in service-delivery work activities and insisted on their joint accountability. He ensured that they were visible together and actively involved in resolving service-delivery-related challenges. Thus, whilst participative decision making is an orientation of collective functioning it is also a form of leadership practice. To this effect, FG2-P1 stated:

*the PEL is not only expecting of the team and then him sitting back; he constantly challenges himself to do more. I think that helps us pull*

*together into perspective because you know this idea of raising the bar is not just about people who are serving with him but also for himself as well, such that we all as a collective need to raise the bar.*

Emerging from the above discussions is that collective leadership's participative decision-making process is demonstrated by visibly walking the talk. This means that LG dual leadership requires political and administrative executives that are role models who practically demonstrate collaborative and participative decision making in resolving service delivery challenges. Thus, not only do we observe participative behaviour in LG leadership's collective functioning, but combined decision making marked by active visibility and co-accountability of both political and administrative teams. Furthermore, participative and co-accountability behaviours by both political and administrative teams are attested by FG1-P3 as nurturing professionalism and liability that instil a sense of service delivery. She said:

*We have been led to have a sense of service delivery as the PEL emphasised this a lot. You see there is a sense of professionalism and accountability; and with other municipalities, they do not necessarily have that sense of commitment.*

c) *Consultation as a collective practice*

Like other forms of collective practices, the level of consultation by and between political and administrative leadership is critical to dual leadership. Based on the data, both the AEL and PEL participants devoted time on consultations with each other, their subordinates and the Mayoral Committee so as to enhance cooperation and buy-in. FG2-P1 highlighted:

*about the PEL, firstly it is his ability to consult. He comes from the background where most of us were taught the importance of*

*consultation, especially in the municipality where you are a public representative, as you represent the views of the public. So, you have to consult the public in terms of what they want and then the teams so as to be on the same wavelength. That I think he does very well to the point that at times we feel it's too much, and even think why doesn't he take decisions on his own.*

Clearly consultation is an embedded leadership practice stemming from the political orientation irrespective of positional role. The PEL's ability to consult is further confirmed by FG2-P6 as he stated:

*Many – a- times the PEL would consult with the administration team to raise issues like going to the communities, and indicate that it is not only about technical results; but that in the South African (SA) context, you need to remember where we are coming from.*

According to the data, not only is consultation a collective practice ensuing between political and administrative leadership but an activity to be embraced through both engagements with the communities in various issues. Equally, the AEL denotes the importance of consulting with his political leadership so as to ensure that organisational problems-solutions are embraced both at administrative and political levels. The AEL thus stated:

*In fact, I discussed problem solutions and implementation plans at the most grass-roots level within the ruling party. Maybe also coming back from the old style – the way we were trained was, you don't just take decisions without having taken or gone through consultative processes. Here the consultations I found it easy to do.*

Emanating from the data, consultation is an essential practice of LG leadership as it is integral to leadership training. Apparently, the ability to consult

strengthens unconditional support and cohesion between the political and administrative teams so as to solidify collective decision making in dual leadership. AEL said:

*The pressure of running an office with a politician would be the same....but he (PEL) was always there to support me during accountability, provided I had put everything needed in place. It was not about me or him and it was not personal. Institutional issues should never be viewed as personal; rather deal with the issues and never personalise them.*

The excerpt affirms that dual leadership is demanding, yet focus should be more on being supportive of each other (political and administrative) through active consultation on the work at hand than concentrating on individuals or personal issues. This is confirmed by FG1-P6 who added that:

*I've always found to a large degree political support to the administration, which I think is critical. In a political environment there can be a lot of outward fights, disputes and arguments between political leadership and administration. If there is an issue that I have picked up is that it gets sorted out internally between administration and political leadership, it hardly spills to us as administration management.*

Herewith, FG1-P6 confirms the complexity of dual leadership and how executive leadership's consultations and backing-each-other-up buffers conflict between political and administrative collective teams. Such supportive behaviour in this research, seems to have cascaded below executive levels, as FG2-P4 stated that *when we come to meet we make sure that we encourage each other, because to him (PEL) we are a team, a collective; neither individuals nor separate entities of political and administration.* Clearly, consultations between political and administration enhances supportive behaviour that augments a political-administrative cohesion which fosters

collective functioning made up of a political and administrative team as opposed to an individualistic outlook (Sinha, 2012).

Collaboration, participative decision making and consultation are techniques of collective leadership practices (Linden, 2010) that ensure effective functioning of the collective in a dual or shared political-administrative leadership. On the other hand, the AEL indicated that collective leadership practices are to be augmented with other techniques so as to ensure leadership effectiveness. The AEL in this regard said:

*....I quickly learned that it might help that on the line items if I can call it that, there is no collective approach as we cannot sit around the table and hope to have a decision. There is purely a one-on-one relationship with the managers*

Clearly the AEL, instead of using a collective approach in dealing with line items, assertively took a directive stance so as to give clear direction to his team. On the other hand, even though it is not articulated in any participants' words, I deduced from his expressions and emphases on what he strongly believes in – that the PEL authoritatively gave direction to both the AEL and the political-administrative teams. My deduction can also be affirmed by the AEL excerpt when he said *His (PEL) approach was that you are accountable. I do not want to know the details I want to know what you have done.* Additionally, the PEL and the AEL cooperatively implemented the performance management system as a control mechanism to hold jointly the political and administrative teams accountable for measurable results against pre-set goals of service delivery. The AEL emphasised that: *instead of having a round table discussion on operational transactional issues, it was more of a hard-nosed performance-target-driven approach supported by a very strong and structured performance management system.* Thus, in addition to a collective political-administrative leadership practice to attain measurable results of the pre-set

organisational goals, a performance management system was used as a strict control mechanism. Equally, the PEL supported the AEL's "hard-nosed approach" through putting together accountability measures such as incorporation of external panellists into the team. Notably, the PEL and the AEL's application of control measures to ensure achievement of goals strengthened their collaborative functioning as they worked as a collective. Herewith the AEL articulated in theme 2 - *...what really united us was both our strong belief in the performance management system that we established. It raised a bar for me and I felt it drew me and the mayor close.*

Conversely, FG1-P6 explained that:

*It is a difficult thing in LG because one point you are trying to deal with the strategic issues, I mean like where he (PEL) is trying to take the institution, then performance issues. Yes, he (PEL) had put performance panellists to ensure that we have the public service commissioner as a performance panellist and this is where he worked closely with the CM (AEL).*

Emanating from the data is that although collective leadership is LG's key leadership practice due to its dual nature, political and administrative leaderships are of different expertise. Therefore, additional techniques, like assertiveness and performance management are required as control mechanisms and creating a balance between the two. However, deduced from FG1-P6's excerpt is that in LG dual leadership, it is a challenge to balance collective practices with performance management and assertive leadership as controls in the spirit of balancing strategic and operational leadership issues as these may seem to contradict each other. Nevertheless, I believe that LG leadership is made effective through balancing of collective leadership practices with other techniques such as assertiveness and use of tools – such

as performance management system to ensure tangible outcomes of the leadership (Halvey et al., 2011).

Taken together, the concept of LG collective leadership has three main features; collaboration, participative decision-making and consultation (Van Wart, 2003; 2011). While these are critical mechanisms applied by the collective team in dual leadership of LG, emergent from the data is their combination with other techniques such as assertiveness and performance management system -control mechanism. Such a combination of techniques is to ensure that their balanced implementation makes LG leadership effective. From a collective orientation, LG leadership is made effective as a result of firstly, collaboration that enhances political-administrative relationship by creating a climate of cooperative functioning, consensus-building and co-accountability. Secondly, participative decision-making is role-modelled by the LG executive leadership (PEL and AEL), while consultations with each other and subordinate teams strengthens political-administrative support, eradicates individual leadership but enforces cohesive dual leadership. Lastly, coupling collective leadership with various techniques, like assertiveness and employment of PMS as control mechanism not only does it make LG leadership more effective but also creates a holistic and a balanced view of the collective/dual leadership practices.

#### *3.2.4.2 Servant leadership*

While the preceding analyses drew attention to collective practices that enrich the administrative-political dual leadership, analysis further suggests integration of other leadership practices like serving others. Serving others is mainly putting other people's needs first (Northouse, 2012). Emerging from the data is the PEL's interpretation of 'serving others' as the core leadership mission and focus. In this regard he said: *I must emphasise that I wanted my political team – MMCs – to be clear that needs of the people are well met.*

Evidently, the PEL wants service to others to come first and as such he clarified this point to his subordinates. He further articulated: *The question of service to others was to determine the way the work has to be done to meet these needs.* Clearly, according to the data, service to the people is a key principle of how to do work in LG and it links directly with the broader context within which LG functions. (See theme 1). Actually, not only is it a principle, but also an institutional objective and leadership's primary focus (Sinha, 2012). In this instance, FG1-P2 attested that: *We have been led to have a sense of service delivery and the PEL emphasises this lot. You see with other municipalities, they do not necessarily have that sense of commitment.* In agreement with the administrative focus group, FG2 - P2 said: *in terms of the leadership, our political and the administrative interface, there is always a greater level of urgency because I think we understand and we come in, in fact, with an agenda to serve people.*

This implies that, serving others is a leadership agenda and core focus, subsequently the highest priority than any other LG function. Owing to the fact that service to the people is the primary agenda of LG, executive leadership, particularly the PEL viewed it as the foundation to LG's existence, yet larger than leadership. On this notion, FG2-P4 indicated that:

*PEL doesn't necessarily dish out praise but he can be quite cutting in his criticism from time to time; not because of you as an individual, but, of the fact that work and service to communities is not happening in the way that he expects. But I think the thing that keeps the team together and fused is the sense of a bigger picture; of something bigger than all of us as individuals, and his constant reiteration in the fact that all of the work we do is actually bigger than ourselves.*

It is clear from the data that service to the people is regarded as an all-encompassing mission of LG. Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2003) assert

that the act of serving includes a mission of responsibility to others, such that leaders' have to understand that service is the centre of their leadership. This means that LG leadership has to view and practise its leadership on the basis of service to the people. FG2-P6 alluded that: *Many times government is criticised for the leaders' serving their own interests. However, she further explains that this study's leadership participants have proven to be different. She clarified by saying: ...The PEL drives us in a common direction both the political and administrative teams in such a manner that doesn't alienate.* Clearly, this common direction, as interpreted from the data is ensuring the achievement of the LG's primary objective – service to the people.

As perceived and interpreted by executive leadership, the meaning of service to the people is about LG's provision of rudimentary services to the public. Concerning this observation, FG2-P3 said:

*...there are things which are very critical that the PEL reiterates as he has little tolerance for and somehow we still don't get it right. He just wants us to get the basics right as he would say "why is it so difficult for you guys as a team to get the basics right." Yes, sometimes you also wonder why some of these basics are so difficult and we tend to grapple with. But when issues are more complex and so forth I think he does create the space for mistakes.*

Emanating from the data, the expected basics of service to the people, as defined by the political leadership are fundamental services such as electricity, water, fixing of roads, etc. In this regard, FG1-P3 said; *PEL expects that electricity must be on, the potholes fixed, and the traffic lights must work. He gets highly irritated, when those things don't happen, because those are the things that irk citizens.* Elaborated further by FG2-P5 was that:

*One of the things in terms of the service, it is the PEL's constant reminder both in formal and informal meetings or interactions, that*

*everything else is peripheral; but the wellbeing of the people is key, irrespective of whatever other issues that might be going on. His ability to constantly focus the collective towards the wellbeing of the people is particularly useful to us.*

Emanating from the data, the leadership (political) instills to the subordinates the sense of urgency and responsibility on providing rudimentary community services. This sense of service and caring is inculcated as a mission of responsibility that surpasses everything else to be achieved by the collective political and administrative. Based on the preceding considerations, three components central to serving people as an LG leadership's critical agenda are identified, and these are:

- Service to others comes first (leadership facilitates subordinate to be service-conscious),
- Service to the people as an institutional objective that is far-reaching and larger than LG leadership; and
- Service to the people as a key principle of how LG work should be done.

Linked to the data is Greenleaf (1977) as well as Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora's (2008) assertion that such above stated components are fundamental to servant leadership. According to Greenleaf (1977, p.13) servant leadership begins with the "natural feeling that one wants to serve - to serve first". Evidently, (although not articulated in the data regarding the AEL), both the PEL and the AEL have demonstrated servant leadership as deduced from their interviews, the two focus groups, as well as their comments during the study. Firstly, while the PEL demonstrates servant leadership for the people he leads (members of the mayoral committee and AEL) and for the communities LG is to serve, the AEL willingly took up opportunities to serve the PEL and his subordinates (members of the mayoral committee) (refer theme 2) regardless of the nature of the service. A common thread between the two key

participants is their internal conviction that servant leadership, according to Sedjaya et al. (2008) is a servant of a higher being or power, whilst in obedient appreciation to that higher power, serves other people.

Firstly, I deduce that dual leadership between political and administrative leadership becomes effective due to their common internal conviction and a sense to want to serve. Secondly, service to the people as per the data is the actual existence of LG organisations, which articulate government's agenda. I am of the view that failure by the LG executive leadership to recognise serving first as the heartbeat of the LG organisations' existence and model of their leadership practices may result into misguided leadership goals. Probably this explains FG2-P6's former statement on government leadership being criticised for placing their self-interests over the good of those led and serviced. Proven throughout the data is the key participants' (PEL and AEL) sense of serving as their personal purpose; consequently their support to each other and their subordinates towards the goal of serving. Their sense of serving is coupled with the sense of caring and strong need to serve the communities without expecting recognition of any form. Interestingly, Smith et al. (2004) assert that individuals that demonstrate servant leadership are not initially motivated to be leaders, but they emerge within the group and are then thrust into leadership positions. This is the case with both the PEL and the AEL as they refer to themselves as learner leader and leader by default respectively (refer theme 2).

In conclusion, the data evidenced that LG leadership is made effective through the political and administrative leaders' collective leadership and servant leadership styles and practices. Gauthier (2006, p.1) confirms the already quoted data extracts as he asserts that "collective leadership or co-leadership is leading together as partners" to make the LG leadership effective. Collective practice of leadership is built on three primary characteristics – collaboration, participative decision making and consultation. In order to balance the identified primary features of the collective practice of leadership to enhance

dual leadership of LG other characteristics, among others (as per the data), assertiveness and a performance management system control mechanism are incorporated. In servant leadership, LG's dual leadership is made effective through the political and administrative leadership portraying a resolute conviction and strong character by taking on not only the role of a servant but also the nature of servant. This is demonstrated by both the political-administrative dual total commitment to serve others first with no emphasis on their positional roles or personal benefit.

### **3.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the findings of the empirical study were analysed and discussed according to the four primary themes that emerged from the data. These four themes were discussed together with their sub-themes and categories in an attempt to respond to the main research question: **What makes LG effective?** The main four themes are: Leadership in LG is determined by context, leadership qualities required for ensuring efficiency and fit within the LG context, the dynamics of the LG leadership and leadership practices. In conclusion the analysed and discussed data themes are to be linked to theory (in chapter 4) so as to augment and/or contrast the empirical research results.

## **4. THEORETICAL INTEGRATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter I presented my findings on leadership in LG within the framework of four identified themes. In this chapter, I review existing literature that is found to augment and/or contrast these themes so as to sharpen the focus of the study and contribute to the study aim of constructing a theoretical model of LG leadership. Before I turn to the leadership literature, I want to emphasise that, firstly, this is a focused literature search as I intend to mainly make sense of the empirical research themes. Secondly, the central question of the study is “What makes LG leadership effective?” So, an understanding of leadership shall be clarified largely from the public sector’s perspective. Consequently, I discuss theoretical issues about the concept or meaning of leadership and the creation of leadership effectiveness as restricted to the theory that has relevance to the research findings. The chronological discussions in this chapter include - the evolutions of leadership theories and LG leadership as well as shared leadership theory in LG leadership. In a sense, this contextualises the approach that I have adopted.

### **4.2. AN EVOLUTION OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND LG LEADERSHIP**

Leadership, despite being a major research topic that has produced numerous empirical and conceptual studies in psychology, appears still to have a literature that is disconnected and incoherent, as it lacks an integrated theoretical framework or approach (Avery, 2004; Chemers, 2000; Hackman & Wageman, 2007; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Humphrey, 2005; James & Collins, 2008). According to Bennis (2007) plus Lussier and Achua (2013), this lack is the result of the fact that the leadership concept is vast and amorphous, so it is inevitable for leadership researchers to distinguish between what they can or cannot write with authority on the subject of leadership. For example,

traditional leadership research typically takes a dyadic leader-follower approach, which is not completely applicable in the LG study context. Whereas the study on leadership is conceptualised around a single leader, there are perspectives on leadership, for example, shared leadership, that are potentially more relevant in the LG context (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Raelin, 2003; Yukl, 2002).

In light of the above, it is important to examine the leadership concept from the evolution of both traditional leader-centred leadership theories, as well as shared leadership theories, in order to understand the nature of LG leadership and what makes it effective from a theoretical perspective. In this section I therefore present theories that aim to increase the understanding of leadership and what makes it effective. I first address traditional leader-centred theories to provide a general understanding of leadership and then shared leadership theories, as they have stronger bearing on the type of leadership required in the LG context.

#### **4.2.1 Leader-centred Theories**

Among the abundant literature on leadership theory, especially prominent in the social and organisational psychology literatures, the overarching and well-known leader-centred theories are trait-, behavioural- and contingency/situational theories. These traditional leadership theories – psychological in approach – were among the first systematic attempts to study leadership (Gill, 2006; Northouse, 2001). As such, leadership as a ‘single leader’ paradigm has dominated the field of leadership research and studies (Baddeley, 2008; Pearce & Conger, 2003) and disregarded context-based leadership in public organisations such as LG (Fletcher, 2004; Maddock, 2008). However, I still consider these theories to form a critical basis to understand leadership in this study despite the limitations alluded to.

#### *4.2.1.1. Trait- and behaviour theories*

The trait and behavioural perspectives are reductionist in approach with a focus on the nature of the leader and not the nurture of leadership (Barker, 1997). These theories are known to focus on a leader's personal qualities and the interpersonal processes between individuals, nominal leaders and followers, without consideration of the organisation and its variables that influence the nature of leadership (Van Vugt et al., 2008; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). Zaccaro (2007) clarifies that in the early scientific research on leadership, trait theory explained leadership in terms of personality characteristics of the leader, with the result that traits were understood to be innate or heritable qualities of the leader. Hence Parry and Bryman (2006, p.448) conclude that "nature is more important than nurture". From the trait perspective certain inherent traits are assumed to differentiate effective leaders from other people (Fleishman, 1973; Northouse, 2012), which resonates in theme 2 of my results, indicating that specific leadership qualities are required for effective LG leadership.

Furnham (2005) confirms the trait theory's postulation that leader characteristics such as personality traits, interpersonal skills and cognitive skills determine an individual's potential to be effective in a leadership role. This means that leadership is something intrinsic to the individual, such that the individual's traits (one's nature) determine how well the leader will perform in a leadership role. Zaccaro (2007) concedes that this perspective shifted in the first half of the 20th century to include all relatively enduring qualities that distinguished leaders from non-leaders. However, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) argued that trait theory did not make assumptions about whether leadership traits were inherited or acquired but asserted that leaders' characteristics are different from non-leaders. Van Wart (2003; 2011) asserts that the leader's inherent qualities or specific traits are associated with strong or effective leadership.

Theme 2 of my empirical study partially confirms the trait theory's intrinsic qualities of leadership as one of the key participant stated: *I guess there are instances where you find leaders who have natural ability, who are outstanding and whose leadership is acknowledged and accepted.....the Mandelas of this world and so on ...but in relation to many of us, we learn leadership and we tend to attain it over a period of time* (PEL – interview). Highlighted in the empirical data for theme 2 is that leaders' inherent qualities are applicable to a chosen few individuals whereas others learn leadership within the context where leadership occurs. Northouse (2013) and Yukl (2006) assert that, although people with the 'right' traits would become best leaders, how the common traits of good leaders are identified is unclear. Also, "psychologists have not sorted out which traits define leaders or whether leadership exists outside of specific situations" (Bennis, 2007, p.3).

Hackman and Wageman (2007) introduce a slightly different trait approach. They concede that focus should be more on how leaders' personal attributes (traits) interact with situational properties to shape outcomes as opposed to a narrow emphasis on "What are the traits of leaders?" (Hackman & Wageman, 2007, p.44) Similarly, researchers like Ralph Stogdill in 1948 already questioned the trait theory by stating that an individual cannot assume a leadership role by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), Van Maurik (2001) and Bennis (2007) supported Stogdill's argument that no traits were universally associated with effective leadership, as situational factors were also influential. To address some of the limitations in trait theory, behavioural theory as an additional leadership theory was conceptualised (Krumm, 2001; Yukl, 2006).

According to Yukl (2006), behavioural theory contains some very different assumptions from trait theory. Yukl (2006) states that while trait theory assumes that a leader is born with specific traits that make him/her a good leader, behavioural theory presupposes that one can learn to become a good

leader because one does not necessarily draw on personality traits only. Thus, behavioural theory assumes that anyone can be made a leader by being taught the most appropriate behavioural response for any given situation. Theme 2 of my empirical study refers to lifelong learning, which permeates social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory emphasises both experiential learning, as well as observation of others and imitation of what others do (Bandura, 1986; 2001; McAlister, Perry & Parcel, 2008). Similarly, the lifelong learning perspective emphasises learning as an acquisition of knowledge and skills within the workplace so as to change and rapidly develop leadership skills in order to keep up with organisational demands (Longworth & Davies, 1996). Illeris (2003) states that learning in general integrates two different processes: an external interaction process between the learner and his/her social, cultural or material environment and an internal psychological process of acquisition and elaboration. In the context of the traditional behavioural and cognitive learning theories, learning focuses mainly on the internal psychological processes (McAlister et al., 2008). On the other hand, the lifelong learning approach, as is also evident in theme 2 of my research findings, draws attention to external interaction processes.

Longworth and Davies (1996) supported by Illeris (2003) view lifelong learning as the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process that stimulates and empowers individuals (leaders) to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding required throughout a lifetime of leadership; to apply such qualities with confidence, in all roles, circumstances, and environments. According to Illeris (2003), the explanation set out above includes several basic elements of the lifelong learning ideal such as: (i) a belief in the idea of lifetime human potential and the possibility of its realisation; (ii) efforts to facilitate achievement of the skills, knowledge and aptitudes necessary for a successful life and leadership; (iii) recognition that learning takes place in many modes and places, including formal educational institutions and non-formal experiences such as employment and informal self-

initiated activity; and (iv) the need to provide supportive systems adapted to individual differences that encourage and facilitate individuals to achieve mastery and self-direction. Aspin (2007) and Soni (2012) state that the lifelong learning perspective seems to have emerged in all parts of the political field (like that of LG in this study). Further stated is that in its many different forms it is used as the means of enabling people within the workplace to keep up with the continuous transfer of knowledge that is changing the nature of competition within the organisations (Aspin, 2007).

Although the empirical research befits Illeris's (2003) lifelong learning view, which underscores external factors (or context of learning), it is evident to me that both processes – internal (psychological) and external processes – must be actively involved if any holistic learning is to take place so as to shape leadership. In my research findings, both the psychological and context specific lifelong learning qualities such as leaders' self-motivation, passion to learn unique LG leadership (e.g. politics and its vision) and being adaptive to change are evident. Therefore, the study findings contradict Parry & Bryman's (2006) assertion of nature being more important than nurture. Rather, my findings align with behavioural theory and emphasise both nature and nurture as contributors towards leadership ability. However, behaviour theory focuses mainly on what leaders do and how they act. This is still interpreted as a definition of one's leadership ability without taking into account the organisation in which leadership occurs (Yukl, 2006).

Various forms of leader-centred approaches have evolved; amongst others transformational-, charismatic, authentic, - and visionary leadership (James, 2011). The transformational, authentic, visionary and charismatic leadership theories are a further evolvement of trait- and behavioural approaches in that they better consider an interactive leadership context but they are still leader focused. For example, Bass and Avolio (1994) supported by Bass and Riggio (2006) developed Burns' (1978) ideas and posited the formal concept of

transformational leadership. However, Northouse (2012) states over the previous decade, researchers have produced mainly standard models of transformational that assume a unitary approach to leadership across levels and situations, hence overlooking the context-based of leadership. The most recent leadership theory born from transformational leadership and developed is authentic leadership (Bishop, 2013; Tonkin, 2013). Avolio (2003) and Bishop (2013) say that authentic leadership brings together the concept of authenticity with positive psychology. Although, like the concept of leadership, authentic leadership is difficult to define because it greatly depends on perceptions; at its core, it is comprised of moral behavior that is based on a system of sound values that align with others and the organization (Bishop, 2013; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Tonkin, 2013; Webster, 2013). Authentic leadership places emphasis on both positive psychological capacities within a highly developed organisational context which results in leader's self-awareness, self-regulated positive behaviours and fostered positive self-development (Bishop, 2013, Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Walumba et al., 2008; Webster, 2013).

Bishop (2013) and Webster (2013) agree that although authentic leadership model is not currently evidence based, as a leadership approach, it can be viewed from three viewpoints, namely; intrapersonal, developmental and interpersonal. However, Tonkin (2013) argues that due to the fact that authentic leadership is a recent leadership theory, not much empirical work has been done. As a result, the theory leaves a lot of unanswered questions regarding authentic leadership as a concept, its ideas and application validity (Bishop, 2012; Day & Antonakes, 2012; Webster, 2013). Although the authentic leadership approach gives a fresh perspective on positive psychology and leadership, its emphasis, like transformational leadership and leader-traits theories, is more on leader characteristics than context-based leadership (Bishop; 2012; Tonkin, 2013). Despite its unilateral focus, it adds to the findings' perspective of administrative-political leadership qualities like the quality of lifelong learning.

As discussed in the previous chapter, from the findings leaders' (political and administrative leaders) qualities (lifelong learning, collective-self and servant-self) are viewed as interactive in the context of leadership (such as leadership in LG), which determines the nature of leadership. Therefore, leaders' traits; authentic leadership viewpoints of intrapersonal, interpersonal and positive self-development with their actions do support LG leader qualities, although alone do not fully define LG leadership but the interaction of all these in context do. Hackman and Wageman (2007) indicate that contingency models are well positioned to address the interaction between personal attributes (traits and behaviours) and situational aspects of leadership.

#### *4.2.1.2 Situational/Contingency theories of organisational leadership*

Situational and contingency theories emphasise the context of applied leadership that is left unaccounted for in both traits and behavioural theories. Pure situational theories like Perrow's (1970) are based on the premise that organisational leadership resides in structural features rather than in leader characteristics such as traits and behaviours (Vroom & Jago, 2007). According to Langton and Robbins (2007), Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory of 1973 state that an effective leader adapts his/her style to subordinates' capacity to accomplish tasks. This means that the leader will choose a type of leadership according to the subordinates' degree of maturity. The framing of the interactionist position between personal characteristics and situational attributes was done through a contingency model by Fiedler (1967). Fiedler's (1967) contingency theory postulates that leadership depends on the leader matching his/her style to the demands of the situation (Avery, 2004; Van Maurik, 2001; Sinha, 2012). Krumm (2001) clarifies contingency theory's perspective that the leader is neither task-focused nor relational-focused.

The implication of Fiedler's theory is for an individual leader to be placed in a situation that is favourable to his/her style (Avery, 2004). To a limited extent,

contingency theory is aligned with my empirical findings' that leaders need to adapt to the contextual demands of LG leadership through acquisition of specific qualities to be able to fit into the LG leadership setting. Halvey et al (2011) and Van Vugt et al. (2008) argue that although contingency theory and its models enhanced the interaction of leader's personal qualities (including traits, behaviours, attitudes, motives, etc.), and situational contingencies (structural issues, followers, etc.) these are commonly focused on separately, with emphasis still placed more on the leader than on the process of leadership. Hence, Yukl (2006) refers to the literature as containing many useful theories but not very well connected theories.

According to Chemers and Ayman (1993) and Lussier and Achua (2013), contingency and situational theories shifted the concept of leadership from an individual-leader- and linear focus towards situational issues within leadership. Chemers and Ayman (1993), cite that these theories concentrated on other dimensions, such as "the leader's relationship with the group, the degree to which the group tasks are structured and the backing by the organisation of the leader/s in the form of rules." (Chemers & Ayman, 1993, p.3) I tend to agree with these researchers because in my findings, leader/s matching the demands of the context (situation) is just one aspect of organisational leadership's (such as LG) components of effective leadership. Furthermore, situational and contingency theories also view leadership from the perspective of a single leader in a context and outline three contingency dimensions. These dimensions are leader-subordinate relations, task structure and the position of power and they serve to define the situation the leader faces (Langton & Robbins, 2007; Sinha, 2012). Such dimensions implicitly align with the empirical research theme 3's 'dynamics of LG leadership', which are; political-administrative interdependent relations (subordinate relations), structure and roles of leadership (task structure) and primacy of politics (position of power). This theme, however, is but one of LG leadership's uniquely combined logic of political and administrative dimensions.

Van Wart (2013) in agreement with Lemay (2009, p.10) highlights that there are two different operating logics in the literature of leadership that differentiate between political leadership (elected officials) and administrative leadership (administration executives and managers). However, this view diverts from contingency/situational theories' explanation of the LG leadership because of its main focus on the leader. The limited explanation of contingency/situational theory of the LG leadership can be partially equated to the administrative leadership. The combined political-administrative perspective influences the leadership away from a single leader perspective to dual leadership, which contingency/situational theories do not mention. This means that there is a major disconnection of contingency/ situational theories from the LG leadership perspective. Zaccaro and Klimoski (2002) augmented by Sinha (2012), stress that the disconnection in theories is a result of a lack of progress in developing an integrated understanding of a specific organisational leadership.

I am of the view that even though situational and contingency theories and models attempt to explain organisational leadership from the context-demands perspective, their point of departure still emphasises individual leaders and their styles. These models, however, do not emphasise the impact a unique context like LG has on dual leadership. Daft (2005) and Reidy (2005) dispute the explanation of both the situational and contingency approaches, indicating limitation and skewness. For that reason, Vroom and Jago (2007, p.20) point out that Fiedler (1967; 1973) favoured trying to "engineer the job to fit the leader". Still, Daft (2005) and Reid (2005) hold the view that the situation of leadership may be the most ambiguous factor since it can refer to anything from the specific task or the situational context wherein leadership occurs, such as the type of organisation. Therefore, situational and contingency theories may have to expand the conceptualisation of leadership to include more constructs to be more embracive of the organisational leadership concept.

In summary, it can plausibly be argued that the leader-centred theories are reductionist in their understanding of leadership. While the leader-centred approaches provide only a partial view of the leadership concept, the notion of 'leadership' focuses on a more complex concept that stretches beyond the single leader but includes variable constructs that contribute to a broader understanding of leadership (Brungardt, 1998; Gill, 2006; Northouse, 2001). Buckmaster (2005) and Baddeley (2008) concur that although leadership research has focused traditionally on the individual rather than the other context of leadership, the public sector's (including LG) real challenge is to reject those leadership theories and empirical research that overlook the context of the organisation. Since the organisational context of this study is LG, prior to achieving a comprehensive model and theories that can sufficiently define LG leadership, it is important to review how context affects LG leadership.

#### **4.2.2 LG: Organisational Context determining Leadership**

Whereas contexts come in various forms and involve any set of circumstances surrounding an event, knowing the specific context of the event is imperative so that the event can be interpreted accurately (Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Kutz, 2008). As stated earlier, context may be the most ambiguous element since its assumptions about leadership can refer to anything from: the setting/environment where leadership occurs; the specific leadership task/s; relations within and between the participants in leadership; and explicit practices typical of a specific organisation (Barker, 1997; Probert & James, 2011; Reidy, 2005). Therefore, to understand LG leadership, this literature review filters through the public leadership (specifically LG leadership) as well as institutional/organisational theory (organisational and institutional concepts will be used interchangeably in this study) so as to build on a theoretical grounding. This also calls for the need to know more about the themes that explain contextual leadership, which is what is emphasised in this study's themes 1 to 4.

#### *4.2.2.1 LG context and its leadership*

According to institutional theory, organisations in which leadership occurs are part of a broader, total environment (Hunsicker, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Mackenzie, 2005). For example, the public sector is the broader context of the LG and LG is characterised by its two major dimensions – its political mandate and its services to the people (SOLACE, 2005). Accordingly, Silberstang (2008) and Van Wart (2011) asserts that public sector organisations are increasingly facing a variety of challenges that relate to their having a dual mandate. My study theme 1 confirms the difference between private and government-sector organisations, alluding to the government's uniqueness based on its political mandate that drives the goal of service to the people. Incorporated in the government sector, the White Paper on Developmental Local Government (1998) introduced the concept of 'developmental local government', which is clarified in the LOGOLA (2004) concept paper as the third sphere of the South African government established post-apartheid from 1994.

The LG "is to be committed to working with citizens and groups within the communities to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs, and improve the quality of their lives" (LOGOLA, 2004, p.19). Additionally, the "municipal system is the delivery point and organisation of LG; tasked with the provision of basic services" (LOGOLA, 2004, p.2). Declared further in the concept paper is that municipal organisations of LG are the macro government's (national and provincial) operative vehicle to ensure the day-to-day running of LG governance and execution of basic services to the people within a political mandate. Confirmed in theme 1 is that LG is a cascading entity from its macro context, with its organisations (municipalities) as operational arms of the national and provincial government. These unique constructs represent a distinct set of contextual factors that have an important influence on LG organisational leadership (Silberstang, 2008; SOLACE, 2005). Further, proven in my findings is that LG as the third level of government and

national government's delivery arm interacts with its broader context by incorporating these unique constructs into its system.

Choi (2009) cautions that many researchers have circuitously and explicitly assumed that theories of leadership apply the same to both public- and private sector organisations. Yet, Goodwin (2006, p.3) asserts that on "one level the leadership process is the same for the public and private sectors but it is only the context that is different". Whereas some leadership roles may have more universal application, the effects of context cause uniqueness to either the public- or private sector's leadership concept and process (Choi, 2009, Kinsella & Mansfield-Schiffman, 2006; Van Wart, 2013). Hunsicker (1996) and Van Wart (2011) highlights that if organisations disregard environmental context by rejecting or misunderstanding the constructs coming from the environment, it is unlikely that the organisation will make a reasonable adjustment of its leadership.

Consistent with this idea, the municipal system organisation, namely LG, apparently to date has had a myriad challenges, amongst which a common challenge is a lack of effective leadership that results in corruption and maladministration (LOGOLA, 2004). Mawhood (1993) ascribes such problems at municipal level mainly to the devolution of power from national and provincial government to LG level. Also, Chermers (1997) and Ngambi (2004) posit that LG organisations' temptation to borrow conventional thoughts and traditional leadership theories to define and develop its leadership has contributed to these challenges. Such challenges are interpreted by Chermers (1997) as caused by ignoring the LG's unique contextual constructs – the political mandate and its primary objective of service to the people – in the consideration of the concept of leadership in LG. This institutional view extends beyond factors typically modelled in situational/contingency approaches in the leader-centred leadership literature, because organisations like LG have specific internal characteristics that differentiate its organisational

leadership from traditional leadership approaches (Hunsicker, 1996; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). The leadership configuration is one of these characteristics.

#### *4.2.2.2 LG Leadership configuration*

In leader-centered theories, leader qualities (traits & behaviours) are typically accentuated without consideration of the structural factors that affect leadership. Andreas and Lindstrom (2008), however, maintain that organisational leadership cannot be modeled effectively without attending to such factors. The important thing I noted in my findings was a structure that was prompted by the demands of the organisational setting. Ngambi (2004) spells out the unique arrangements of LG organisational structures as the co-existence of political and administrative units. According to legislation encapsulated in the Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 (MSA Act 32 of 2000) the LG political structure consists of the Council, the Executive Mayor- the PEL and the mayoral committee members (Thornhill, 2008). The Council is a body vested with all legislative and executive powers and, in terms of MSA (Act 32 of 2000); most of the powers are devolved to the elected Executive mayor or PEL. Alongside the political structure is the administrative structure defined as a process of aligning the organisation with its environment (political), especially with the necessary macro-level structures (Van Wart, 2003).

Thornhill (2008) explains that the political and administrative structures are established with the intention to co-exist and be interdependent. The LOGOLA (2004) concept paper clarifies that the unique co-existence of political and administrative structures forms the foundation of the LG leadership in the sense that the two groupings automatically translate into one leadership structure. Thornhill (2008, p.493) warns that the link between political and administrative structures is “probably one of the most complex dimensions within any public institution”. In the preceding chapter theme 1 of the findings

reveals that political and administrative structures overlies each other as they converge into an entwined leadership structure and process. In LG leadership, a distinction is made between political and administrative leaderships concentrated at the municipal level – the foremost institution of LG. Therefore, in this organisational setting the complexity of the context brought about by the relationship between the political and the administrative determines the type of leadership (Hansbury, Sapat, & Washington, 2004).

In explaining the political and the administrative converging into an entwined structure, Kinsella and Mansfield-Schieffman (2006, p.27) assert that the political-administrative structure is a “Janus-like dualistic kind of power sharing structure” that adds a critical and distinctive feature to the LG’s organisational leadership. From the organisational/institutional theory perspective contextual variables are integral to the emerging leadership. While the institutional perspective does not explicitly define specific models of leadership, the findings distinguish a dual and collective power-sharing model of leadership, which does not align with any of the traditional single-leader-centred theories. The sharing of leadership happens between the two leaders – the PEL and the AEL in the case of the LG. In the literature research, apparently sharing of leadership as a concept attracts a range of meanings and names, among other terms: “shared”, “distributed”, “constructed”, “post-heroic,” “collective” and “relational,” yet it is associated with a variety of practices that are largely un-researched (Drath, 2001; Fletcher, 2004; Gronn, 2002; Ospina & Sorenson, 2006; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Woods, 2004). Also, the terms “shared leadership”, “collective leadership”, “team leadership” and “distributed leadership” are used interchangeably, whereas team leadership is commonly viewed as a slightly different stream of research (Avolio et al., 2009; Koccolowski, 2010). In this study, I choose to use **shared leadership** as an umbrella term that encompasses some of the above conceptualisation; then position the concepts distributed-, collective-, relational- and servant leadership within this framework.

### **4.3 SHARED LEADERSHIP THEORY AND LG LEADERSHIP**

Shared leadership as a concept emerged through Gibb (1954), who introduced the concept of distributed leadership, arguing against the traditional assumption of leadership that resides in a single individual (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). Linked to Gibb's argument, Fletcher and Käufer (2003) presented shared leadership as both a concept of leadership practice and a group-level phenomenon. Fletcher and Käufer (2003) suggested three fundamental shifts in leadership theory that are inherent in shared leadership. These shifts refer to shared leadership practice as a distributed and interdependent process that is "embedded in social interactions and is considered as a collective learning by the group members" (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003, p.23-24). Hence, Pearce and Sims (2002)'s argument that shared leadership is multi-dimensional with a few theories that subtend it. I therefore consider in my study shared leadership to be the theoretical grounding of LG leadership because of its multidimensional focus.

#### **4.3.1 LG's Shared Leadership as a Group Phenomenon**

Buckmaster (2005) argues that there are several reasons for the emergence of shared leadership in specific organisations. The institutional/organisational theory views the emergence of shared leadership as influenced by organisational conditions such as context and structure (Peck & Dickinson, 2009). LG leadership is primarily a product of its organisational context. As such, it is critical to first view how the LG setting influences the group dimensions into shared leadership.

##### *4.3.1.1 A co-leadership concept*

The complexity of an organisation and its jobs or functions may lead to a very distinct form of shared leadership, namely, co-leadership in the executive

suite, which “may or may not ultimately prove to be successful” (Buckmaster, 2005, p.7). Choi (2009) clarifies that in public sector organisations (like in LG municipal organisation) although there are varying roles, the two key top positions of leadership exercise authority in the executive suite as the recognised positional leaders. My research findings highlight leadership positions that are based on the political-administrative structures as distinctive roles differentiated from each other as an AEL with technical skills of municipal (organisational) management and a PEL, who is a politically elected leader through political party structures (LOGOLA, 2004). According to Pearce and Conger (2003, p.8), co-leadership’s focus is “primarily on situations in which two individuals simultaneously share one leadership position.”

In LG, the concept of co-leadership means that there are two leadership positions held by the AEL and the PEL respectively. Rittner and Hammons (1992) clarify that leadership research pays more attention to co-leadership in group therapy settings wherein mentor and protégé relationships are observed. Pearce and Conger (2003) further state that recently co-leadership has been explored in the executive suite between Chief executive officer (CEO) and Chief operations officer (COO). Under these conditions, co-leadership is viewed as an exceptional two-person case – the case of shared leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Similarly, Baddeley (2008), Kinsella and Mansfield-Schieffman (2006) and Sally (2002) reason that at an organisational level, like LG, positional functions co-exist to necessitate co-leadership in the form of sharing the leadership role. This means therefore that Andreas and Lindstrom’s (2008) shared position and shared power concepts apply in LG co-leadership. Andreas and Lindstrom (2008) further clarify shared position as a process where particular leaders share a formal leading position, commonly known as co-leadership, whereas shared power refers to persons of different positions sharing the distributed power.

O'Toole, Galbraith, and Lawler (2002) explain that shared position is common among corporate institutions and arises from mergers, which enforce co-leadership to enhance the recognition of the two companies made one. O'Toole et al. (2002) are, however, quick to point out that co-leadership, with the intention of sharing and distributing leadership between two leaders seldom succeeds, as a result of the lack of cooperation that competition brings about. Choi (2009) and Halvey et al. (2011) explain that this is due to the organisational arrangement that is hierarchical in nature. Choi (2009) warns that traditionally a person's hierarchy or position in the organisation, as in vertical leadership, is viewed as a source of authority and power. Therefore, emphasis on co-leadership that requires sharing of positional authority with distributed power of leadership may be problematic while the organisation is still hierarchically designed (Halvey et al., 2011). Yet, although the LG is hierarchical in structure, the two leadership structures are parallel but interdependent.

Unlike corporate institutions where two CEOs or CEO and COO co-lead in exactly the same position or role while sharing the same powers of leadership (Andreas & Lindstrom, 2008), the LG literature confirmed by the study findings accentuates the importance of dual or co-leadership that is separate yet interdependent (entwined political-administrative). Buckmaster (2005) and Lipman-Blumen (1996) highlight that with some organisations that are political in nature (e.g. LG's political and administration); the co-existence of two contradictory forces infuses an acceleration of interdependence between the two positions occupied by the core team (political and administrative executives). The empirical analysis indicates that the dual leadership consists of a co-leadership team (the political and administration executive leaders) that share the executive suite positions, working together, without interference into each other's roles. Taken together from the LG literature, organisational theory and the research findings, the co-leadership concept proves to be a distinct concept that reflects the LG's dualistic leadership occupied by the PEL and

AEL. Before I elaborate on the practice of co-leadership, it is important to first understand the team factor that is crucial in co-leadership.

#### *4.3.1.2 A team property of the group: The collective team*

Fletcher and Käufer (2003) and Carson et al. (2007) assert that the shared leadership concept originated from a team-based perspective. These authors make this statement despite the fact that Fletcher and Käufer (2003) state that research on shared leadership is seldom linked to research on group processes and teamwork – to the extent that theory and practices of shared leadership are disconnected. Instead, shared leadership is explained in the context of specialised teams that are rather short term and assigned to a specific and common function within an organisation (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003). Conceptually, the primary distinction between shared leadership and the team structure in a project is that the former concerns collective influence, whereas the latter concerns collective cognition (Carson et al., 2007). This study's focus slants towards collective influence.

Vadi, Allik and Realo (2002) propose that a collective team is one of the attributes of co-leadership influenced by the context that surrounds the organisation. The empirical study (theme 1) refers to two types of teams; namely independent yet interdependent political and administration teams, which also unite as an inter-operative team that represents a core collective team at the top (Smith et al., 2007). Similar to the team property of leadership, the collective view purports that leadership does not derive from individual influence but from the process of people working together for a common purpose (Drath & Palus, 1994). Thus, shared leadership itself will need to be viewed as a collective process of interdependent functioning (Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark, Michael, & Mumford, 2011). The collective entity is defined as joint or united team members of diverse expertise that coexist. The coexistence is in a dependent and independent manner to create an

atmosphere to work together effectively to accomplish some shared goals (Raelin, 2005). In this regard, a collective operates at a higher level than a team, as it emphasises the importance of cohesion that involves different roles being co-ordinated seamlessly (Jackson, Colquitt, Wesson, & Zapata-Phelan, 2006).

According to the collective team approach in shared leadership, the success of an organisation as a whole depends not only on the remarkable qualities of the individuals or leaders but on the collective contribution of all members (Jackson et al., 2006). Linking the literature to my study, the unity of the team members is evident from the findings in theme 1 where the PEL and AEL both refer to themselves as a family and a core team. Not only is the core team a family but also 'psychologically merged' into the collective as they, as shown in theme 2, adopted the collective self-identity (Van Knippenberg, 2006). Jackson et al. (2006) affirm that the joint members of organisations within the collective need to have 'we' identities, to a certain degree at least, in order to cooperate and accomplish the organisational purpose. Evidently, in my findings the core team embraced the collective identity marked by humility and low self-importance whilst elevating their connectedness within the inter-group. Therefore, shared leadership is a collective team activity that is interdependent and distributed amongst the collective team members (Conger & Pearce, 2003).

Andreas and Lindstrom (2008) as well as Alvarez and Svejnova (2005) tried to give some perspective regarding political organisations. According to Alvarez and Svejnova (2005), the literature does not elaborate on the cross-functional contexts that involve the political and administrative executives as the organisation's core team, nor on dynamics and constructs as is the case with the entwined political-administrative context. Linking the literature with the LG empirical study, my observation is that from the literature, homogeneous team models in shared leadership only provide a basic understanding of the

LG's political and administrative team (as explained in cross-functional team context) and the fact that shared leadership is facilitated in an overall team environment. However, the models do not explain nor give perspective on team functioning; for example, the collective functioning of LG. So the entwined political-administrative team of LG may be viewed a misfit in the discussed team concept because of its non-homogeneous character as compared to the literature's team models of shared leadership.

According to Spillane (2005), the collective team that works together in co-leadership share responsibilities in a form of a division and/or distribution of tasks across two or more leaders that work separately but interdependently. O'Toole et al. (2002) consider this practice to be a difficult process even though it characterises the most critical dimension in the functioning of the collective team during co-leadership. I therefore discuss the second critical dimension of shared leadership – the distribution and interdependence dimension.

#### **4.3.2 Shared Leadership in LG: A Distribution and Interdependence Dimension**

Referring to Fletcher and Käufer's (2003) "distributed and interdependent" shift, I understand it as being linked to an operationalisation of LG leadership as in theme 3. As clarified earlier, the term distributed in this study will be restricted to the distribution of the leadership functions between collective team members within the dual - or co-leadership process (Burke, Fiore & Salas, 2003). Similarly the concept of interdependence in the study refers to political and administrative roles and tasks being interdependent in the degree to which team - or group-functions and goals accomplishment require such interdependency (Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003). For the purpose of this study, however, the distributed and interdependent shift is narrowed into Woods' (2004) three distinctive elements, namely; the distribution of tasks and

responsibilities among the collective, variable expertise interdependence and management of boundaries.

#### *4.3.2.1 Distribution of leadership tasks/responsibilities among the collective team*

Harris (2005) and Spillane (2005) clarify that distribution of leadership is an analysis that implies interdependency rather than dependency, embracing how leaders of various kinds and in various roles share responsibility. Cox et al. (2003) state that unlike the homogenous teams, the distribution or sharing of leadership cannot emerge without members of the collective entity recognising and acknowledging their task interdependence as well as the degree to which goal accomplishment affects the dependent sub-tasks. Spillane (2005, p.146) asserts that “distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines, and structures.” As a result, leadership practice is spread across two or more leaders who work separately yet interdependently as a team (Spillane, 2005). Although distributed leadership emphasises leadership practice (to be discussed later in the chapter) I am of the view that in order to understand the distribution process within the collective team, it is important to recognise the roles and functions of the team members that are involved in the distribution.

Linking the empirical study’s findings to Alvarez and Svejnova’s (2005) role separation perspective, the political team (PEL and members of the mayoral committee) is separate from the administration team (AEL and the executive directors). However, the political-administrative dichotomy and role sharing imply the interoperation of the political and administrative teams with the emphasis on the PEL and the AEL as the collective team at the top. This collective team at the top (PEL and AEL) is fully involved in their separate political and administrative leadership roles yet interdependently interoperate as a collective in the execution of their separate responsibilities as well as the

interfacing political-administrative functions. Andreas and Lindstrom (2008) articulate that in political organisations like LG, sharing of tasks in a team context is imperative. The reason for this is the same as for other organisations in which it is not possible for one single person to do everything ranging from political to administrative functions (Andreas & Lindstrom, 2008). Alvarez and Svejnova (2005), in agreement with Andreas and Lindstrom (2008), note that in such organisations, the group or team is within a small executive team at the top, in which there is sharing of leadership roles. Clarifying further, Alvarez and Svejnova (2005) state that there are different constellations of roles and relationships at the top of an organisation, which are a mixture of role separation, role combination and role sharing among a reduced number of executives. The emphasis of the political organisation's collective team at the top being jointly engaged in leadership roles is true of LG's political and administrative executive leaders' functioning.

Sally (2002) from an organisational theory perspective focuses on an organisation's structural factors that are likely to support the distribution of tasks to enhance success of the collective team. The structural factors point out to Andreas & Lindstrom's (2008) concept of 'shared position and shared power' that entails cooperation between different positions. The shared power element as it applies in the research findings is the context of the operationalisation (i.e. interdependence of political and administrative roles) of the LG leadership through roles clarification and execution (theme 3). According to my findings, the political positional structure and its team is involved in a political decision-making process (political power) that entails formulation of organisational policies on behalf of the Council. On the same continuum, the professional implementation process of such decisions is delegated to the administrative structure. Furthermore, the members of the mayoral committee's role are to oversee administrative management's operational functioning.

Correspondingly, the administrative positional structure and its team (AEL and executive directors) that controls and manages the administrative aspects of the organisation are involved mainly with policy-execution activities while taking into account political dynamics. Essentially, the two teams' tasks and responsibilities are a split between policy determination assigned to political leadership and operation of the policies (which is the continuum from the political position) assigned to the administrative leadership of the municipal institution (SOLACE, 2005; Thornhill, 2008; Sinha, 2012). Power in this instance is not a commodity concentrated within certain individuals but is distributed throughout the communal or the collective field of work (Foucault, 1977; Getha-Taylor et al., 2013; Hassard, Cox, & Rowlinson, 2013; Van Wart, 2011). How the distribution of power is sustained in the continuum field is further characterised by the management of boundaries between the two independent powers. In the same vein, Woods (2004) and Linden (2010) assert that the distribution and management of power independence can best be explained through distributed expertise within the collective team members. This is discussed below.

#### *4.3.2.2 Different expertise' interdependence in the collective team of shared leadership*

According to the literature, leadership is not something done by an individual leader to others but is an emergent property of the team members from various professional spheres whose expertise is brought together with the intention of achieving organisational goals (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). With different expertise brought together they forge an expertise combination, which represents more than the sum of the individual contributors (Halvey et al., 2011; Woods 2004). Applied to LG leadership, this means that the political and administrative components of leadership invariably represent a pool of different expertise. As such, the political and administrative expertise is brought together in a form of concerted effort/actions based on a separate yet interdependent political-administrative collective (Gronn, 2002; Harris 2005).

From this perspective, leadership tasks do not put emphasis solely on one expert field but in a collective of political-administrative fields working together cross-functionally (Avolio et al., 2003; Buckmaster, 2005; Carson et al., 2007; Fletcher & Käufer, 2003; Linden, 2010; Locke, 2003; O'Toole et al., 2002; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Van Wart, 2013).

The key distinction between emerging team-based models of shared leadership and traditional leader-centred models of leadership is that shared leadership is more dispersed amongst collective team members. This is so as to infuse expertise to respond to the demands of the organisational context as compared to downward-subordinate hierarchical influence of one leader in charge (Ancona, Malone, Orlikowski & Senge, 2007; Getha-Taylor et al., 2013; Halvey et al., 2011; Pearce, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003). In LG leadership, core professional expertise exists in an administrative space surrounded by politics and the boundary protects professional activities from politics (Baddeley, 2008; Thornhill, 2008). Yet without the resources “from the political space, professional space cannot exist” (Baddeley, 2008, p.183). Based on this logic, the study results indicate that the administrative leadership is an enabling function that gives effect to political directives. As such, the administration’s primary concern is the establishment of the “enabling framework” (micro-level structures) for the execution of the political leadership’s directives and operationalisation of goals (Thornhill, 2008, p.504). Evidently, LG leadership is non-existent without the combined effort made up of the political-administrative collective. Before the discussion of collective, a look at boundary management of the collective team is critical for the power sharing and the success of team efforts (Halvey et al., 2011; Sinha, 2012; Woods 2004; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002).

#### *4.3.2.3 The Collective team's power sharing and boundaries management in shared leadership*

In an emergent team who share leadership, shared authority (from positional authority) and power are recognised, yet a hierarchical structure and position titles that are accompanied by authority and power often obstruct appropriate sharing or even distribution of power in leadership (Halvey et al, 2011; Heifitz, 1994; O'Leary & Vij, 2012). O'Toole et al. (2002) explain that, instead of leaders being interdependent and distributive in their tasks and work as a collective, they compete with each other. Apparently the challenge for the sharing and distributing of leadership is the unwillingness to share the power because the arrangement of the organisational structure is interpreted as a single-leader approach (Northouse, 2013; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). In contrast, Halvey et al. (2011) and Woods (2004) warns that the organisational structure might be designed to promote shared leadership, but behaviours experienced within the co-leaders are what influence members whether to or not distribute leadership tasks. Linked to my research, LG's dual or co-leadership exhibits more of a slanted or unequal power sharing but in a collective approach that embraces collaboration, cooperation and consultation practices between the political and administrative team (to be discussed later in the chapter).

The slanted power sharing as uncovered in the research findings (theme 2) is due to the primacy of politics that places prominence on political supremacy (by the political executive) and political astuteness (by the administrative executive). The notion of primacy of politics as confirmed in the LG leadership literature, as well as my research findings, indicate that the LG setting, by virtue of being a political environment, makes political supremacy a fundamental element. This political supremacy in turn determines the disproportionate distribution and sharing of power within the executive leadership team. Hartley and Fletcher (2008), state that some researchers'

view of political supremacy in a negative context is the result of their interpreting political supremacy as bullying from political leadership. This view may be perceived as a dysfunctional element to LG organisations and its leadership as a whole. As it unfolds in the study, the dysfunctional of leadership may be exacerbated by the administrative leadership's lack of political astuteness and humility to 'negotiate' distribution of leadership towards the administrative function. Hence, Peck and Dickinson (2009) supported by O'Leary and Vij (2012) highlight that the executive team can only be held together as a collective as long as there is a shared commitment towards particular principles; for example, the negotiation of a boundary that holds and sustains the collective as well as the consistent application of collective practices of leadership.

Peck and Dickinson (2009) explain further that the shared commitment should adhere to the rigidly defined boundaries around and between the team members or else the enclave will quickly disintegrate. Contrary to the literature, the empirical data highlights that the political-administrative leadership consists of boundaries that cannot be mapped out with precision. In agreement, Woods (2004) state that the notion of leadership being distributed does not suggest how wide the roles and power boundaries should be set. Therefore, plotting out boundaries at an executive leadership level of LG is difficult. Therefore, Baddeley (2008) and Van Wart (2011) caution that for political and administrative executives to acknowledge knowing the clear separation between their activities would be a misrepresentation of the co-leadership. Unlike the preceding literature, my research, supported by other researchers, alludes to boundary "negotiation" so as to sustain continual but uneven distribution of power during sharing of tasks (Baddeley, 2008; Day, Gronn & Salas, 2006; Gill, 2006; Linden, 2010; O'Leary & Vij, 2012).

While the political and administrative leadership co-lead as a collective team, the distribution of leadership powers requires continual negotiation of the

leadership space by both leaders (Day et al., 2006). The empirical research illustrates that the process of leadership negotiation is augmented by political power, assuming firm and lucid political leadership. Similarly, the administration's acknowledgement of political authority and power and support and implementation of political decisions enhances the process of negotiations. Butcher and Clarke (1999) and Peled (2000) allude that political astuteness, however, has been a missing discipline in administrative leadership despite it being a key factor in successful LG leadership sharing. Furthermore, the empirical research highlights that each LG organisation has to set its operational rules on what and how to negotiate because boundaries are not clinically defined. Baddeley (2008) together with O'Leary and Vij (2012) warn that failure not to recognise the boundaries is to neglect the co-leadership and its collective characteristic. Andreas and Lindstrom (2008) explain that distribution of leadership within the collective team implies sharing tasks and working interdependently whilst negotiating boundaries, even though leadership boundary negotiation seems to be an ambiguous concept in leadership theory. Unlike the trait-, behavioural-, situational- and contingency theories, leadership from a shared perspective is an organisational quality and a way of thinking about the nature of leadership in an organisation (Spillane, 2005). Therefore, the shift towards a shared perspective of leadership, with leadership responsibilities and expertise distributed and interdependent demonstrates the critical benefit of leadership not residing entirely in one individual but shared.

It is argued that while it is important to note the shared leadership perspectives as a paradigm shift from the single-leader viewpoint, the discussions on shared leadership end prematurely at a level of acknowledging the distribution of team tasks among members (Friedrich et al., 2011). Friedrich et al. (2011) state that these levels of discussions do not fully account for the ways in which shared leadership is practised in the real-world settings. Although distribution of tasks, responsibilities and expertise that are

interdependent is a critical shared-leadership practice, the empirical study does expatiate on additional LG leadership practices, which are the collective and servant leadership practices.

#### **4.3.3 The Relational Dimension of Shared Leadership in LG Leadership**

The conceptual shift implicit in shared leadership represents a significant step toward a relational concept of leadership and its importance during distribution of leadership within the collective (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Unlike traditional approaches where relationships are explained and understood on the basis of the attributes and behaviours of interacting individuals (or leaders), a relational perspective views leadership as a social-relational process that occurs within an organisational context (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Dachler & Hosking, 1988, 1995; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Northouse, 2013; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Hosking, Dachler, and Gergen (1995) as well as Northouse (2013), state that contrary to a more traditional orientation, which considers relationships from the standpoint of individuals as independent and discrete entities, a relational orientation starts with processes (development) and not persons. Hosking et al. (1995) view persons, leadership and other relational realities as constructed through processes. Day and Antonakes (2012) together with Northouse (2013) propose a focus change in leadership research that will switch attention from leaders as persons to leadership as a process. Dachler (1992), Day and Antonakes (2012) and Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) assert that instead of searching for traits, behavioural styles, or identifying particular types of leaders, a relational perspective emphasises exploration into how the processes of leadership in organisations emerge. Applied to my research findings, a relational perspective may give further clarity to the emergence of a political-administrative dual leadership and its feature of collectiveness.

In addressing the process of leadership emergence in organisations, Drath (2001), Murrell (1997) and Northouse (2013) write about relational leadership.

In its strongest form, relational leadership is viewed as a dynamic system, embedding environmental and organisational aspects of leadership (Hunt & Dodge, 2000; Linden, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien, Graen & Scandura, 2000). Taking the concept of relational leadership further, Uhl-Bien (2006) coined the term as “relational leadership theory”. She defines relational leadership theory as “a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e., evolving social order) and change (e.g. new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviours, and ideologies) are constructed and produced” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p.688). This is true of my study findings under theme 2, whereby leaders’ emergent self-concept of collective and servant selves developed through interaction with the LG setting – mainly the dualistic and collective nature of LG and its mandate of serving others. Theme 2 of my study findings indicates how critical it is for leaders to relate to the leadership environment in order for a new social order to emerge and change to occur. Thus, the new qualities of collective- and servant self-concept developed so that the leaders (PEL & AEL) were able to emerge as fitting into the LG’s collective and co-leadership setting of service to the people.

Werhane and Paintes-Marland (2011) agree that Uhl-Bien’s (2006) definition is embracive of entity and relational perspectives, since reality in a dynamic social process can be seen as acts of individuals operating in a context or as social constructions of interacting relationships and contexts. According to Hosking (2000) and Northouse (2013), an entity perspective emphasises individual relations and views multiple realities of self and others within a co-evolving context. Uhl-Bien (2006) refers to relational leadership theory as an overarching framework for a variety of methods, approaches and even ontologies that explore the relational dynamics of leadership rather than a theory in a traditional sense. Similar to relational leadership theory, LG leadership is also embedded in the organisational context (a political setting with an entwined political-administrative core dimension) and relations between the core collective. The AEL and PEL are viewed as integral to the

politically inclined organisational setting. According to theme 3 (sub-theme 'Interdependent PEL & AEL Relationship'), taking organisational factors such as sensitising the administrative leadership on political supremacy (i.e. orientation and sensitisation of AELs on LG's political supremacy) is a way of inculcating the contextual meaning of administrative leadership dominance or 'being in charge' that lays the basis for the establishment of political-administrative relations. Furthermore, in my findings, understanding and abiding by the characteristic principle of political supremacy in LG plays a significant role in improving leadership relations between the political and administrative executive leaders. Submitting to the principle of political supremacy also benefits the administrative leadership in that it assures the co-operation and commitment of political leadership (Foldy & Ospina, 2012).

Whereas Uhl-Bien's (2006) view is similar to other relational perspectives, the difference is that in relational leadership theory, leadership is additionally regarded as an outcome (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Werhane & Paintes- Marland, 2011). This means that the leadership relationships become both an outcome (i.e., how leadership relationships are produced) and a context for action (i.e., how relational dynamics contribute to structuring). For example, the relational leadership theory regards leadership as a collaborative process through which people define and develop their relationships not just as a question of influence but also as a question of how to collectively strengthen their collaborative relationships (Werhane & Paintes- Marland, 2011). Uhl-Bien (2006) writes that the question of collaboration can be addressed on both the individual and collective level. At an individual level, the members involved define their characters or qualities and work towards developing the leadership relationship. At a collective level the focus is more on how the leaders sustain the leadership relationship such that they consciously influence the leadership structure instead of the structure uniquely influencing the leadership (as evidenced in collective leadership practices) (Sinha, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Linked to the empirical research results, theme 3's sub-theme "Interdependent PEL- AEL relationship" typifies how LG leadership relationships develop and form a political-administrative leadership bond. On the basis of the empirical research in themes 3 and 4, the development of the LG leadership relationship is not an automatic process but a product of fostered collaboration based on both political and administrative executives' willingness and desire to build a working relationship. Uhl-Bien et al. (2000) concede that when social bonds (interdependent leadership relationships as in LG) do develop they can be characterised as strong ties or weak ties as well as more positive or more negative ties in nature.

In the study findings (theme 3) the first relational strains caused weak ties between the PEL and the AEL because of AEL's poor judgement of the LG leadership. Also, the AEL's misinterpretation of an administrative leadership role (i.e., the meaning of "being in charge" vs. political supremacy plus an imposition of previous successful leadership relations onto LG's dual or co-leadership) contributed towards weak ties of leadership. These sources of weak ties resulted in frustration for both executives and relational disconnection in their dual leadership roles marked by a sense of rejection by and mistrust of each other. On the other hand established relational bonds hold together and sustain a leadership collective as was the case with the empirical findings in the entwined political-administrative leadership. Clearly, relational perspectives conceptualise leadership not only from what leaders are and do but these perspectives focus more on processes and behaviour that influence acts that contribute to the structuring of interactions and relationships (Hosking, 200; Sinha, 2012; Williams, 2012). Such processes that sustain relations in shared leadership are identified in the study findings as leadership practices.

#### **4.3.4 The Leadership Practices in Shared Leadership**

The findings in this study highlight leadership practices as a form of accounting how dual and collective leadership is accomplished in LG. From the findings two leadership practices that anchor LG leadership and collective team interactions stand out. These are collective and servant leadership practices.

##### *4.3.4.1 Collective leadership practices*

Collective leadership practice is a relational process, in terms of which the group or collective as a whole is a leader, with members within the collective being leaders within the collective (Friedrich et al., 2011; Sinh, 2012). According to Jackson et al. (2008), a collective leadership as a process begins with a shared purpose and as relationships are formed around a shared purpose, a cohesive collective is formed to create a common awareness of co-ownership and shared resolution of problems and challenges. Boone and Hendricks (2009) cite that a cohesive collective is critical in shared leadership practices and is characterised by specific mechanisms, which are, among others, collaboration, information sharing and joint decision making. These mechanisms are recognised in the research findings as the main features of LG's collective practices that support the existence of its collective leadership. The features as identified in the empirical research findings are: collaboration, participative decision making and consultation.

##### *a) Collaboration*

At a basic level, a partnership formed within the collective starts with simple relationship building (Lawson, 2003; 2004; Linden, 2010; O'Leary & Vij, 2012) Collaboration is a relational partnership in which people network, communicate and cooperate so as to share power, authority and information; harmonise operations and activities, share resources and enhance each partner's

capacity to reach a common goal (Lawson, 2003; Linden, 2010; Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001; ). According to Linden (2010) and Mattessich et al. (2001), collaboration is distinguished by lasting relationships characterised by high levels of a reciprocal investment, focus, trust, mutual commitment and a strong sense of joint ownership towards positive outcomes of the organisational goals. Therefore, collaboration is regarded as both a process and an outcome (Lawson, 2004; O'Leary & Vij, 2012).

While the collaborative process involves a combination of different perspectives to better understand complex problems, a collaborative outcome is the development of integrative solutions that goes beyond an individual vision to a productive resolution that could not be accomplished by any single person or organisation (Lawson, 2004; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Sinhan, 2012; Williams, 2012). In the empirical study (theme 4), a collaboration process was observed when the executive collective recognised that neither of the two leadership members could succeed without the other; hence, both voluntarily involved each other in major decision-making processes. From the empirical study, through active involvement of each other as the executive collective team with leadership responsibilities and challenges, cooperation and consensus building were enhanced. The collaborative functioning observed through deliberate efforts to build consensus and co-operation sequentially cascaded to both political and administrative subordinate teams. Also, the collaborative functioning between political and administrative teams, in turn, heightened commitment of both the political and administrative teams to want to work together and be co-accountable for achievement of organisational goals.

Carmeli and Schaubroeck's (2006) study demonstrated that simply having a collective entity was not sufficient but that collaboration among the team members was critical to the effective distribution of leadership within the collective. Along the same line, Boone and Hendricks' (2009) findings supported by Williams (2012) show that functional diversity with varied

expertise among members of the top management collective was beneficial; however, the benefits of the diverse expertise were even greater with increased collaborative functioning among team members. O'Leary and Vij (2012) and Torres and Margolin (2003) together with Williams (2012) clarify that collaboration develops when members of the collective recognise that no one can succeed without the other because each has special expertise or unique capabilities that the others need for achieving a common organisational goal. Thus, close collaboration amongst the members of the collective is characterised by trust, norms of give-and-take, shared responsibilities, consensus building and conflict resolution mechanisms (Lawson; 2004; Day & Antonakes, 2012; Getha-Taylor, 2011; O'Leary & Vij, 2012; Williams, 2012). Proven in the empirical research is strong collaborative functioning that developed into political-administrative collegial and family bonding between the PEL and the AEL as well as their subordinates.

b) Participative decision making

Participative leadership theories suggest that the ideal leadership style or practice is one that takes the input of others into account (Lam, Chen, & Schaubroeck, 2002; Van Wart, 2013). Probst (2005) suggests that such leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process. Participative decision making is viewed in leadership theory as a joint process that fosters ownership of decisions by all members of the team (Probst, 2005). Lam et al. (2002), state that in participative collective leadership, efforts are made to encourage and facilitate participation of all the members by soliciting ideas and information prior to making important decisions. According to Yousef (2000) as well as Van Wart (2011; 2013), participative decision making is associated with consensus, consultation, delegation, and involvement of members so as to enhance higher decision acceptance by the collective. In contrast, Miles and Watkins (2007) warn that it

is sometimes difficult for a group of leaders or a team to reach consensus, resulting in decisions taking longer to make.

Evidence of participative decision-making is presented by the empirical research findings that show that both members of the executive collective team involved each other. Equally, the executive collective team forced engagement of their political and administrative team subordinates to participate through sharing of critical information that impact on crucial decisions to be tabled at Council level. Friedrich et al. (2011) demonstrated in their study that effective information exchange was a driving force behind the participative decision making among top-management team members. Thus, it is assumed that information is the medium by which the leadership-role participants work with each other so as to share among a collective diverse expertise that moulds effective decision making (Friedrich et al., 2011; Van Wart, 2013; Williams, 2012).

According to Boone and Hendricks (2009), effective information exchange leads to a very important consideration of joint decision making. Furthermore, participative decision making is characterised by group facilitation and the ability to teach and learn collaboratively in each situation (Lam et al., 2002; Linden, 2010). This is evident in the research results where it is clear that the subordinate teams (political and administrative) are forced to be hands on. In other words, as a collective team, the subordinates walk the streets to learn and collate information regarding service-delivery challenges so as to develop interventions and strategies based on collective decision making for the accomplishing of service-delivery goals. However, Jackson et al. (2006); Locke (2003) and O'Leary and Vij (2012) point out that team attitudes, turf battles and individual career goals are potential obstacles to efficient decision making, particularly if the collective does not have a clear and shared collective purpose and mission. In the empirical research findings, however, it is evident that the collective share the LG mission and primary purpose of

service to the people. Hence, participative decision making is anchored in the achievement of this shared purpose.

c) Consultations

Whereas consultation is interpreted in the empirical findings as a collective-leadership practice, the literature views it as a technique applied to promote cooperation and collective spirit among the members to enhance participative decision making (Linden, 2010; Yousef, 2000; Van Wart, 2011). Similarly, consultation at its core is a specific form of communication; a bi-directional communication pathway (Friedrich et al., 2011). Fu and Yukl (2000) clarify that consultation provides the collective and its subordinates with a voice and functions as an open exchange between two parties to access information. This implies that it is through consultation that the political and administrative collective (PEL & AEL) can exchange ideas while they also involve their subordinates (members of the mayoral committee & executive directors) to provide inputs to incorporate into critical decisions taken by the Council. In consultation, Jackson et al. (2006) contend that the members of the collective have to develop the ability to influence each other as well as their subordinates rather than impose their authority, as is the case with autocratic leadership.

Evidently, it is indicated in the empirical research (theme 4) that consultation is an entrenched leadership technique emanating from the political orientation of the government leadership. This technique endorses the fact that the executive collective (PEL & AEL) encourage each other to have buy-in from the group members (members of the mayoral committee & executive directors) prior to any decisions made and implemented. Additionally, the executive collective team has the power to consult with subordinates (members of the mayoral committee & executive directors) so as to gather inputs in the form of suggestions and build consensus towards critical decision-making processes. Consultation and collaborative functioning in participative decision making

requires members of the collective to develop trust, respect and ultimately cohesive teaming to be inherent in the relationships of the collective (Getha-Taylor, 2011; O’Leary & Vij, 2012; Torres & Margolin, 2003). On the basis of the research findings, these are also personal qualities the collective team members are to possess in order to fit into the LG leadership setting.

As in the preceding discussions, in order for the collective team members to work interdependently so that responsibilities can be distributed amongst them, members are to submit their personal interests in terms of the purpose of the collective. Also, submission of personal interests is for the members to identify with the collective’s norms and embrace their connectedness with the in-group members (Jackson et al., 2006; Williams, 2012). Seemingly, the concept of collectiveness allows us to describe how the members of the collective think of themselves as parts of different collectives and to what extent their social behaviour is a consequence of norms, duties, and obligations imposed by these collectives. Thus, Jackson et al. (2006) as well as Williams (2012) assert that highly collaborative, participative and consultative members of the collective tend to view themselves as the “we”, with a common purpose of service, as it is the case with LG leadership. The success of the collective team’s leadership practice is anchored by its continual learning. This then brings us to the third shift underlying shared leadership – collective learning by the group members.

#### *4.3.4.2 Collective learning of the team*

Collective learning is defined by Laberge (2006, p.2) as “a social process that produces intellectual synergy of many minds coming together to bear on a problem, and the social stimulation of mutual engagement in a common endeavour.” Similarly, Fletcher and Käufer (2003, p.23) state that collective learning of the group refers to the kind of social interactions that comprise the ideal of shared leadership as differentiated from other leadership relations by

virtue of their outcomes, mutual learning, greater shared understanding and eventually positive action". In this context, the collective learning concept does not necessarily highlight learning from its traditional perspective as intellectual property, but stresses the need for relational practices and skills to enhance shared leadership (Fletcher and Käufer, 2003; Sinha, 2012).

Linking the literature to the empirical research findings, openness to learning demonstrated by the executive collective is a form of lifelong learning. However, not only do the empirical research findings highlight learning by the core collective team, but both executives provide an environment that is conducive to empowering their subordinates. Traditional thinking is that the leader makes the important decisions, which requires him or her to have all or most of the answers. With the collective being collaborative, participative and consultative the opposite is true - it is the collective body that collaborates to create the approaches and solutions to complex issues and challenges that need to be resolved (Laberge, 2006; Northouse, 2013).

#### *4.3.4.3 Servant leadership practice*

Greenleaf (1977, p.13), the founder of servant leadership theory, initiated the movement of servant leadership in organisations where a profound sense of leadership that "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first" emerged. As highlighted in the preceding chapter, Sendjaya et al. (2008) and Northouse (2013) argue that the underpinning of servant leadership is the leader's internal conviction that he/she is a higher being or power and, in obedient gratitude to that higher being or power, serves other people. Heskett (2013) and Northouse (2013) suggest the two-fold distinguishing elements of servant leadership; namely, its primary intent (what the servant leader does) and self-concept (who the servant leader is). In terms of the self-concept, the implication is that servant leadership is not only about practising the acts of service but also being a servant (Boone & Makhani,

2012; Lawson, 2007; Northouse, 2013). The literature further suggests that central to servant leadership is a willingness to take up opportunities to serve others whenever there is a legitimate need regardless of the nature of the service, the person served or the mood of the servant leader (Boone & Makhani, 2012; Lawson, 2007; Sendjaya et al., 2008). Such behaviour is evident in the study findings where it is found that both the LG leaders (PEL & AEL) serve each other as well as their subordinates as a form of expressing serving first.

Pertaining to the servant leadership's primary intent, Greenleaf (1977) confirmed by Northouse (2013) assert that servant leadership as focused on individual followers in making sure followers' highest priority needs are served. Bass (2000), Heskett (2013) and Stone et al. (2003), although they agree with Greenleaf's view, emphasise that the allegiance, objectives and focus of servant leadership are directed to individual followers unlike transformational leadership's allegiance and loyalty, which is towards the organisation or collective goals. Parolini (2005) interpreted that transformational leadership's unique features is its distinctive allegiance and loyalty towards organisational goals, whereas servant leadership's allegiance or loyalty is to followers' interests and needs. Consequently, Sendjaya et al. (2008, p.403) conclude that "the focus of servant leadership first and foremost is on individual followers and takes precedence over organisational objectives". The research findings show that the core collective team (PEL & AEL) facilitated service consciousness (theme 4) with their subordinates and inculcated it as LG's primary intent. On the other hand, the research findings contradict the literature view of subordinates' needs being prioritised above those of the organisational purpose.

The empirical study demonstrated that the collective team's uppermost priority is striving towards the alignment of the core collective and all affected members' interests with the organisational goal of serving communities.

Additionally, ensuring that serving as an institutional goal is larger than internal serving (inner group or collective unity), Heskett (2013) in support of Stone et al. (2003, p.355) clarify the literature's rationale for the followers focus vs. organisational goals in their statement: "organisational goals will be achieved on a long-term basis only by first facilitating the growth, development and general well-being of the individuals who comprise the organisation". A critical interpretation of the study findings reveals that, although the collective team member (PEL) interprets servant leadership as the critical and primary mission (or distinctive allegiance and loyalty to organisational goals) of LG, the question of serving others is first inculcated into the subordinates (members of the mayoral committee) as a key principle of how LG's leadership's responsibilities are to be carried out. Similarly, Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) backed up by Boone and Makhani (2012), note that Greenleaf believes that the final goal of servanthood is to help others to become servants themselves, so that the organisation and the society can also benefit.

Since Greenleaf did not provide definitions clear and specific enough to be empirically tested, Laub's (1999, p.83) conceptual definition for servant leadership is proposed:

Servant leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organisation and those served by the organisation.

Based on this definition, similarity of servant leadership to shared leadership deserves mention. Servant leadership, with its emphasis on valuing people, sharing power and working for the common good of others is a form of

leadership that seeks to recognise both the people within the organisation and the organisation itself. In contrast, both Fiedler's (1967) contingency model and the trait and behavioural theories (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) focus on characteristics, qualities and behaviours, with the leader's behaviour being important and the one to which subordinates respond. However, Heskett (2013) emphasises that Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership centres on attitudes of service towards subordinates and the organisation/communities and, thus, distinguishes the servant leader from other types of leaders and their focus on leadership. In sum, servant leadership, similar to shared leadership, recognises another widely accepted truth in leadership theory: leadership is a relationship and not a set of attributes or traits.

Boone & Makhani (2012) and Johnson (2001) propose that servant leadership's self-awareness is an advantage because of its altruism, simplicity, and consciousness. According to the research findings, the PEL's servant leadership display is integrity marked by his above-reproach character. He is described by his subordinates (members of the mayoral committee) as a servant leader, whose primary concern is the life improvement of the underprivileged communities. Hence, I support Spears' (2010) and Northouse (2013) assertion that servant leadership offers hope and guidance for a new era in leadership practice and for the creation of better, more caring institutions.

#### **4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter reviewed various theories that augment and or contrast the research findings on LG leadership. Psychological theories (e.g. trait, behavioural), although systematic in nature, confine leadership to an individual or leader phenomenon, which to a certain extent contrast LG leadership that is more context influenced. Also, most theories of organisational leadership in the psychological literature are largely context free (Hassard et al., 2013; Mackenzie, 2005). Zaccaro & Klimoski (2002) assert that viewing leadership

from an organisational or institutional perspective brings up an understanding of leadership as being contextual. In seeking to address the inattention to context or situation, the contingency and situational theories attempted to account for the interrelation of leader, follower and situations. However, the approaches remain vague in explaining the concept of leadership, particularly leadership in the public sector, such as LG. Findings from the study drew attention to the multi-dimensional components of LG leadership aligning with the principles underlying shared leadership theory. Thus, shared leadership theory's multi-dimensional view includes other theories like organisational/institutional theory, distributed leadership, collective leadership perspectives, relational leadership theory and servant leadership theory that are relevant to LG leadership.

While there are numerous deliberations within the shared leadership arena, three stand out to me as having particular salience in LG leadership. The first concerns the notion of co-leadership at the top of an organisation, which in LG is the entwined political-administrative dual leadership represented by two positions and powers – political and administrative. Whereas traditional theories of leadership stress a heroic leader to give direction, co-leadership in organisational theory inherent in shared leadership accentuates sharing of leadership role and power. Thus, organisational theory provides some theoretical grounding and clarity on the effect of LG's unique context and structure and its shaping of the co-leadership concept at the executive level. The second salient point is that of leadership processes that occur within a team. Much of the work on the interaction of teams makes the assumption that the team is a homogeneous unit in which individuals are assumed to have similar characteristics and respond to the leader in the same way (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). In LG, however, the typical team members are political and administrative executive leaders; who bring forth diverse skills and expertise; which is a critical precondition to the co-existence of the collective team in LG leadership.

The third salient point that links to the collective team aspect is the notion that leadership is relational. I see from the literature review different relational approaches and though these can all be considered relational, what they mean by relational is quite different. However, what they all agree upon is recognising leadership wherever it occurs – not restricted to a single leader but being an interactive process. In LG, relational leadership is an interactive process engaged in by the collective team (political and administrative leaders) collaborating as partners (Hosking et al., 1988; Linden, 2010; O’Leary & Vij, 2012; Rost, 1993; Uhl-Bien et al., 2000; Williams, 2012) to share leadership. Linked to the relational aspect of LG leadership is servant leadership which is a complex relationship that is purpose driven. Based on the literature, shared leadership is more likely to emerge when the collective team members share a common purpose and support one another (Carson et al., 2007). In the same vein, the research findings confirm that to achieve a common purpose, the collective core teams are to adopt Greenleaf’s servant leadership theory’s servanthood attitude – which is succinctly captured as “servant first” and a leader later (Northouse, 2013). The empirical findings confirm the core collective team’s self-concept as that of collective self and servant first, augmented with lifelong learning so as to fit into LG leadership.

Grounded in the shared leadership perspective, I therefore conclude in this study that LG leadership is a context-based leadership made up of different dimensions that need to be connected to form a seamless form of leadership. The interconnections of the shared leadership multidimensional concepts and the role that they play in the shared leadership process will be the main focus of the LG’s leadership model in the next chapter.

## 5. LG SHARED LEADERSHIP MODEL

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

It emerged from my study results that LG leadership is a multidimensional form of leadership. Yet, the preceding chapter has demonstrated that the empirical and conceptual leadership studies in organisational psychology lack an integrated model or approach that could make sense of the richness of the LG study data on its leadership. This chapter, drawing from my study findings and the supporting literature introduces a leadership model that presents alternative conceptions of leadership that will enhance effective LG leadership. Different from traditional and some of the contemporary theories in psychology, which stress leader-centric approaches that are single-dimensional in focus, this model accentuates multi-dimensional views of shared leadership. The conceptualised model is depicted in Figure 5.1 below and discussed in the remainder of the chapter.



Figure 5.1: The CCPQ -Shared Leadership Model of Local Government

## 5.2. DISCUSSION OF THE LG SHARED LEADERSHIP MODEL (THE CCPQ MODEL)

Argued in the leadership literature is that model building is often not grounded in strong conceptual frameworks that have significant empirical support (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). The envisioned LG shared leadership model (Figure 5.1) is, however, grounded in the study's research findings. From the study, four critical dimensions that anchor the LG leadership model stand out to me as having particular salience that influences a distinct view and understanding of what makes LG leadership effective. These dimensions are:

- i. **Contextual leadership dimension (C):** Leadership is inherent within its context as it is influenced by its setting/system characteristics.
- ii. **Co-leadership dimension (C):** The co-existence of unequal yet interdependent political-administrative constructs make up a collective team that shapes the sharing of leadership roles.
- iii. **Leadership practices (P):** Context-aligned leadership practices underpin the sharing of leadership.
- iv. **Leaders' context-inherent qualities (Q):** The distinct context characteristics (e.g. political-administrative entwines, political supremacy) impose unusual and special leader qualities.

Different from the dominant leader-centric and individualistic perspectives of leadership that emphasise the individual leader components, the envisioned four-dimensional model (CCPQ) discussed in this chapter presents a fundamental paradigm shift in both the philosophy and practice of leadership in LG.

### **5.3 THE FOUR-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF LG LEADERSHIP**

The four-dimensional model (CPQ) demonstrates the interconnection of the dimensions as well as how jointly these constructs define the new and different perspective of leadership in LG.

#### **5.3.1 Contextualised Leadership (C-dimension)**

Emanating from the research findings, and confirmed by the selected literature, an explicit and particular context that lies at the core of the LG is its distinctive context. Unlike the situation/contingency theory's context viewed as a moderator, my model considers an environment set-up of LG as contextual ethos, which creates a prerequisite boundary for both conceptualisation and specifications that in turn shape the LG leadership. The LG boundary conditions are an inherent political-bound milieu with a service-driven goal, which sequentially configures the unique and a typical political-administrative organisational structure and its unique leadership. Typically, this distinguished context sets the parameters about what defines LG leadership (i.e., its nature) and how it is made to be effective.

Essentially, the nature of LG leadership is a product of a political goal setting, which embraces the pluralistic (political-administrative) institutional disposition and service-driven focus. Thus, the unique organisational context influences the fundamental nature and process of LG leadership. While there is limited empirical research in contextualised leadership literature, my study model adds to the leadership perspectives:

- The significance of contextual ethos that engulfs and characterises the LG's institutions and structural arrangements (political-administrative entwined);
- The configuration of the leadership (dualistic/co-leadership), its practice and the leadership focus on service to the people; and

- Leader qualities that befit specifically the LG environment's sharing of leadership.

I therefore conclude that in order to identify what makes LG leadership effective, it is imperative to acknowledge and understand first the fact that LG leadership is inherently bound by a political-administrative system. As a result, a mental shift from the leader-centric leadership paradigm to that of contextually defined LG leadership is imperative. I argue that the conceptual leadership model that either ignores or excludes the critical dichotomy and dimension of political-administrative context disregards the very existence of the LG leadership.

### **5.3.2 Co-Leadership dimension (C - dimension)**

Flowing from the LG context-first dimension is the configured political-administrative pluralistic leadership that is dual (or shared between two leaders), hence operating in a form of co-leadership (the second dimension). Unlike with corporate institutions, I argue in this model, that co-leadership is an institutionally predetermined shared leadership process and I view it in three parts:

#### *5.3.2.1 Political-Administrative Collective Team*

In this model I take the position that effective LG functioning is the political-administrative entwining made effective through co-leadership. Essentially, the co-leadership that makes LG leadership effective is the compulsory co-existence of incongruous, but interdependent positional roles (political and administrative). Thus, co-leadership is an indispensable character of the LG organisations specific within a set of political and administrative leaderships that merge to become a collective. This collective is viewed in the empirical study as a core-team (AEL & PEL) epitomised by a collective identity (the "we" instead on an "I" identification) that consents exchange of social, emotional

and psychological support between political and administrative leaderships to ensure effective, interdependent and inter-operative leadership.

#### *5.3.2.2 Shared leadership power*

In order for the collective team to co-lead, it is imperative that the team share leadership power. Therefore, the sharing of leadership powers and authority marks an inter-operative functioning of the collective team during co-leadership. The authentic sharing of power and authority in the LG co-leadership is through an uninterrupted distribution of tasks, which are the political power (political decision making on policy and institutional strategy formulation) and administrative power (an implementation of policies, execution of technical/measurable outputs and professional advice to political leadership) across a political-administrative continuum. This political-administrative distribution is a leadership exercise of power and authority that further enforces interdependency on variable political-administrative skills and expertise to enhance effective execution of leadership responsibilities. Most significantly is that the leadership power and authority be shared inequitably in favour of the political supremacy which elevates the political leadership in order for co-leadership to be successful. This implies that although co-leadership is a collective function, the baseline principle that determines leadership effectiveness is an unequal sharing of powers and submission of the administration to the political supremacy.

#### *5.3.2.3 Negotiated leadership boundaries*

Linked to the preceding discussion the positional roles are to share unequally leadership power and authority while the position holders (PEL & AEL) simultaneously negotiate the leadership boundary to ensure harmonious co-existence. The study has proven that the success and sustenance of the shared leadership power and authority is dependent on continual negotiations over leadership boundary. During the incessant negotiations on leadership

power and authority, both political and administrative leaderships are to diligently manage the boundary parameters agreed upon from time to time. My findings suggest that positional power and authority may be used or misused under the guise of political leadership supremacy. Therefore, relentless negotiations on leadership boundary (without overlooking the political supremacy slant) and consistent management of 'agreed upon boundaries' is certain to enhance effective co-leadership in LG's shared leadership.

In summary, the LG shared leadership model depicts the co-leadership dimensional view comprising three critical characteristics that facilitate effective LG shared leadership. These are:

- Collective teaming that adopt the "we" identity;
- Shared leadership power and authority that slants more towards political leadership in response to political supremacy; and
- Continuum task distribution with interdependent responsibilities that require negotiations and consistent management of political-administrative boundary.

For the reasons above, not only does the model underscore the paradigm shift from the leader-centric perspective but also accounts on the intrinsic leadership practices during task/responsibility distribution, which determine further the makes and breaks of the LG shared leadership.

### **5.3.3 The LG's Shared Leadership Practices dimension (P - dimension)**

The second dimension of LG as shared leadership and co-leadership gives perspective on LG functioning and the nature of its leadership. The third modelled dimension highlights further the interactive processes by which effective LG shared leadership is produced and enabled; namely through collective and servant leadership practices.

### 5.3.3.1 *The collective leadership practices*

The collective leadership practices, namely collaboration, walk-the-talk and consultation are the critical techniques used in shared leadership by the core collective (political and administrative collective) to ensure their effective functioning together as a team. I interpret these collective practices as beyond positional power sharing but more of the core collective members' intentional interactive functioning. The modelled collective leadership practices are:

#### a) *Collaboration*

Within the core collective team's functioning, the political and administrative collective team are to influence each other positively towards co-leading in an effective manner. Therefore, I am of the opinion that the co-existence of the core collective (political and administrative executives) in co-leadership is meaningless without collaboration. Collaborative functioning is a conscious commitment of the core collective to co-operate and co-lead in partnership as opposed to competing with each other, while holding each other accountable for successful/unsuccessful LG organisation functioning and achievement of its purpose. In addition, the model demonstrates the measure of collaborative functioning in the extent and quality of participative decision-making practice in a form of the co-leadership walking the talk.

#### b) *Walk-the talk*

Distinguishing the extent of participative decision making is the core collective's 'walk the talk' position. The 'walk-the-talk' is visible involvement of the core collective in organisational tasks performed by subordinates yet requires core collective's critical decision making. The significance of participative decision making is demonstrated through the core-collective's consultation.

### c) Consultation

Consultation as a form of collective leadership practice entails the political and administrative leadership being in constant discussion with each other on critical tasks outcomes despite slanted power sharing (i.e. political supremacy). The political-administrative consultations manifest through active soliciting of critical information, encouraging subordinates' participation in information gathering and decision-making participation. Thus, consultations foster taking co-ownership and reaching consensus on both good and bad decisions made during the sharing of leadership. The core-collective members are to submit their personal interests to the LG purpose of serving people in order for the collective practices to be sustainable.

#### 5.3.3.2 *The servant leadership practice*

The servant leadership practice in LG is the core collective's conscious **sacrificial attitude**, the egalitarian serving of the organisation and subordinates, consistent display of humility and integrity as well as altruistic pursuance towards achievement of the organisational purpose – serving people first. The noticeable demonstration of servant leadership practice by the AEL and the PEL (core collective) in the study are the AEL's submission to the principle of political supremacy and willingness to work quietly behind the scenes, making important decisions unrewarded and unnoticed, while credit goes to the PEL. Similarly, the PEL's humility is shown through '**servant first**' inclination and conscious inculcation of service first to both the executive team (core collective) and the secondary collective (the political and administrative leadership's direct subordinates).

Eminently, the leadership practices of collective and servant leadership are the most critical LG leadership factors that enforce effective sharing of leadership and achievement of the leadership purpose of serving people first. Failure to employ these techniques in LG's shared leadership obstructs smooth and

effective distribution of leadership tasks and the core collective's interactive relationships, which may result in leadership conflicts and disarray in the effective sharing of the leadership between political and administrative forces. Linked to the fourth dimension, these holistic leadership practices are strengthened by specific qualities of the core collective, namely, a context acquired self-concept – collective self, servant first and lifelong learning.

#### **5.3.4 Political-Administrative Leaders' Qualities (Q - dimension)**

Unlike the leader-centred theories that identify leadership qualities (attitudes, behaviours, etc.) from inherent qualities of the leader, the LG shared leadership model picks out the fourth dimension of critical, context-specific LG responsive-leader qualities. These qualities (i.e. self-concepts of collective self ('we' instead of 'I') and servant first, as well as lifelong learning) prescribe the 'to be acquired' LG leadership qualities that set a basis for a leader to fit into the interactive and collective processes of shared leadership. Rather than described leader characteristics, in LG leadership, the leader-context interaction yields a psychological merging of self (Van Knippenberg, 2006) into the organisational context demands, resulting in this instance in leaders' collective and servant-self outlook. These qualities are explained as follows:

- a) Collective Self: a psychological 'merging' of self into a group identity – we instead of I; the shared understanding of leadership.
- b) Servant first: selflessness, humility, altruism, egalitarianism, integrity, diligence and trustworthiness, trust and dependability.
- c) Lifelong learning characteristics:
  - *Self-motivation*: i.e., *self-directed learning*;
  - *Passion towards LG functioning and its leadership demands* (i.e., *passion and willingness to belong*);

- *Political Vision*: unwavering belief in LG's unique characteristics and willingness to implement according to its norms and values; and
- *Adaptability to change*: flexibility towards LG's changing demands and requirements.

I argue that the shared leadership of LG's study model involves more than specifying and describing leader traits and behaviours that lie at the heart of the leader-centric approach. Instead, this model identifies the leader as a team itself (collective), hence the leader qualities reinforce the *we-ness*, context-appropriate exchanges and context purpose serving. Thus, the aforementioned acquired characteristics only endow leaders with the potential to fit into the leadership of LG that unfolds through the interconnection of the four dimensions- context, co-leadership, leadership practices and leader's qualities. This means, these qualities on their own do not necessarily influence effective leadership unless these are balanced with the nature of leadership (interactive and collective co-leadership) and its practices.

While I do not disregard the inherent traits and characteristics of leaders, my view is that an effective LG shared leadership is the consequence of a successful incorporation of distributed leadership tasks and self-insight (collective and servant self) while persistent in lifelong learning in order to acquire LG knowledge and political-administrative skills. So, leader characteristics in an effective LG leadership make up only one critical dimension that on its own does not relate to the concept of leadership rather than just to a leader in leadership.

#### **5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter aimed to provide an integrated and succinct conceptualisation of the model proposed in this study. In summary, the conceptualised four dimensions that make up a holistic and integrative LG shared leadership

model are mutually re-enforceable and complementary towards the efficacy of the LG leadership. These four dimensions work together to create a contextual leadership that is characterised by a collective team that co-leads to achieve a shared understanding of the purpose through interactive leadership practices – consultation, collaboration, participative decision making and continual team interactions. Adopting the four-dimensional shared leadership model in LG means that the LG leadership can no longer be defined as a context-free leadership that involves disintegrated dimensions that put more emphasis on a single leader and identifying or defining leadership from the leader's inherent qualities. This model instead, focuses on the uniqueness of the functioning of LG that is made effective by its mutual/reciprocal leadership that involves interactive, distributed and interdependent tasks operationalised by the collective team that interrelate. Likewise, the practice of LG leadership should no longer focus on leaders, subordinates and their shared goals only, but should accentuate cooperative-participative decision making, consultations and collaborative functioning of the political and administrative functions in order to achieve the common purpose of serving. Finally, I am of the view that promoting LG shared leadership as a four-dimensional model and practice would be better for the LG organisations as compared to the leader-centric leadership.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a consolidation of the study and gives some conclusions that are drawn in accordance with the research aims set out in Section 1.5. The most significant contributions of the study as anticipated in Section 1.6 are also discussed. In addition, limitations of the study are articulated in detail. The study's recommendations on practical implementation of the developed leadership model are also set out. Finally, future possible research in the field of consulting psychology, with specific reference to shared leadership in the public sector organisations, is highlighted.

### **6.2 THE RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS**

The study explored the dual political-administrative leadership of LG with an aim to understand and describe what makes LG truly effective. Thereafter an effective leadership model was developed – the shared leadership model of LG. The general conclusion of the explorative descriptive study is that the LG leadership takes the shape of shared leadership. It is a shared leadership phenomenon embedded in political primacy, defined and anchored by multidimensional constructs, which successively make the sharing of leadership effective. These four critical interconnected dimensions – unique organisation setting, co-leadership, leaders' context influences and their qualities, and context-aligned leadership practices – (collective and servant) are inter-operative so as to enhance the completeness of an effective LG shared leadership model.

The specific conclusions from the study are that, firstly, the multidimensional shared leadership perspective supports the view of leadership as a context-

configured and defined phenomenon that is shared and made effective by political-administrative co-leadership. The political-administrative sharing is characterised by the collective teams' (PEL & AEL) leadership power sharing sustained through political-administrative skills and interdependencies of expertise. The conceptualisation of the LG leadership without taking into account the context specific factors offers the context-free leadership explanation, which is inappropriate for the LG setting. The specific elements of the LG shared leadership include: unique political-bound leadership context; distinctive yet compulsory co-existence and co-functioning of political-administrative powers; continual leadership-boundary negotiations; a continuum of political-administrative task distribution and a collective team in which the 'we'ness offers the contextual leadership character. I conclude that the avoidance of the aforementioned components of the LG context would be oblivious to the configuration of the nature of the shared leadership in LG. Secondly, the co-leadership characteristic clearly proves that LG leadership contrast the vertical leadership relations in favour of horizontal leadership interactions between the members of the political-administrative collective team. Such leadership interaction is displayed through the distribution, yet inequitable sharing of leadership power in favour of the political leadership.

Thirdly, the four-dimensional shared leadership of LG describes the context-specific leaders' qualities, which are; collective self and servant first self-concept, together with life-long learning. The study identifies qualities that are an enhancement of the leaders' fit into the context of the LG shared leadership specifically. I conclude that the political-administrative leaders' distinct qualities provide a basis upon which to identify effective leaders that benefit the LG shared leadership. Whereas leader-centric perspectives that are single dimensional describe, for example, personality traits, behaviours and leadership styles, these traits and behaviours are inadequate characteristics for effective shared leadership in LG. Context-specific qualities, however, support the view that leadership, including LG leadership, can be learned.

Therefore, an effective leadership of assigned leaders (PEL & AEL) can be noticeable through what leaders do (e.g. co-leading as a collective), how they do what they do (e.g. collective and servant leadership) and how they see themselves and behave (e.g. collective self; servant first and leader later self-perceptions, as well as openness to continual learning).

The definitive conclusion suggested by the study is that LG leadership is made effective through the shared leadership approach, characterised by a complex set of four interconnected dimensions that underscore the political-bound context, co-leadership, distinctive leader qualities and collective-servant leadership practices. The conclusive study findings have contributed to leadership studies, and such contributions are discussed below.

### **6.3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The study contributes to the development of the field of industrial and organisational psychology by advancing knowledge of leadership from the shared-leadership perspective. The shared-leadership perspective knowledge supports the shifting of the leadership view from both a vertical and an individualistic approach into horizontal and collective team viewpoints. I believe that I have added to the body of knowledge on the emerging concept of shared leadership in LG leadership because Jackson and Parry (2008) and O'Toole et al. (2002) highlight respectively the lack of empirical and theoretical studies about shared leadership in real organisations. More particularly, my study within the public sector contributes to the recognition and acknowledgement of the existence of the shared-leadership concept and practices in LG organisations and other SA public sector organisations. My study contribution is regardless of the fact that vertical leadership –‘the command and control’ type (Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2007, p.4) is still the prominent leadership approach in LG organisations. In addition, my contribution confirms Döös, Hanson, Backström, Wilhelmson, and Hemborg’s

(2005) assertion that although the shared leadership phenomenon obviously exists formally (e.g. in LG) or informally in many organisations, it seems to be given other labels or no label at all both from leadership studies, as well as LG organisations.

Furthermore, my contribution through this study is to manage to explore and describe the concepts and terminologies that emphasise shared leadership, as well as how shared leadership is practised in LG. Concepts such as co-leadership, distributed leadership, collective leadership and collaborative leadership are more than just variants of shared leadership but offer descriptive clarity towards the activities underlying sharing of leadership. In this study, shared leadership does not refer to any other phenomenon than sharing of leadership between the PEL and AEL as per findings of the study. I, however, recognise the indication by Crevani et al.'s (2007) that quite often shared leadership carries different meanings within different contexts of execution or field of studies. New terminologies typical to shared leadership in LG such as, collective self, 'we'ness, servant self and primacy of politics are highlighted as an additional contribution to leadership studies resultant from my study. These terms will enhance the development of constructs in leadership competencies as qualities unique and critical for LG leadership, as well as other public sector organisations that should practise shared leadership.

Although the exploratory-descriptive study is based on a single political-administrative case study of dual leadership by PEL and AEL, in one LG case organisation, the unique political-administrative nature of LG is exactly the same across 288 LG municipal organisations in SA. For that reason, the shared leadership conceptual model of LG is applicable to the entire LG municipal organisations even though context may slightly differ. Therefore, the model can be generalised to all of the 288 municipal organisations. On the other hand, the typical nature of the study's focus on the unique political-administrative leadership seems to be restricted to LG, insomuch as the

shared leadership conceptual model as it applies in LG does not allow me to generalise to other public sector organisations. However, it does allow me to generalise certain parts of the model, such as leader qualities, leadership practices and co-leadership, because the political influence and service to the people components are similar to those of LG.

The developed model's leadership practices (e.g. collective and servant leadership) add to the training and development interventions practical and applied leadership styles that leaders can be trained on as shared leadership practices or styles within the LG and public sector. Methodological contribution is the use of the grounded theory for both data collection and data analysis. This methodological contribution to the industrial and organisational psychology field is the practical and detailed step-by-step process articulated in data analysis and themes formulation. I show in the study how I applied the grounded theory method to analyse the raw data and subsequently construct the shared leadership themes that form a basis to develop a model of shared leadership in LG. It is therefore reasonable for me to state that by developing a shared leadership model of LG, I have provided a framework for leadership knowledge grounded in the research data.

## **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The research study limitations are addressed in the sections that follow.

### **6.4.1 Limitations of the Literature Review**

Relevant literature references within industrial/organisational psychology and organisational behaviour fields are extremely difficult to access as a result of the scanty number of published studies or even articles that examine shared leadership. My experience on the literature availability confirmed Choi's (2009) and Kocolowski's (2010) uncovering of ample studies on shared leadership, being mainly within the education and healthcare industries, with a few within

the public administration and political science. A review of the literature on shared leadership indicates that the research on the subject is still in its infancy (Choi, 2009; Kocolowski, 2010; Northouse, 2013; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Even more, Pearce and Conger (2003) and Van Wart (2013) allude to the fact that there has been increasing attention in both public and private sectors to explicitly explore the emergence of shared leadership; nonetheless, there has been little research from industrial and organisational psychology on shared leadership.

Most of the research on organisational behaviour and leadership studies focuses more on aspects of leadership teams and teamwork (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2004; Carson et al., 2007; Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006; Pearce & Herbig, 2004; Pearce & Sims, 2002) rather than shared leadership in its purest form, which is sharing leadership power and authority as is the case in LG. Furthermore, the literature on political-administrative leadership and LG shared leadership is non-existent. To my knowledge no studies have directly explored political-administrative leadership in its original context, while focusing on shared leadership from an organisational-behaviour perspective. Seemingly, the concept of shared leadership within the organisational context has not gained much recognition despite all the advantages found in the shared leadership perspective (Andreas & Lindstrom, 2008; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). The main limitation is that I had to draw from various fields (e.g. education, health, public administration, political science), which bear little resemblance to industrial and organisational psychology and organisational behaviour studies. Consequently, I had to assemble relevant literature on shared leadership from these fields.

#### **6.4.2 Limitations of the Shared Leadership Theory**

From a theoretical grounding of the study, Pearce and Conger (2003) offers a theoretical foundation to channel the study of shared leadership. Although

Pearce and Conger (2003) used conceptual and empirical research to develop this theory, very few studies and empirical analyses are in existence to back up, crystallise and validate the shared leadership theory as a paradigm. A few theory-related limitations that I encountered are: a lack of a clear and/or an integrative definition and a delimitation of the shared leadership and its core constructs. Researchers state that lack of a clear definition of shared leadership is, however, not unusual in the field of leadership because the “term leadership, despite its popularity, it is not a scientific term with a formal, standardised definition” (Vroom & Jago, 2007, p.17). Similarly, Northouse (2013) confirms that the operational definition of leadership depends to a great extent on the purpose of the research. Equally, the difficulty to delimit shared leadership is because of its ambiguity as a concept (Andreas & Lindstrom, 2008; Choi, 2009; Sinha, 2012), with many and different dimensions (Carson et al., 2007; Koccolowski, 2010) such that it is not fully accepted as a leadership paradigm (Andreas & Lindstrom, 2008). Added is Jackson and Parry’s (2008, p.85) indication that shared leadership is “a multifaceted concept” that carries different terminologies inasmuch as many fields of study use different terms to refer to “shared leadership”. At the same time, the literature from various fields uses other terms like “collective leadership” and “distributed leadership” interchangeably with “shared leadership” (Carson et al., 2007; Koccolowski, 2010; Northouse, 2013). In order to overcome this limitation, I recognised the specific four dimensions that define the makeup of LG leadership yet contribute to the effectiveness of shared leadership.

#### **6.4.3 Limitations of the Empirical Research**

At the very beginning of the study, the research topic was conceptualised as the “exploration of an integrated leadership and development model for LG”. In consequence, the letters addressed to the case study organisation to seek access permission as well as permission to engage the key participants in the

study carried the above-mentioned heading. During the unfolding of data collection, categories and themes pointed towards a shared leadership phenomenon, resulting in the modification of the research topic and discarding of the original literature review to predominantly rely on data themes for the relevant literature. Nonetheless, the revised research topic as a result of the data analysis findings was not highlighted to both sets of participants (key participants and focus groups) to rectify what was contained in the informed consent letter. In response to this, I argue that the constructivist grounded theory as a data collection and data analysis method that contributes to the development of a new theory/model was successfully used in this study. As a result, the revised research topic emerged from the data.

The emergence of my research topic supports Glaser and Strauss' (1967) statement that with the grounded theory method, rather than commencing with a theory that is to be verified, the researcher relies on an area of study wherein relevant theoretical constructs are allowed to emerge, thus allowing the fundamental relationship to develop between data and theory. Laws and McLeod (2004, p.11) state that "grounded theory methodological emphasis encourages actors' (participants) own interpretations and meanings to emerge with minimal prompting or predisposition by the researcher". Besides, the use of concepts emerging from the data was also consistent with an interpretivist ontological position of the researcher's ability to adapt according to the data. Other researchers also argue that no one can gain accurate previous knowledge of the context of the research topic that is bound in social realities (Carson et al., 2001).

The other limitation is based on the fact that both key participants are of the same gender and racial group, so they are not representative of South Africa's leadership demographics. On this point it is fair for me to point out that gender and racial group aspects were not prerequisite criteria for identifying the unit of analysis – the political-administrative dual leadership team within a particular LG organisation. My psychology background, my knowledge of the LG

environment as well as using self as an instrument of data collection made it impossible for my subjectivities not to impact my data interpretation and the formulation of the final study themes. The epistemological view based within the interpretivist orientation (which I adopted in this study) allows the researcher to enter the field of research with some sort of prior insight about the research topic but assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design as a result of the complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Carson et al., 2001). Therefore, I draw attention to the fact that this philosophical view influenced the study's epistemological position by co-creating the categories/themes based on findings in which my prior knowledge, insights and prejudices shaped the interpretive process of the themes. Also, how questions were asked in both interviews and focus groups was influenced by both my professional background and knowledge of LG organisation dynamics. At the same time, I made attempts during the study to minimise the impact of these limitations by using a professional transcriber to transcribe the data so that the raw data were not biased.

#### **6.4.4 Limitations of Shared Leadership Model Implementation**

Although the LG municipal organisations in SA are better suited to host shared leadership by virtue of the unique entwining of the political-administrative leadership, the biggest challenge is the hierarchical structure (as depicted in Figure 1.1) that denotes the vertical leadership of control and command by the political primacy. The shift of control and command away from the PEL towards the collective (PEL & AEL) in practice may prove to be difficult as it may be perceived as a weak political leadership. Secondly, the continual negotiation of leadership boundaries between the political and administrative leaderships is currently a difficult and complex exercise, yet the study proves that boundary negotiations is at the heart of effective co-leadership and success to sharing of leadership. Baddeley (2008, p. 179) state that shared leadership boundaries negotiations "is a hazardous terrain" demanding skills

that takes time to refine and that need honing. Thirdly, the tasks overlap and continuum distribution of responsibilities of policy decision to policy implementation is less perceived as a functional interdependency rather than as political leadership overseeing the administrative policy implementation. Fourthly, collective and servant leadership practices of the shared leadership in LG are currently not well recognised leadership styles as it is with the democratic and transformational leadership. Also, because of the heroic leadership model entrenched in LG organisations, the collective and 'servant leadership' self-conception and practices expected of the PEL and AEL may seem ambiguous for effective leadership. Such qualities and leadership practices could be seen as weak leadership as compared to leader-centric attributes such as those of the visionary.

The multi-dimensions of the shared leadership model of LG may be interpreted as complex, hence the reluctance to want to implement all the dimensions. Failure to implement all the dimensions would result in the loss of the essence of the interconnection of these dimensions. This reluctance, therefore, hinders adaptation to an expected shared leadership. In order to overcome these limitations, I am of the view that the model must be introduced and explained in a formal training and development context with the emphasis falling on leadership that facilitates sharing of responsibilities and even distribution of power. The simultaneous exposure and training of both PELs and AELs on the model will facilitate better leadership effectiveness within LG municipal organisations.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The following recommendations, including practical recommendations, are made to guide future research and implementation of the model within LG organisations.

### 6.5.1 Recommendations

- The LG's entwined political-administrative structure is designed as a vertical leadership structure. Its nature and the execution of the leadership functioning, however, are unknowingly intended for shared leadership practice. Therefore, I strongly recommend that shared leadership be the future model adopted by LG leadership within LG organisations. Adapting the organisational structure alone may not yield the envisaged results of embracing and practising shared leadership in LG organisations.
- An explicit political-administrative duality puts an undisputable demand on the sharing of leadership between the two leadership powers. The complexity brought about by the LG leadership's structure, roles and responsibilities and its organisational purpose must be highlighted as absolute characteristics that force LG's effective leadership to adopt and implement the shared leadership approach. Effective LG leadership cannot be accomplished by either political or administrative leadership alone. So, the shared leadership focus as the primary leadership approach that makes LG leadership effective cannot be avoided any longer.
- In order to understand the shared leadership and build the LG's shared leadership model, the study took into consideration more the opportunities on contextual leadership as presented by the uniquely entwined context of political-administrative. For that reason, more research in industrial and organisational psychology, as well as more studies on leadership, is essential to explore contextual leadership in order to make leadership research relevant to real organisations.
- At a practical level, the potential impact and leadership success that could be the result of the implementation of shared leadership by the

collective team (PEL & AEL) must be brought to the awareness of the political-administrative leadership of LG organisations. Accordingly, LG organisations' collective teams (PELs & AELs) must be sensitised on shared leadership and be encouraged to put such leadership into practice.

- Leadership consultants that work in the public sector, specifically on organisational re-design and leadership interventions, must play a pivotal role in persuading the viewing of LG leadership as a shared phenomenon that gives confidence to collective leadership achievements rather than political or administrative achievements separately. Similarly, leadership consultants should focus their interventions on the development of LG leadership competence in leadership sharing more than putting emphasis on the leader-centric model characteristics (e.g. heroic leader qualities) that could impede public sector (LG) leadership fit and effectiveness.
- The developed model of shared leadership in LG emphasises interaction and interdependency of the political-administrative leadership. This angle of relational interactions typifies the leadership bonds that further our understanding of the nature of LG's shared leadership. I recommend that LG organisations begin work on the operationalisation of the model by putting more focus on the establishment of the political-administrative bonds that sustain the sharing of leadership.
- I am of the strong view that a different paradigm of leadership – the shared leadership that recognises the duality of political-administrative leadership in LG organisations and underscores effective leadership – should be formally introduced. Encouraging an implementation of this shared leadership in LG organisations should gradually eradicate the

political supremacy misconception of command and control and persuade strong relational leadership partnership between the PELs and the AELs.

- There are existing LG institutes of training with training programmes which slant towards leader-centric models of leadership. At one level, it is encouraging that such initiatives are being implemented to ensure LG effectiveness. This study however, recommends that the *CCPQ Shared Leadership Model* of LG be deciphered into a training programme on which the multidimensional elements of the model can form the leadership competence elements.

### **6.5.2 Future Research**

- The current developed model of shared leadership offers a conceptual base to understand the nature and practice of shared leadership in LG organisations. So, I recommend that future leadership research be conducted on the shared leadership model of LG. Future research should explore the integrative view of the multi-dimensions upon which a theory of shared leadership can be built.
- Future leadership research in organisational psychology/behaviour should explore the relational acts between the collective team members, which influence and sustain developed relations (refer to section 4.3.1) to enhance practices of shared leadership.
- Future research on shared leadership should explore leadership practices – collaboration, participative decision making, co-accountability and consultation – for the achievement of organisational goals. Such exploration will enhance the understanding of the shared leadership process beyond merely the abovementioned being leadership styles.

- The shared leadership model of LG underscores serving first as both a leadership quality and a leadership practice that is imperative for the sharing of leadership in LG organisations. I recommend that future research in leadership studies and organisational psychology/behaviour explore the concept of 'serving first' as a leadership quality in shared leadership theory because of the contribution of 'serving first' to the success of shared leadership in the public sector.
- Unique shared leadership qualities in the context of LG leadership are clearly articulated in the developed model. Future research, specifically in organisational psychology/ organisational behaviour, which focuses on the leadership qualities of shared leadership grounded in the shared leadership theory, is recommended. Future research based on LG's shared leadership qualities can be explored so as to develop a shared leadership competence model for both the political and administrative executives of LG and even the public sector generally.

## **6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter began with a general conclusion as it relates to the general aim of the study. The specific conclusions demonstrate how the specific aims were fulfilled in the study. The significant contribution of the study towards the knowledge of leadership studies in industrial and organisational psychology and organisational behaviour were also highlighted. Attention was paid to the limitations of the study, whilst the recommendations for the implementation of the model, as well as for future research, were given.

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## **8. APPENDICES**

### **8.1 APPENDIX 1**

**LETTERS TO ORGANISATION XYZ TO GAIN ACCESS**

**AND**

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY WITH IDENTIFIED  
PARTICIPANTS**

Date: 3 September 2009

**TO: THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER**

**RE: PERMISSION FOR THE STUDENT: S.V. BVUMA TO COLLECT DATA AT YOUR INSTITUTION AS PART OF THE FULLFILMENT OF HER PHD THESIS**

1. Solani V Bvuma, student number 43394752, is a registered PHD student in Consulting Psychology at Unisa. In order for her to satisfy the requirements of her studies on her thesis "The exploration of an integrated leadership and development model for local government" she has identified organisation XYZ for data collection.
2. The data collection will include a one –on-one interview(s) with yourself (Municipal manager) as the executive administrative leader and one focus group with your direct reports, the executive directors.
3. Therefore, permission is sought from your office to conduct the study by scheduling a one-on-one interview with yourself at your most convenient time. Also, permission is sought to conduct focus group session with the executive directors and their convenient time, mainly after the one-on one interview with you.
4. The participation to this study is voluntary; as such participants are allowed to withdraw at any given time should they wish to do so. The data collected will be used solely for this study purpose and nothing more.
5. The completion of this study is viewed as a positive contribution towards local government leadership and its leadership. Consequently your participation will be an invaluable contribution to the success of this study.
6. Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

---

Dr Antoni Barnard (Research Promoter)

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Solani V. Bvuma (Student)

Date: 3 September 2009

**TO: THE HONOURABLE EXECUTIVE MAYOR**

**RE: PERMISSION FOR THE STUDENT: S.V. BVUMA TO COLLECT DATA AT  
YOUR INSTITUTION AS PART OF THE FULLFILMENT OF HER PHD THESIS**

1. Solani V Bvuma, student number 43394752, is a registered PHD student in Consulting Psychology at Unisa. In order for her to satisfy the requirements of her studies on her thesis "The exploration of an integrated leadership and development model for local government" she has identified organisation XYZ for data collection.
2. The data collection will include a one –on-one interview(s) with yourself (Executive mayor) as the executive political leader and one focus group with your direct reports, the members of the mayoral committee.
3. Therefore, permission is sought from your office to conduct the study by scheduling a one-on-one interview with yourself at your most convenient time. Also, permission is sought to conduct focus group session with the members of the mayoral committee and their convenient time, mainly after the one-on one interview with you.
4. The participation to this study is voluntary; as such participants are allowed to withdraw at any given time should they wish to do so. The data collected will be used solely for this study purpose and nothing more.
5. The completion of this study is viewed as a positive contribution towards local government leadership and its leadership. Consequently your participation will be an invaluable contribution to the success of this study.
6. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

---

Dr Antoni Barnard (Research Promoter)

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Solani V. Bvuma (Student)

## **8.2 APPENDIX 2**

### **KEY PARTICIPANTS' CRITICAL INCIDENT INTERVIEW GUIDELINE**

# **POLITICAL/ ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE LEADERS' CRITICAL INCIDENT INTERVIEW GUIDELINE**

## **1. INTERVIEW OPENING STATEMENT**

Thank you Honourable Executive Mayor/ Mr Municipal Manager for the opportunity you awarding me to interview you. It is a great privilege to me. As indicated in the correspondence sent through your office some time ago, I am a PHD student at UNISA, and I am conducting my research in local government leadership. The purpose of the interview is for me to gather knowledge of the local government leadership through you. As a leader in local government, your insights will assist me in gaining a deeper understanding into the essentials of leadership successes and/ or failures in the local government organisations. Before we start, may I request your permission to record this interview? However, should you want certain parts of the discussion off the record I will respect that.

## **2. INTRODUCTORY QUESTION:**

As an expert in your field (local government political leadership), I would like to know more about you. I am also interested to understand how you work in your leadership and how you relate with your administrative/political leader.

2.1 May we start off by you telling me about yourself and your leadership role?

*Notes:*.....  
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- *Successful Incident 2.*

Notes:.....  
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Thank you Honourable Executive Mayor/ Mr Municipal Manager for the two successful incidents you related.

2.2.2 Now, I want you to tell me about the two unsuccessful incidents during your leadership in organisation XYZ. In conclusion of each incident, do indicate to me the lessons learned from the unsuccessful incidents.

- *Unsuccessful Incident 3*

Notes:.....  
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- *Unsuccessful Incident 4*

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3. During your tenure as a political/administrative executive leader, what would you say about your relationship with your political/administrative counterpart?

Notes:.....  
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4. In closing tell me - who do you identify with as your role model and what is outstanding about this person that attracts you to him/her?

Notes:.....  
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**5. Concluding Statement:**

Thank you Honourable Executive Mayor/ Mr Municipal Manager for your valuable time. May I indicate that I will want to make follow up questions emanating from this interview responses and or gaps to the information. May I therefore request to have a follow up face-to-face interview or a telephonic interview within the next few days/ weeks , at the time that is convenient for you. Once again thank you for the opportunity you gave me to be able to conduct this interview with you. It is an honour to me.

**8.2 APPENDIX 3**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS/MEMBERS OF THE MAYORAL  
COMMITTEE REGISTER FORM**

**Executive Directors/ Members of the Mayoral Committee Focus Group Attendance Register:**

**For Local Government leadership studies- Bv S.V. Bvuma**

Kindly fill in your details as indicated on the register form.

**Note:** Please note that all information requested on this register form shall be used solely for this study purpose. All information that is related to your identity shall not be disclosed in any way or form. Thank you for your willingness to participate in the focus group session.

						Signature	Date
Name & Surname	Gender	Designation	Department/ Division	No. Years in XYZ	No of years in current position	Signature	Date
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							

**8.3 APPENDIX 4**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS/ MEMBERS OF THE MAYORAL  
COMMITTEE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS GUIDELINE**

# **POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE SUBORDINATES FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

## **1. BACKGROUND**

Thank you so much for availing yourselves for this session. Please take note that your participation in this session is voluntary and you are allowed to withdraw should you not feel comfortable at any point of this session. Are there questions of clarity or concerns before we start?

## **2. INTRODUCTIONS.**

May I suggest we quickly do a round of introduction so we know each other?

## **3. PURPOSE OF THE FOCUS GROUP**

Now that we know each other may I reiterate on the purpose of this focus group. Your participation in this session is mainly to help me verify information already gathered from your leaders, -PEL and ex-AEL on the local government leadership. Therefore, your honest response to questions will assist me to gain a broader understating of leadership in this type of organisation- local government. Please be aware that this session will be recorded and that at any point you want your statement/s be off record that request will be honoured and respected.

## **4. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

4.1 How long have you been with the organisation and what attracts you about organisation XYZ?

4.2 What has been the most striking issues/things about your political and ex-administrative leaders for the past four-five years?

4.3 During the discussion with both the AEL and PEL, they emphasised on learning in leadership, what can you say about them regarding that?

4.4 Serving others and “dirtying your hands” came out very strongly from both the AEL and PEL’s discussions. How did each of them demonstrate this element of serving and how did they apply it in XYZ in their leadership?

4.5 Both leaders - AEL and PEL alluded to the importance of roles clarity and separation of powers between political and administrative roles.

- Can we talk about political-administrative roles clarity and separation; and
- How in your knowledge the PEL and AEL managed separation of their roles and powers?

4.6 One thing I heard the PEL and AEL mention is working as a collective and team respectively.

- I wonder what the rest of you have to say about that ?
- How did the team and or collective function practically within XYZ under the leadership of both the AEL and PEL?

4.7 The PEL spoke about primacy of politics – what political leadership says goes.

- What do you understand by this statement?
- How did the primacy of politics apply in the leadership between PEL and AEL? Please do give me examples on these scenarios.

4.8 How would you describe the AEL and PEL qualities as leaders?

4.9. In closure, what would you say about the PEL and AEL in terms of their strengths and developmental areas?

5. Thank you all for your enthusiastic participation in this focus group.

**8.4 APPENDIX 5**

**CO-CODERS DATA CODING CERTIFICATE**

## CLIENT/STUDENT

Solani Bvuma

### THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Dr. Jeanette Maritz and Dr. Retha Visagie have co-coded the following qualitative data:

**5 Critical Incident Interviews & 4 Focus Groups**

For the study

### **A MODEL OF SHARED LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

We declare that we have reached consensus on the major themes of the data during a consensus discussion. The client/student has been provided with a report.

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