

THE ROOTS OF CIVIC APATHY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

by

EDWIN NTWAMPE MOKGWATSANA

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ADMINISTRATION

in the subject

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR C A THEUNISSEN

JOINT SUPERVISOR: DR E J NEALER

NOVEMBER 2000

Key Words

Public Participation

Civic Apathy

Civic Involvement

Government by Consent

Reluctant Citizens

Citizen Consultation

Role of Local Government

Citizen Perceptions

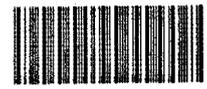
Participatory Democracy

Political Participation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. C.A Theunissen and Dr. E.J Nealer for guiding and supporting me to reach this point of the dissertation, and all the people, especially Mrs. H Napaai, who assisted in making information and resources available to complete the study. A word of appreciation to Agnes Phiri for helping with the typing, my parents and colleagues for providing moral support.

306.20968 MOKG



0001782843

ABSTRACT

The dissertation deals with the roots of civic apathy in local government, and the main emphasis is to establish the root cause/s of civic apathy. The hypothesis: 'civic apathy is a phenomenon intensified by ignorance and a feeling of powerlessness and frustration on the electorate' is tested in this study. To examine further specific aspects of civic apathy, including establishing the cause/s and effects of apathy, the author conducted a quantitative research in the Northern Metropolitan Area in Johannesburg, using questionnaires and literature study as the research method.

The hypothesis advanced in the dissertation has been validated insofar as it has been argued and demonstrated that indeed people can feel powerless and frustrated if they are deliberately being excluded from, or denied the opportunity to participate actively in their local government activities. The main finding is that civic apathy is intensified by ignorance. However, the most important finding is that there is a causal relationship between powerlessness, frustration and apathy.

CONTENTS

✓ CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1	General overview	1
1.2	Problem statement and hypothesis	2
1.3	Research questions	3
1.4	Purpose and significance of the study	4
1.5	Focus and frame of reference of the study	4
1.6	Design and research method of study	6
1.7	Exposition of chapters	8

CHAPTER 2: GLOBAL EXPERIENCES IN CIVIC APATHY

2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	Civic apathy in the United States of America (USA)	13
2.2.1	Historical background	13
2.2.2	Counties	13
2.2.3	Cities in the United States of America	14
2.2.4	Analysing public participation and apathy in the United States of America	15
2.2.5	Apathy in theories of democracy	19
2.3	Apathy in the United Kingdom	22
2.3.1	Historical background (party system)	22
2.3.2	The history of local party politics	23
2.3.3	Local pressure groups in the United Kingdom	23
2.4	Apathy in Australia	25
2.4.1	The local government background	26
2.4.2	Non-participation in Australia	27
✓ 2.5	Public participation in Canada	28
2.5.1	The political environment	28
2.5.2	Civic involvement in Canada	29
2.6	Africa's experience in civic apathy	30
2.6.1	South Africa in the 1980's (political participation in fight for liberation)	30
2.6.2	Zambia	33

2.6.3	Angola	36
2.6.4	Zimbabwe	38
2.6.5	Tanzania	39
2.6.6	Malawi	40
2.6.7	Mozambique	42
2.6.8	Botswana	43
2.6.9	Namibia	44
2.7	Summary and conclusion	45

CHAPTER 3: CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1	Introduction	49
3.2	Role of local government in participatory democracy	49
3.2.1	Citizen consultation	50
3.3	Citizen participation and involvement	51
3.3.1	Citizen initiated contacts	52
3.3.2	Attitudes to public participation	53
3.3.3	Citizen perceptions	55
3.4	Policy and decision-making process	56
3.5	Democratic principles of citizen participation	61
3.5.1	Freedom of expression and association	61
3.5.2	Right and access to information	63
3.5.3	Information and communication technologies	65
3.5.4	Participatory democracy	67
3.6	Political participation	69
3.6.1	Voting	70
3.6.2	Rational ignorance	70
3.7	Role of municipal councillors in citizen participation	72
3.7.1	Principle of representation	72
3.8	Interested and disinterested citizens	75
3.8.1	Rewards, interests and beliefs	75
3.8.2	Costs and benefits	76
3.8.3	Reluctant citizens	79
3.9	Effects of civic apathy in South Africa	82

3.10	Summary and conclusion	87
------	------------------------	----

CHAPTER 4: CITIZEN GOVERNANCE

4.1	Introduction	89
4.2	Modes of participation	89
4.3	Responsive local government	92
4.4	Principles of community governance	93
4.5	Era of citizen governance	95
4.6	Will of the people	100
4.7	Government by consent	102
4.8	Barriers to citizen governance	104
4.9	Nature of community representatives	109
4.10	Need for informed public	110
4.11	Facilitating community involvement	113
4.12	Summary and conclusion	115

CHAPTER 5: CIVIC APATHY: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1	Introduction	118
5.2	Stratified sampling	119
5.3	Pilot study	119
5.4	Research method	120
5.5	Measurement	127
5.6	Univariate analysis	128
	5.6.1 Results	128
5.7	Study limitations	141
5.8	Eradicating civic apathy	141
5.9	Summary and Conclusion	150

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1	Introduction	152
6.2	Summary	153

6.2.1	Global experiences in civic apathy	153
6.2.2	Challenges of democracy in South Africa	156
6.2.3	Citizen governance	159
6.2.4	Civic apathy: research findings	161
6.3	Conclusions	163
6.4	Recommendations	165
6.5	Further research areas	166
7	List of sources	168

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The policy and decision-making process model	58
Figure 2: The acts of participation and apathy	60
Figure 3: The interactive model	82
Figure 4: Citizen governance model	99
Figure 5: Politics of power	108

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1: Gender participation in each Zone	122
Graph 2: Gender participation	123
Graph 3: Radar chart	123
Graph 4: Participation in zone 1	124
Graph 5: Participation in zone 2	125
Graph 6: Participation in zone 3	126
Graph 7: Participation in zone 4	126
Graph 8: Participation in zone 5	127

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Sample stratification	7
Table 2: Types of participation in each zone	121
Table 3: Statement agreement	128
Table 4: Questions agreement	128
Table 5: Is ignorance a cause of civic apathy	129
Table 6: Statement agreement	131
Table 7: Active membership and participation in local government	132
Table 8: Indication of community representatives in the local authority	132
Table 9: Indication if residents knew their ward councillors	133
Table 10: Satisfied that community views and problems put forward by community representatives are being heard	133

Table 11: Responses received from the local authority from time to time	135
Table 12: Indication if regular ward meetings are held	136
Table 13: Interest shown by residents in discussing community issues with their local authority	137
Table 14: Indication whether residents know the local authority's functions and whether they are interested to know how it function	137
Table 15: Necessity to participate in policy and decision-making process	138

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1	Locality map of Zones in the Northern Metropolitan Area	5a
Annex 2	Locality map of Regions in the Greater Johannesburg (Unicity)	6a
Addendum		179

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview

The concept of "apathy" is a general term that refers to lack of interest or indifference. There are many forms of apathy, such as voter apathy, political apathy, media apathy and civic apathy. Research has shown that there are many reasons why individual persons and communities are apathetic, but this does not necessarily mean that those reasons are the cause of apathy. Nevertheless it should be first acknowledged that people are not homogenous, but they are different. However, this assertion does not mean that people should, therefore, be apathetic because they are not of the same kind, both in thinking and appearances. It simply means that people view issues differently and do not express themselves in similar ways. One person's interests may not necessarily be another person's interests; and one may argue that education benefits society, but the next person might think otherwise. However, there are instances where people reach agreements or share common views.

It is a common practice that people react to issues that directly affect them. A classical example is personal income. Every person is aware that money is a tool for survival in this modern world. Therefore, every person seeks work or goes to work in order to generate some income, otherwise they will starve. On the other hand if issues are not having a direct impact on them, they tend to act differently or avoid the issues altogether. The point emphasised here is that, before many people act or respond to a problem they first seek direct and immediate benefits. Therefore, people do things for different reasons.

The primary objective of any government is to serve its people; and it will not be in existence or survive without people, hence citizens have power over the survival of any government. The thought that what would happen if ninety percent of people choose not to vote or pay for services being rendered by the local government, is the perfect example. As in business, without customers the business collapses. This qualifies the statement that any form of government cannot survive without its people.

However, the point is that people have the power and are entitled to participate in government matters, but in reality not everybody participates in governmental activities either by voting or in influencing the decision and policy-making processes. Thus, many of them fall into a state of apathy. Zatz (1994) argued that some people have been brought up to be apathetic; others were influenced by their school, friends or jobs (past and present) to lose the sense that they control their own destiny. This statement is debatable, but does hold some validity.

In many instances apathy results from non-participation and if there is participation (public or citizen participation), it means there is less, or no, apathy at all. The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) enshrines the principle of public participation in government activities. Section 152 (1) of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) states that one of the objects of local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government. Lack of public participation and apathy are two global problems, which does not only affect governments but also directly affect businesses. Hence the aim of this study is to discuss and investigate the root cause(s) of civic apathy in local government; and why people are apathetic when they are entitled to participate in the affairs of local government.

1.2 Problem Statement and Hypothesis

It was mentioned earlier that section 152 (1) of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) protects a citizen's right to participate in local government matters. Local authorities have the responsibility to encourage community involvement. The barriers to public participation have been removed, yet civic apathy still exists. South Africa is now a democratic society and as such the people should influence government policies. However, the problem arises when most of the people who are supposed to be participating in government activities are not involved in shaping and influencing policies and decisions concerning their communities and determining the way they want to live.

It is, therefore necessary to investigate the cause(s) of civic apathy and understand the reasons behind the lack of public participation. It is further necessary to determine

whether South Africans can really participate in local government activities. If not, what are the problems and are there any channels opened for them in exercising their right to participate? Or is it a case of “If people don't know, they won't care”. If they don't care or they are too busy to get involved and active, nothing happens, nothing matters and nothing changes (Zatz,1994:6).

Hypothesis:

‘Civic apathy is a phenomenon intensified by ignorance and a feeling of powerlessness and frustration on the part of the electorate’.

1.3 Research Questions

Researchers are generally prompted to ask questions that may help to answer and provide possible solution/s to the research problem/s being researched. The following are questions that may help to explore some of the statements made in this study:

- Do people think that local government is necessary?
- Are local authorities really providing essential services to the people?
- Do people know that they are entitled to participate in the local authority's activities?
- How many people do participate in these activities?
- How many people vote or participate in the political process?
- Do the people know that by participating they are fulfilling a civic duty?
- Do people believe that it takes time and effort to learn what is going on in politics and to try and influence political events?
- Is it demanding to spend time registering or voting?
- Does voting make any difference in the lives of the people?
- Do potential voters believe that local issues pertain to them?
- Is their indifference to the issues keeping people from voting or participating?
- Are the people informed about the local issues and do they know how the South African political process works?
- Can it be assumed that every person knows how local authorities operate or function?
- What is/are the real cause(s) of civic apathy?
- How many people are apathetic about and ignorant of their local authorities' issues?

- Are the people always informed of proposed actions or plans by the local authorities?
- Do people know their local ward councillors?
- Are people being alienated by the South African politics?
- Can apathy be reduced if there is less ignorance?
- Is ignorance reinforced by apathy?
- Does greed exploit the ignorance of the majority who do not have sufficient comprehension to counter the greedy factions?
- Are bureaucrats a power hungry elite who pay little attention to those who elected them?
- Is the public ignoring the politicians?
- Could the whole process of representative democracy collapse without the people's participation and involvement?
- What is really keeping the citizens away from participating in local government?
- Do people really feel no shame about not knowing anything of their local government and how it operates?

1.4 Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the root cause(s) of civic apathy; and to consider why citizens are not interested about or participating in the affairs of the local government and the political process, in particular at local government level where these structures should be able to determine the standard-of-living and the quality-of-life for every local citizen. The significance of the study is that it aims to reveal the impact that politics have on every citizen and why most potential voters are not interested on what goes on in their own local authorities. On the other hand the study hopes to find out why many people are apathetic and also to highlight the difficulties and frustrations (if any) that some of the local people encounter when dealing with their local authorities concerning community issues or problems.

1.5 Focus and Frame of Reference of the Study

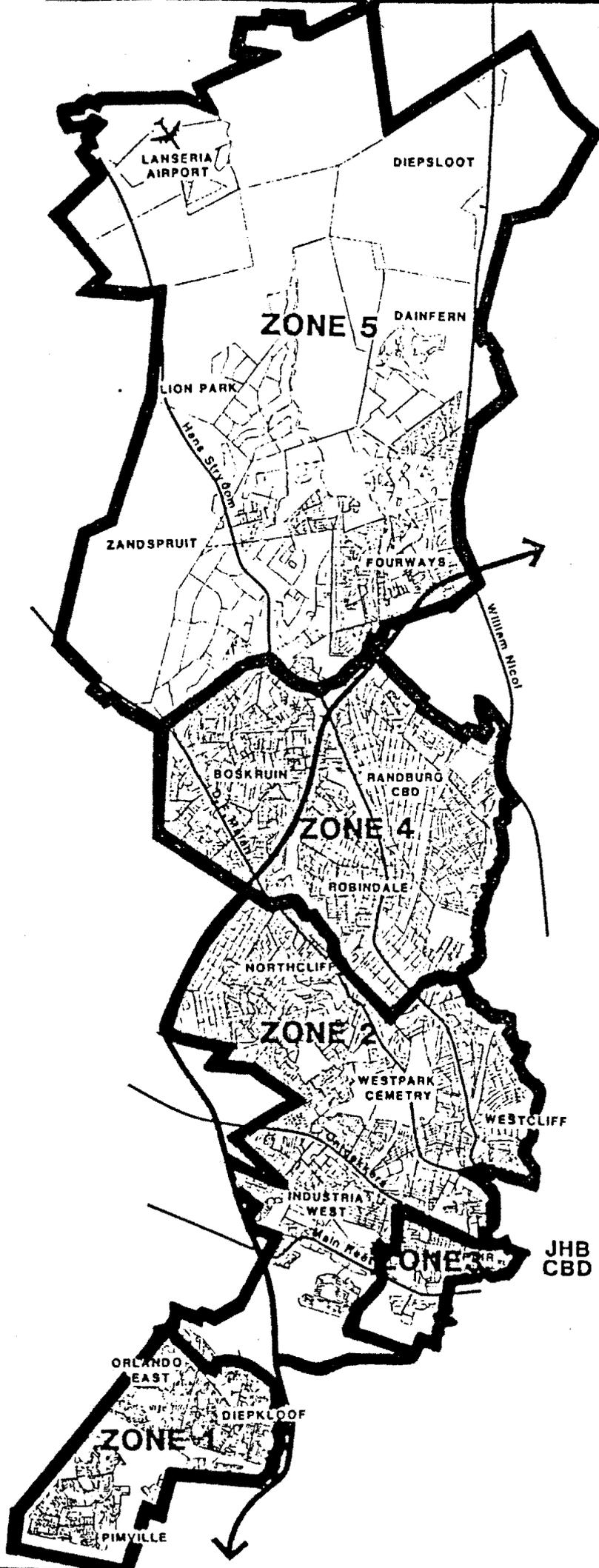
The research study focuses on local government. This is because local government is regarded as the most important sphere of government in which people have a direct

opportunity to participate. The study was conducted in the former Northern Metropolitan Area in Johannesburg) (see attached locality map marked Annex 1).

The Northern Metropolitan Area in Johannesburg refers to those areas that fell within the Northern Metropolitan Local Council area of jurisdiction. The reason for choosing the Northern areas in Johannesburg was that of easy accessibility, the saving of costs and the fact that their total population was adequate to draw a research sample from. The area also provides a general mean or standard baseline. In addition the area is representative of many similar areas countrywide. The Northern Metropolitan area in Johannesburg as a whole was divided into five zones, before the introduction of the regions as a result of the adoption of a Unicity concept, which consolidated all metropolitan councils in Greater Johannesburg into one administration, divided into eleven regions. A particular population group dominated each zone. Zone one incorporated areas such as Pimville, Klipspruit, Orlando East, Diepkloof and Noordgesig. Blacks are ninety nine percent (99%) of the population and coloureds constituted only 0.3% of the population. Zones two and three incorporated areas like Coronationville, Newclare, Bosmont, Riverlea, Industria, Westbury, Mayfair, Brixton, Auckland Park, Northcliff, Fairland, Blackheath, Emmarentia, Westcliff, Sophiatown (formerly known as Triomf) and Westdene. Whites grouped together in both zones constituted eighty seven percent (87%) of the population, coloureds thirty seven percent (37%), Asians 46.2% and blacks only 29.2% of the population.

The reason why the percentages do not add to a hundred is that the population groups of Zones two and three are combined together to avoid fractions. For example, whites in zone two will constitute 43 and a half percent of the population and zone three will be the same. The same also applies to Zones four and five which incorporated the following areas: Sundowner, Ferndale, Kensington B, Blairgowrie, Randpark Ridge, Malanshof, Fonteinebleu, Robindale, Strijdom park, Windsor, Linden, Bushhill estate, Cosmo City, Diepsloot, Johannesburg North and Lanseria. Whites grouped together constituted 59% of the population, blacks 40.1%, Asians 0.9% and coloureds also 0.9% of the population.

Zone one had a total population of 312 000, Zone two 184 000, Zone three 22 500, Zone four 130 000 and Zone five 70 000. The total population of the whole Northern



Metropolitan Local area in Johannesburg was 718 500 with an estimated annual growth of 13.1%. Thus, whites constituted 28.5% of the population, blacks 57.3%, coloureds 4.8% and Asians 9.4% of the total population. Zone one had fifty five thousand (55 000) formal housing units and five thousand (5000) informal units. Zone two had forty five thousand (45 000) formal units and one thousand (1000) informal units. Zone three had four thousand, two hundred (4 200) formal units and five hundred (500) informal units. Zone four had only thirty three thousand (33 000) formal units; and Zone five had an estimated four thousand and five hundred (4 500) formal units and fourteen thousand, five hundred (14 500) informal housing units. The growth rate varied in the different Zones because some Zones (Zone two and three) have reached saturation, while Zones four and five were regarded as new growth areas, to the North and Northwest.

The introduction of regions as a result of the adoption of a Unicity concept in the Greater Johannesburg did not have a negative impact on the outcome of this study. However, there are slight adjustments of boundaries in some areas as a result of the integration of these areas (see attached locality map marked Annex 2).

1.6 Design and Research Method of Study

Seventy five percent of data was obtained through literature study. The main sources were books, both local and international, the Internet and journals. Articles and official documents were also used. The emphasis was on analysis, and providing a theoretical background to the global and local experiences on civic apathy, public participation and citizen involvement in local government activities. However, the aim and final analysis in this study is to establish the cause(s) of civic apathy, although only in South Africa, yet with generic application value elsewhere in the world.

A survey was conducted in the above mentioned areas between November 1999 and August 2000. The survey was conducted through issuing out questionnaires randomly to respondents in each zone; and the unit of analysis was South African individuals, 18 years and older. See addendum for an example of the questionnaire. The population sampled was stratified according to the five zones and the population number within the jurisdiction of the Northern Metropolitan Local Council area in Johannesburg.

- LEGEND**
-  Northern MLC
 -  Eastern MLC
 -  Western MLC
 -  Southern MLC
 -  National Roads
 -  Major Roads
 -  DM Municipal Boundaries
 -  Railways
- Proposed Regions:**
- 1 - Debsart
 - 2 - Midrand/Arny Park
 - 3 - Sericho
 - 4 - North/Flourensburg
 - 5 - Roodepoort
 - 6 - Dorekop/Rowena
 - 7 - Alameda
 - 8 - Ixora City
 - 9 - Johannesburg South
 - 10 - Diepkop/Meadowside
 - 11 - Ennedi/Orange Farm

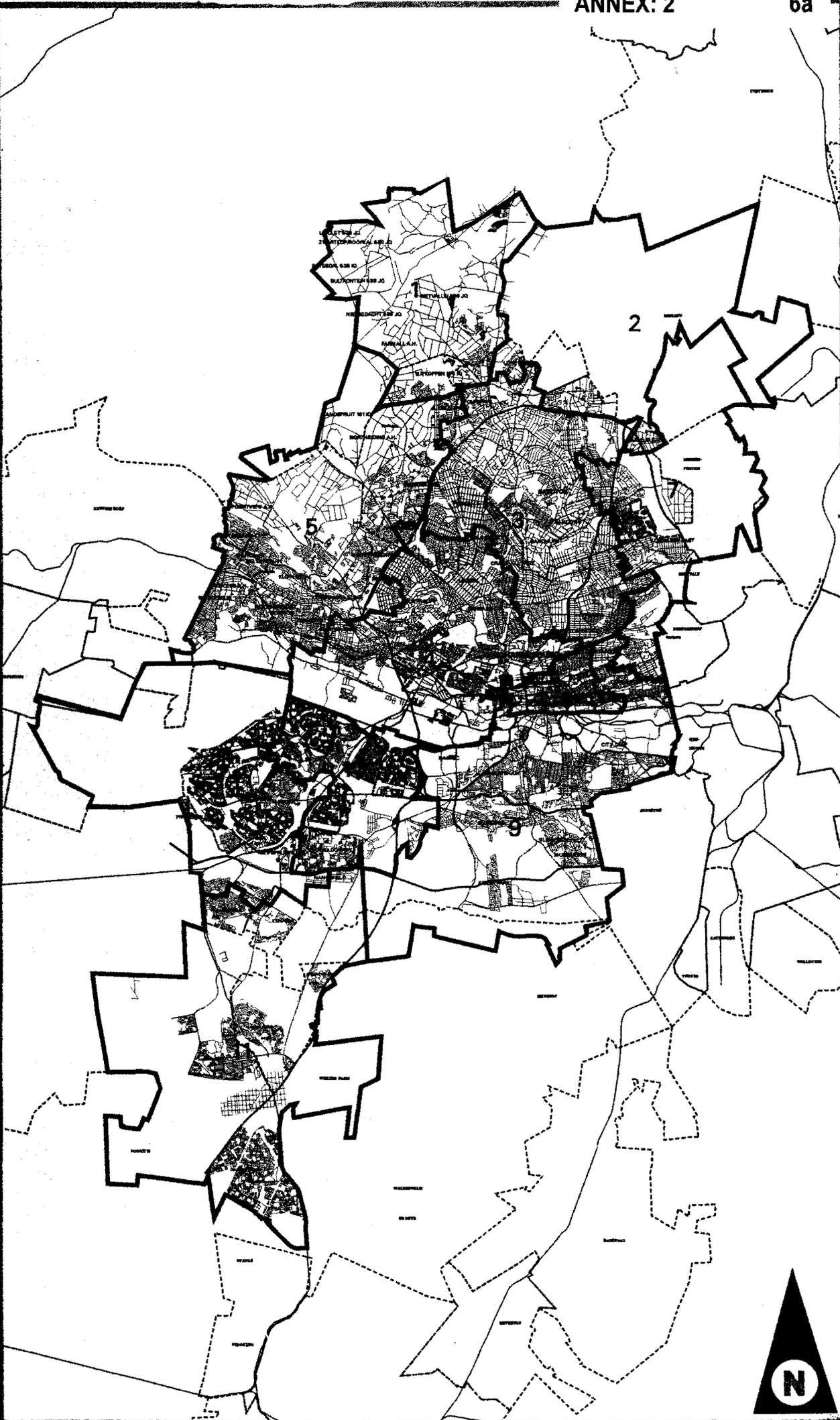


Table 1: shows how the sample size was divided for each zone:

Table 1

Sample stratification

ZONES	SAMPLE	REALISATION
Zone One	200	143
Zone Two	148	83
Zone Three	30	12
Zone Four	72	45
Zone Five	50	21
Total:	500	304

The sample allocation was based on the DRM 1996 population¹ figures provided by the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council population Database. The population figures have since not been updated, hence they appear to be outdated. So these figures cannot be verified as a true reflection of the present total population number. However, it was taken into account that the population, as provided by the DRM survey, was estimated at a growth of 13.1% annually.

On 7 February 2000 a pilot study was conducted, and 30 questionnaires were issued randomly to individuals in all five Zones; 28 questionnaires were realised after two weeks. Thereafter, 500 questionnaires were issued to respondents at schools, libraries and work places in each Zone. Municipal councillors and ratepayers associations were also used to distribute questionnaires.

The reason for using ward councillors, civic and ratepayers associations was that they were in contact with the communities on a regular basis through meetings and other forms. So it was easy to get willing participants for this study. A group interview was also conducted with the participants in Zone five. The reason was that most of the people in Zone five could not read or write, so they preferred to be interviewed. 304 questionnaires were realised with a 60.8 response rate.

¹ The DRM population survey for the Land Development Objectives purposes

1.7 Exposition of Chapters

This research study consists of six chapters. The following provides an idea of their contents:

Chapter one: Introduction/General overview

In this chapter the focus is on a general overview of civic apathy and the aims and purpose of the study. It serves mainly as the introduction to the study and also contains the problem statement, hypotheses, the research questions, significance of the study, focus and frame of reference, methodology and research design.

Chapter two: Global experiences in civic apathy

Chapter two focuses mainly on the literature study. Special attention is given to the international theoretical background on civic apathy, public participation and citizens involvement in governmental activities. The other point of reference in chapter two is the experiences and challenges faced by countries across the world; and the reasons or factors that may have influenced civic apathy and non-public participation. The countries analysed in chapter two are: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Zambia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.

Chapter three: Challenges of democracy in South Africa

This chapter is linked to chapter two. It deals with the literature review in detail. It is basically a literature analysis on challenges of democracy in South Africa. It also reflects whether civic apathy affects proper service delivery, policy and decision-making and consultation. What is also highlighted is a relationship between apathy and other variables such as public participation and ignorance.

Chapter four: Community governance

This chapter focuses on community governance and the modes of participation that are available to citizens. The emphasis is also on the principles of community governance, the will of the people, the principle of government by consent, barriers to community governance, politics of power, nature of community representatives, facilitation of community involvement and the need for an informed public.

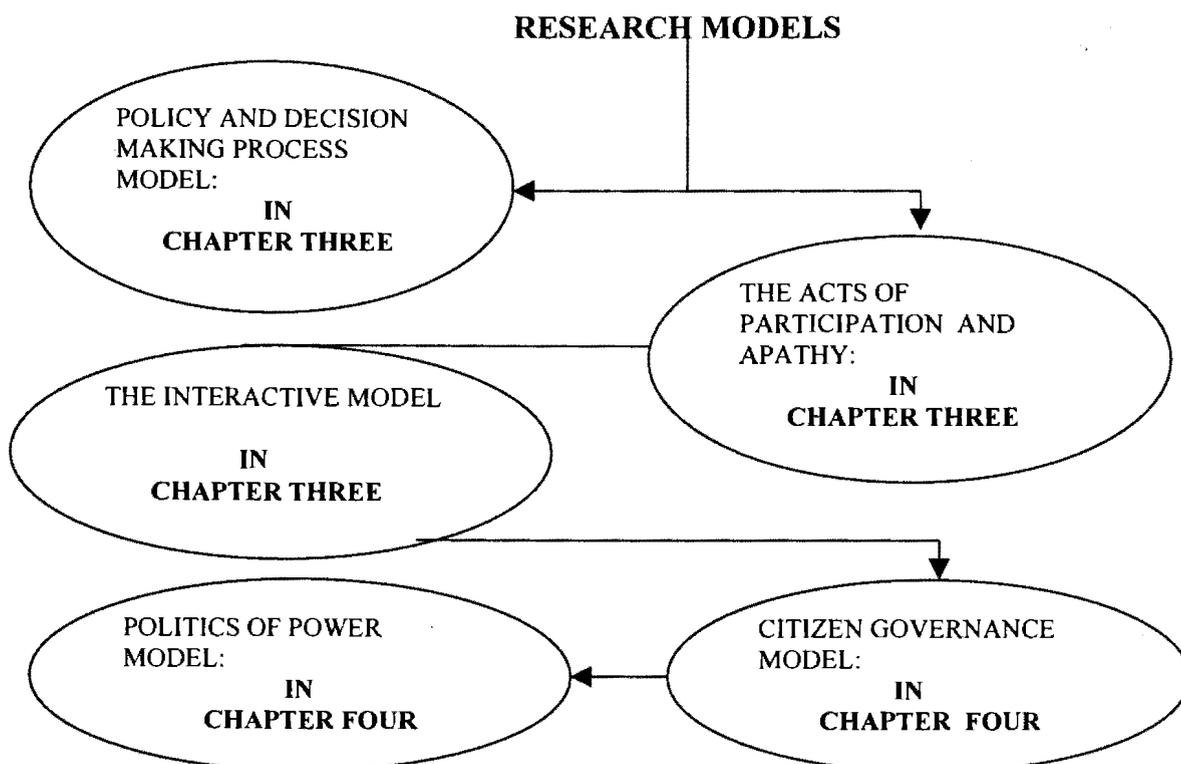
Chapter five: Civic apathy research findings

The chapter focuses on the interpretation of data and the analysis of findings obtained through questionnaires, discussing the methodology and procedures followed to investigate the research problem.

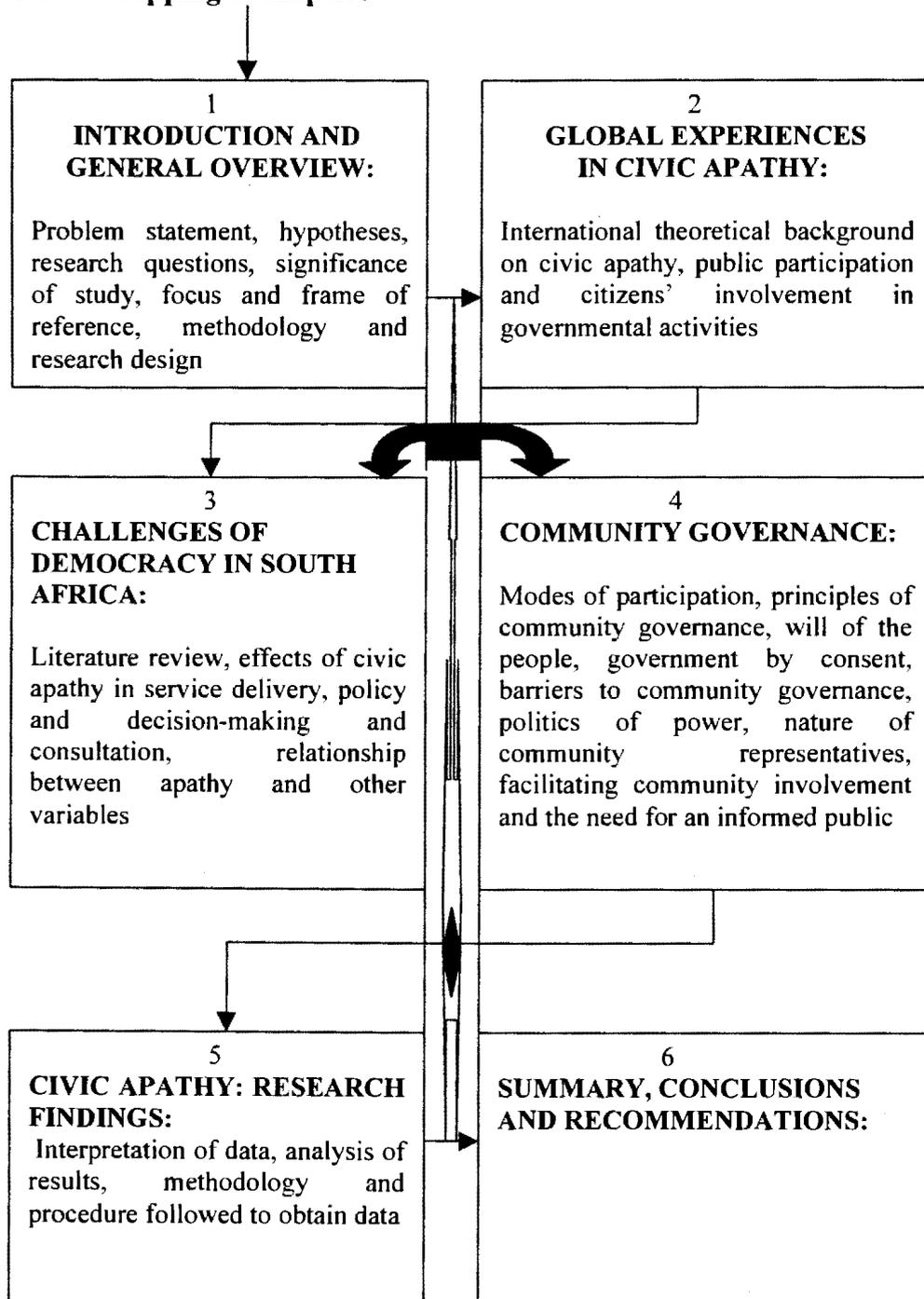
Chapter six: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations to the problem of study.

The researcher based on the research conducted and the analysis thereof has developed applicable models in this study.



1.8 Mapping of chapters



CHAPTER TWO: GLOBAL EXPERIENCES IN CIVIC APATHY

2.1 Introduction

The aspects of apathy take many forms, such as civic apathy. Apathy, as it is defined as lack of interest or indifference, may be viewed or interpreted in different ways. According to the *South African Pocket Oxford English Dictionary (new edition, 1994)* "civic" is defined in two forms. Firstly, "civic" means of citizens or citizenship and secondly it means a non-official body (i.e. civic associations) acting to redress grievances and achieve reform in local government, including municipal and township affairs. Therefore, civic apathy in this instance may refer to citizens' apathy or the apathy of non-official bodies acting on behalf of certain groups of people or a community.

The statement above attempts to highlight the point that when referring to civic apathy, one may refer to different things. A difficulty arises when analysing or describing apathy and its forms in different countries. These forms referred to are: voter apathy, political apathy, business apathy, media apathy and many more. In some countries civic apathy is blended with voter and political apathy. In some instances voter turnout during the elections is used to measure the degree of apathy. On the other hand a resistance to or attitude to a political party/s or the government system may reflect the state of apathy in that particular country. The bottom line is that citizens are the ones who exercise apathy. Therefore, the effects of political and voter apathy are likely to be the same as those of civic apathy.

The burden of this dissertation is to examine specific aspects of civic apathy, for example its manifestation, cause and its effects. This chapter is an attempt to establish the cause(s) and effects of civic apathy in countries across the globe and to investigate how they are dealing with this phenomenon. The mentioning of the history or political background in this chapter is done deliberately to give the reader some idea of the origin of some of the probable causes and factors that influence civic apathy, and the relationship of a government with the people.

Some people tend to ignore the importance of local government; hence they don't see the need to participate in local matters. However, there may be many causes or ways to create apathy. For example, if a local authority has low expectations of local people, who may live down to them or when people are giving their opinions, they ridicule or demean them; attack the people instead of the ideas or just ignore them; promise to do things and never follow through. These are some of the ways that apathy can be created.

Many people feel there is no point in getting involved in how their town, country or state is run, an attitude which is a threat to democracy. Some blame crime partly on apathy and unemployment. One may ask again why many people do not want to get involved in matters of local government. One may also argue that poverty exists because some folk cannot find jobs or the jobs pay poorly, and someone else may ask why is the wage level so low? Someone elsewhere may ask why in South Africa do we have a democratic system if people cannot make use of it? The point is that many people tend to ask questions, especially when things go wrong. In some instances there are no answers for such questions. One may also assume that maybe the voters (citizens) don't demand a change when things go wrong or when government does not work. Therefore, it can not be rightly said that people are justified in being apathetic based merely on social problems. People do possess the power to change any government system by voting or by participating in the political system.

The argument is that there are three fundamental causes of social problems: ignorance, apathy and greed. The ultimate remedy for social problems therefore must confront all three root causes. People generally have something or somebody to blame about being apathetic, yet some people are ignorant.

In this chapter, thirteen countries, including South Africa, are analysed in relation to their experiences in civic apathy. The countries are: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Zambia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. These countries were chosen because of their valuable experiences in civic apathy.

2.2 CIVIC APATHY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2.2.1 Historical Background

The American political system is vast and complex; its complexity derives partly from the fact that the United States of America (USA) is a federation of fifty States, and that state and federal and politics co-exist sometimes uneasily. It is highly democratic in form, from the extent to which an enormous number of officers including state judges are subject to election, to the way contenders for the presidency must campaign for the popular vote in the smallest States before they can even gain their party nomination.

The defining principle behind governance in the United States of America (USA) is federalism. The framers of the United States of America (USA) constitution founded National, State and local governance authorities. Local governments were not explicitly granted sovereign authority in the federal constitution (Flores, 1997:15). The United States of America (USA) consists of counties, cities and districts. Integral to the framing of the American constitution was the avoidance both of too great a concentration of power in the hands of a few and on the other hand avoiding the undue extension of power to the people, so that the federal government consists of separate institutions designed to act as checks upon each other (Flores,1997:15).

2.2.2 Counties

Counties in the United States of America (USA) find their history in medieval England where the country was divided into shires. These parcels of land were renamed counties because they were presided over by an Earl or Count. The early settlers in America used counties as a way to govern rural, sparsely populated areas. To this day, all but four States have counties.

Louisiana has parishes and Alaska has boroughs, both of which serve as county divisions (Flores, 1997:15). Counties are defined as an administrative arm of the State, created by the State to serve its needs and purposes. The county is the most limited and State regulated of the many forms of local government. Despite serving as a form of local

government, a county has no freedom to structure itself so that it can most effectively respond to the needs of its constituents. Home rule (a form of self-governance) is often proposed as the solution to this problem. In fact, a constitutional amendment in 1933 allowed the voters within a county to establish home rule. Unfortunately the amendment was so unworkable that it was eliminated in 1969 (Flores, 1997:18).

2.2.3 Cities in the United States of America (USA)

Each of the fifty states in the United States of America (USA) can determine its own laws for creation and management of municipal governments. Where states allow flexibility, there are more varied forms of local government and where states limit the creation, management and revenue options for municipal governments, there is greater similarity within the state. The state of Texas, for example, has delegated considerable authority to the local levels. Cities fall into two categories, general law or home rule. In 1912 the United States of America (USA) Constitution was amended to address the growing demands of local governments. Early writers identified three objectives in amending the Constitution as follows:

- To create a favourable climate for more direct governing of cities by their citizens;
- To secure adequate powers so that municipalities could meet increased demands for services; and
- To avoid interference in local government by the state legislature (Ritvo, 1997:19).

While general law and home rule cities were both subject to the laws of the state and federal constitution, they both function under different principles. In brief, home rule cities are larger cities that have adopted home rule principles; and that given the structure of state delegated authority within the United States, there is tremendous variance among cities and their forms of government. As can be expected, the type of representative government selected by local communities reflects the historical period in which it was established and the perceived needs of the community.

Local government and its structures and functions are vast in Texas and the United States of America (USA). Its responsibilities for delivering services that are just as numerous often leads directly to the proliferation of local governing entities. The roles that each

government must play in relation to another can lead to many difficulties. However, while so much local government can lead to many potential problems, it has been a system of structuring and restructuring and delivery of services which has prevailed in the United States of America (USA) for over two hundred years. The differences in local government are both subtle and profound, but they remain the preference and foundation of those who choose to govern themselves (Kelly, 1997:25).

2.2.4 Analysing Public Participation and Apathy in the United States of America (USA)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, apathy is a universal problem. However, it takes a different form in the United States of America (USA). This is because the politics of the USA are complex, as outlined in the historical background above. In the 1930's political scientists in the United States of America (USA) were for the first time able to plumb systematically how interested people were in public affairs, and to determine which segments of the population were politically engaged and which were apathetic (Bennett, 1986:24).

Many of the early social scientists who studied the phenomenon of apathy tended to equate apathy with non-voting. Their studies showed that people who were highly interested in politics were more likely to have opinions on a wider range of issues. More recently, as political scientists have focused on apathy, one approach has been to concentrate on the links between political indifference and alienation. (Gilmour and Lamb, 1975:18) differentiated four variants of apathetic orientations to the United States of America (USA) politics in 1972.

The largest bloc of apathetic is labelled the "Indifferent". This grouping made up 46 percent of all apathetic voters. These were people who, because they were disillusioned with contemporary United States of America's (USA) politics did not participate (Gilmour and Lamb, 1975:18). The second largest groups of apathetic people (39 percent) were the "Withdrawn". These were persons who were extremely "alienated" from politics and did not take part in what they believed was a hopelessly spoiled political system. Making up eleven percent of all apathetic citizens, the "Disgruntled" were people who were either severely disillusioned with or even outright "alienated"

from the United States of America's (USA) politics (Gilmour and Lamb, 1975:18). In some ways this variant of apathy is the most interesting of all, although politically indifferent, they tended to engage in political participation, usually to spew their bile. When given a chance these people vote, usually against incumbents. They are the "agile" or "crank" voters. This point is worth remembering because some persons who show low interest may still vote, either out of a sense of duty or more likely, to get even.

Furthermore, there was a small group of apathetic people that Gilmour and Lamb called the "Contenteds", making up only four percent of the apathetic. They were both disinterested and inactive because they were basically satisfied with things as they were. Gilmour and Lamb's approach to the analysis of apathy can be criticised on conceptual grounds. However, it is important because it points indirectly to some of the factors social scientists have alleged to be responsible for political indifference. One of the most interesting factors that influences apathy is that, some people are apathetic because they view political involvement as threatening. Politics, after all, often involves conflict and many people view such conflict as potentially detrimental to business interests, friendships, and even, on occasion, family relationships. Other individuals fear that political involvement could result in serious blows to already fragile egos.

Another factor that could be responsible for apathy is the perception that political involvement is ultimately futile. Man may not be a completely rational political actor, but people do like to think there would be at least the possibility of a successful payoff to their involvement. When the likely results of engagement are seen as dismal at best, it is a small wonder that people lose interest (Gilmour and Lamb, 1975:18). However, (Verba and Nie, 1972:247) in their classic study of participation in the United States of America (USA) concluded that, as communities become less well defined, participation aimed at influencing social issues declines. This finding is particularly compelling because such participation can advance important community goals, yet communities that foster it are "becoming rarer and rarer" (Verba and Nie, 1972:247). The authors found that participation is associated with the demographic characteristics of social status, life cycle stage and race. Their study, as well as others, shows that socioeconomic status is a particularly strong predictor of participation (Alford and Scoble 1968; Hyman and Wright 1971; Verba and Nie 1972).

As communities change, it is critically important to develop a mechanism that promotes participation and the understanding of benefits. One factor promoting participation may be the individual's own psychological benefit. Psychological benefits, which are attributed to participation, include a sense of belonging to the community, and empowerment (Chavis and Wandersman 1990). Sarason (1974) defines the sense of belonging to the community as "the sense that one belongs in and is meaningfully a part of a larger collectivity"; and suggests that its absence is the most destructive dynamic in the lives of people in contemporary western societies. Zimmerman (1988) describe empowerment as the connection between a sense of personal competence and a willingness to take action. It is suggested here that the ability to exercise competence is essential to enhancing individuals through participation.

Botha (1991:6) asserts that the underlying philosophy of a democratic system of local government is maximum effective participation in the political process by all local inhabitants. One would want to agree with Botha, but the problem is how maximum and effective participation can be obtained in a democratic system, taking into account the large sizes of many local authorities. It is easy to say the citizens should directly be engaged in the making of decisions relating to their own welfare, but the implementation of the mechanism to allow direct participation is a difficulty in many local authorities.

In respect of a development project in a community, for example, it is ideal that local residents are involved before any project is commenced, so that the residents can also make a decision on the types of projects suitable for their community. Brown (1995:46) adds that community participation can be defined as the active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a project, rather than merely be consulted about it or receiving a share of the benefits. This is because the community affected by the proposed project is the focus, in that the acceptance by community members of the project is crucial to the eventual success of the management of the project.

Literature on the relationship among participation, sense of community and empowerment shows that this relationship is not well understood. Theory and research identify two different models: first, that a sense of community leads to participation

(Bachrach and Zautra 1985); second, that participation leads to a sense of community (Chavis and Wanderman 1990). In both models, empowerment appears to be an important mediating variable. Model one is particularly appealing in that every local authority official should be able to promote participation through mechanisms that enhance the sense of belonging to the community and empowerment and thus improve the quality of individual and community life.

Verba and Nie (1972) defined four distinct types of political participation, based on empirical analyses of a survey of more than 2,500 individuals:

- Citizen-initiated contacts link a citizen directly with an elected official. The citizen determines the content and time of the contact, and the outcome may be particular to that person;
- Voting results in a collective outcome rather than one relevant only to a particular individual;
- Campaign activity also has a collective outcome and requires initiative from the citizens;
- In cooperative activities, formal or informal groups interact to achieve specific goals. Each type of participation appears able to exert some influence on the political process.

Power may be an important variable affecting the degree to which citizens are willing to participate in public affairs. Evidence has suggested that participation can lead to empowerment that can ultimately produce community improvements (Wandersman 1984; Prestby and Wandersman 1985).

Practitioners have described the community benefits resulting from citizen participation. Wandersman and his colleagues (1985), for example, collected data on the outcomes of citizen participation from several thousand residents of 39 blocks with either active or inactive block organisations. Active block organisations, characterised by high levels of citizen participation, succeeded in repairing sidewalks and painting houses, increasing police protection and fighting crime, regulating traffic and promoting safety, improving sanitation and providing social activities for block residents (Wandersman et al. 1985:57). No such achievements occurred on blocks with inactive block organisations.

The lessons learned from the survey done by Wandersman and his colleagues (1985) is that any local authority should not necessarily initiate public participation or projects in communities, but that the people should take a leading role in initiating projects, for example, and mobilising local people to participate actively in the activities of government, especially in their local authority. This does not mean that any local authority should not play any role in facilitating public participation. Local authorities should also encourage initiatives of local residents. This type of interaction between the local residents and the local authority will ensure active and effective public participation.

Theorists also suggest that participation may have psychological benefits for the individual participant. The claim is that participation; by providing a mechanism for citizen input into policy formulation, promotes feelings of control (Peattie 1968; Checkoway 1977; Zimmerman 1988). Some theorists see an important result of citizen participation as an increased sense of community (Wandersman 1985: 68). According to Heller (1989:39), increasing the opportunities for positive social contact fosters a sense of belonging in the community as well as of increasing influence through collective political power. It is suggested that participation may be a major factor in developing a sense of belonging in the community.

2.2.5 Apathy in Theories of Democracy

Fitzsimon (1997) commented in the USA Triangle Business Journal that the American democracy is in crisis. This is because the poll conducted by the Charlotte Observer and WCNC-TV in 1997 found that 61 percent of the people surveyed in the United States of America (USA) were “cynical or pessimistic” about politicians. This confirms the fact that foundations and sociologists (including political theorists) spent millions trying to identify the causes of this phenomenon that has been identified as civic disengagement, apathy and disinterest, among other things. They come up usually with several answers, that people don't care because they are doing pretty well, that politics and politicians are perceived (correctly, all too often) as listening only to wealthy people or to special interests, that an average person is too busy to keep up with government activities.

However, in a democratic state it is a common feature that apathy tends to give political decision-makers leeway to bargain and compromise. Moreover in a democracy, people have a freedom of choice that may influence them not to participate or be interested in government affairs or politics, for reasons having nothing to do with apathy. Riesman and Glazer (1956:535) pointed out that it is possible to be genuinely interested in politics but remain passive because no appropriate mode of activity is presently at hand. Also, people may be interested in politics but abstain from acts such as voting because they perceive politicians to be insincere, corrupt or even incompetent. Some persons may dearly wish to take part in politics, for example, by voting, but avoid doing so because they fear harassment, intimidation, or even outright violence.

However, a more tendentious point is made by those who regard non-participation, especially by the most disadvantaged segments of society, as a justified reaction to politics that is meaningless in its electoral content and disappointing in its policy results. This partial review of research on apathy reveals that some conceptual re-working of the concept is in order. However, regarding either the contention that apathy constitutes a potential threat or that it is a blessing to democracy, one sees a superimposition onto political indifference of extra conceptual dimensions. Several approaches have been followed to measure political interest. However, the concept of political apathy and civic apathy refers to the varying degrees to which people are not interested in and attentive to politics and public affairs. This is similar to Almond and Verba's (1963) idea of "civic cognition" and to Verba and associates Nie and Kim (1978) notion of general psychological involvement in politics and public affairs.

To describe levels of political interest across a large population, imagine a continuum of awareness, interest and attention. At one end is the individual who is so engrossed with his own psychological needs or the affairs of his family, his work or even his recreational activities, that he has little or no psychic energy left for interest in public affairs or community activities. When such an individual declares that he "hardly thinks about politics at all", or does not "follow public or community affairs much at all", he can be classified as politically disinterested or apathetic. At the opposite end of the continuum is a person who says he follows public affairs very closely or thinks about politics "most of

the time". This person can be considered to be psychologically involved in government affairs. However, it would be mistaken to readily accept the proposition that high levels of psychological involvement necessarily result in participation. As Dahl (1970:280) has pointed out: "it is considerably easier to be merely interested, which demands only passive participation, than it is to be actually active". Nevertheless the concept of political apathy in America remains useful as a device for estimating the degree to which citizens are psychologically "engaged" in the political process and government affairs. As Almond and Verba (1963:83) put it, "we may assume that if people follow political and governmental affairs, they are in some sense involved in the process by which decisions are made".

Today still, in the United States of America (USA) relatively few Americans vote or participate in local government affairs or in politics (Holden, 1997:56). As a result a large percentage of eligible voters do not even register, and large percentages of registered voters don't bother to vote in most elections. The critical view in America seems to be that things would be better if only citizens participated more. But this is not necessarily so. One explanation for voter apathy and civic participation in the United States of America (USA) comes from a cost-benefit analysis. It takes time and effort to learn what is going on in politics or to try and influence political events. The time actually spent registering or voting may be trivial, but paying attention to what is going on, let alone getting "involved", is much more demanding (Ross, 1997:5). Many citizens in the United States of America (USA) feel instinctively that all that effort isn't worth it and that voting or not voting actually doesn't make any difference. The benefits of voting and participation are vastly outweighed by the costs.

One would agree with Holden (1997) that some people chose to abstain from participating in politics for various reasons. Though it is ideal to have everybody in a community participating in politics or activities of government this is not a realistic expectation, not even in the best democratic system. However, citizens in any country, especially in Africa, should start realising that without taking any initiatives to get actively involved in matters of government, proper governance may not be achieved or maintained when there is lack of accountability by those who are in power, to the people

they serve. Thus abuse of power will always occur, as is the case at present in many African states and elsewhere, if there is no active and effective participation to ensure that there is proper accountability.

Holden (1997:85) also agreed that America's people are busy, much too busy and getting busier, hence the United States of America (USA) is in danger of apathy. He concludes by saying that unless and until the people of the United States of America (USA) have basic knowledge or understanding and the feeling of power that go with them in terms of influencing the policies and the decision-making processes in the United States of America (USA), nothing will happen. One also concurs that nothing will happen if people don't take matters of development into their own hands and ensure that services are delivered according to their expectations. Otherwise little or nothing will happen.

2.3 APATHY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

2.3.1 Historical Background (party system)

Since the early twentieth century, when the Liberal Party began to lose electoral support to the Labour Party, the predominant political cleavage in Britain has been along class lines. The British political system gradually evolved into one dominated by the two major parties - the Conservative Party, attracting the majority of middle class support and the Labour Party, linked to the trade unions and seen as the party of the working class (Crewe, 1979:249).

In the mid-1970's, it seemed that the two party system was disintegrating. The proportion of the total vote taken by the two major parties had declined from ninety percent in 1970 to seventy five percent in October 1974. The Liberals and the two Nationalist Parties took increased shares of the vote, and regional voting patterns became increasingly apparent. This fragmentation culminated in the election of a minority Labour government in October 1974 and its maintenance in power through the medium of a pact with the Liberal Party in parliament. In 1979, the trend towards fragmentation was somewhat reversed with a Conservative overall majority of forty four seats, and eighty one percent of the vote taken by the two major parties. The Nationalist parties lost ten of

their fourteen seats and the Liberals lost three of the fourteen seats. But regional variations in voting behaviour had become even more pronounced (Crewe, 1979:249).

2.3.2 The History of Local Party Politics

Fifteen years ago, as James Callaghan's Labour government was nearing its end, the local government landscape looked vastly different from how it did in 1993 (Wilson and Game 1994: 252). The Conservatives, in opposition nationally since 1974 were overwhelmingly in the ascendant locally with a total of one in every two councillors and control of more than half of the country's councils. The Labour Party, by comparison held just fifteen percent of councils and had under a quarter of all councillors. They hardly outnumbered independents. The 1980's thus saw two parallel trends operating in tandem, the swing from Conservative to Labour Party dominance; and the continuing decline in the number of Independents (Wilson and Game, 1994: 252). The present-day hold of party politicians in so much of the country's local government is a comparatively recent phenomenon. At the same time the role of parties in many towns and cities dated back at least as far as the Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 (Wilson and Game, 1994:253)

2.3.3 Local Pressure Groups in the United Kingdom

Local pressure groups in Britain are today still playing an important role in influencing the policies and decision-making processes in the local councils. Many groups in Britain work with local authorities in service provision, and the increased importance of "enabling" authorities is resulting in a development of this relationship. Groups whose aims and objectives are alien to those of the local councils, are those most likely to find themselves excluded and therefore needing to resort to aggression (Wilson and Game, 1994: 280).

Stoker (1991:115-117) delineates four types of pressure groups in Britain as the following:

- Producer or economic groups incorporating business, trade unions and professional associations;

- Community groups which draw a distinct social base for their support, e.g. amenity groups, tenants' associations, women's group and group's representing ethnic minorities;
- Cause groups concerned with promoting a particular set of ideas and beliefs rather than their immediate material interests; and
- Voluntary sector groups and organisations, established to meet a perceived need in the community on a non-commercial and non-statutory basis.

These groups have expanded a good deal in recent years and many such organisations receive substantial financial support from local authorities.

Moran (1986:144) argued that " the tone of the most startling changes in the pressure group system are taking place in local communities and many of the new groups which have sprung up in the last ten to fifteen years have been concerned with such issues as tenants rights, defence of local transport, educational services and the attempt to prevent the decline of the local economy". Local groups are often seen to be movements growing out of the common locations of individuals, as consumers of public services like housing, education and transport.

Moreover, as in other countries, the British government powers are divided between different areas and agencies of government, that is, the basic values of modern democratic society, consisting of liberty, equality and welfare. The different ties of government promote the values of liberty, which protect the citizens from arbitrary rule and over concentration of power. Equality is aided by giving people the opportunity to vote and to take part in as many public bodies as possible.

Welfare goals are promoted by allocating power so that government services effectively meet the social and economic needs of society. Even today, the need for healthy grass roots participation is continually emphasised in the United Kingdom. On the other hand the principles of local self-government centre on representative government to fulfill its aims of liberty, equality and fraternity. The basic tenets of representative institutions are: (i) free elections, majority rule, (ii) protection of minorities, subject to the majority's final say and (iii) the assumption that government encourages widespread discussions, responsiveness and an informed public. Representative institutions in Britain are said to

be truly democratic, where all kinds of people can take part. Although only a relatively small number of people actually stand for election in Britain, or exercise their rights to vote, the system and the theory of democracy are justified because everyone can share in government.

The English tradition of public participation is sometimes also compared with the greater opportunities for participation and expression of opinions that are available in the United States of America. The American system, however, can hardly be called local government at all, in the English sense. In recent years, however, the American ideas about participatory democracy have influenced English thought and practice (Hill, 1974:14). Even though recently the programmes of citizen involvement in local government were much criticised, local politicians and City Hall behaved much as before; and the demands for greater citizen participation turned into demands for benefits, jobs and actual services instead of "talking shops" (Hill, 1974:15).

The problem of the cities seemed overwhelming, but an important legacy remains for the English local government. Participation has become an integral part of the English system of local government for many years. In some instances before the 1980's concern is about civic apathy had a risen because of dissatisfaction with government.

A claim was also made that local leaders seemed too remote and could not be controlled; and they did not consult or inform the electorate before they acted. So even in countries like Britain and America where public participation and involvement is claimed to be relatively high, there are instances where local leaders and politicians in general are accused by citizens of being remote to the masses and often alienating them (Hill, 1974:15).

2.4 APATHY IN AUSTRALIA

The predominant perspective in Australia is that local government is seen as a provider of services. The bureaucracy supplying the services dominates decision-making. This results from the structure of the political system in Australia. The system tends to exclude other perspectives such as citizen involvement and participation in policy and

decision-making processes. As a result the consumer (public) has little interest in who actually supplies the local authority's services. They only care about price and quality, but not about how this is brought about. For most of Australian history, local government has rarely gained legitimacy from the local population. Rather, it is seen as an agency of the State (Jones, 1981:111).

2.4.1 The Local Government Background

Australian local government developed at a time when it had long been widely accepted that local government was subordinate to and dependent on the central government. This was especially in France and Britain; the two countries that have most influenced Australian municipal theory (Jones, 1981:112). Local government was seen to flow downward from the centralised State, not upward from the people. This attitude pervades the history of Australian local government. While today the State controls over local governments may have been reduced in details, the sheer administrative necessity and the philosophy has not changed.

Local government in Australia is, therefore, seen as the legal and administrative creation of the state and must behave within an agreed framework or else face national government intervention. The peculiar collection of functions administered by local government in Australia includes some activities developed according to the centralised criteria but administered locally (Jones, 1981:112). The growth and recognition of local government in the first part of the nineteenth century coincided with an expansion of the role of the state as enforcer of the emerging standards of the industrial and later the Western states. In Australia, the role of elections in local government is limited even when there is full adult franchise.

Many people are not interested in local government and voting turnout is usually low. Voting is compulsory in New South Wales and Queensland, where sixty seven percent and eighty five percent of electors voted in local government elections in the late seventies. About ninety percent of 211 local authorities in Victoria had compulsory voting in 1980. The voter turnout in the non-compulsory elections in Victoria usually ranges from between twenty five and forty five percent; in South Australia between five

and forty percent; in western Australia ten and twenty percent; and in Tasmania between six and thirty five percent (Jones, 1981:209).

2.4.2 Non - Participation in Australia

The low voter turnout and lack of participation in local government and elections is viewed as a serious problem for those who agree that local government should be democratic. Surveys often show that the public has little interest in local government. Compared to England, the "Government Social Survey" conducted for the Maude Committee on local government found that over one quarter of those interviewed were unable to name any service provided or rendered by their borough or district council (Gamson, 1968: 44)

The Periodical Age Survey published in November 1978 found that a similar percentage (nearly a third) of Australians felt that local government had no effect on their daily lives. Only nineteen percent thought it had a great effect. Political scientists and economists are undecided on the meaning of apathy. The dilemma is that non-participation in elections or civic affairs can express political alienation, but it can also mean that people are satisfied with their government. Lipset (1994) noted that in Germany the voter turn-out reached its greatest height in 1933 in the last elections before the destruction of the democratic system with the rise of Nazism. People may only want to participate when things are going wrong. The positive view of apathy has some relevance for Australian local government where there are many small units. The Tiebout theory (cited in Gamson 1968) of local government says the most effective local democracy is produced with many small local authorities.

Each provides a range of goods and services in keeping with local, usually fairly homogenous preferences. This produces little conflict within a particular authority and little reason to participate (Gamson, 1968:46). Some may say small local authorities supply a mundane range of services to the local community and might rationally adopt a managerial rather than a participatory style. Conflict then becomes important between Authorities rather than within the Authority.

There has been considerable research in Australia on the incentives influencing participation in government, whether through voting or by other means. Robert Dahl (1970) in his book, *After the Revolution*, argues three views of authority. Firstly, the voter accepts authority because of personal choice: if a local authority is providing an adequate range of services the voter may feel little need to participate. Secondly, the voter might rely on special expertise to primarily administer mainly technical services. Public participation is generally most popular in the controversial "people services" of urban renewal and slum clearance, law enforcement and education. Lastly, Dahl (1970:86) argues that since participation uses an individual's resources the process has to be worthwhile. This last point is probably the most important because participation requires time, money and energy.

Local government in Australia provides a limited range of mainly technical services. It does not supply the most important "people" services in health, education and welfare. The Australian growth rate continues at a low level, so local government activity focuses on the maintenance of rather than on the growth of new areas. Growth often provides interest and glamour to induce participation, but maintenance decisions in contrast are dull and technical. Long (cited in Dahl 1970:87) argued that defensive communities are usually the most participatory and have the highest-level community interest. Fighting a proposed freeway, for an example, or a new industry, often creates great interest in modern urban society. Even the most apathetic community will usually awaken and organise to take up a defensive position.

2.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CANADA

2.5.1 The Political Environment

Three distinct levels of government, Federal, Provincial and Municipal, administer Canada. Constitutionally, the federal and provincial governments each enjoy superior power and responsibility in distinct areas of activity and power of taxation. The municipal level on the other hand is clearly a creature of provincial governments.

Municipal governments enjoy whatever legislative and taxing powers are permitted them by their provincial government (Weinfield; 1994:89).

2.5.2 Civic Involvement in Canada

The traditional idea in the Western Democracies has been that it is desirable for the effective functioning of the democratic system that the individual be disposed to play an active part in the working of the system, as voter, community participant, worker, activist or political party member. In the end, all members of society should be able to judge the efficacy of various points of view and to act on the basis of what seems to be the wisest course of action. This allows each citizen to make wise decisions and for society to function in a stable manner.

In Canada, civic involvement is evident in a number of settings. The most common are voluntary community organizations. These organizations are locally initiated, responding to local conditions and focusing on specific problems confronting the local population. At a more specific level, these community organizations empower individuals and communities to gain mastery over development and community issues. Moreover, in Canada each context of civic involvement has a potential impact upon an individual capacity and/or opportunity to participate in the future of their community or country (Selman, 1991:14).

People in Canada participate in local government mainly on issues that directly affect them or their community. Current research suggests that individuals become involved in civic activities depending on the benefits and costs of participation. The most active participants in voluntary organizations, such as the leaders, are primarily motivated by purposive benefits such as working towards the improvement of the neighbourhood or community. Material motives were found to play a relatively minimal role as motivator for the most active participants (Selman, 1991:14).

Selman (1991:16) pointed out that Canadians believe in collective active participation. However, there are pull factors involved in keeping individuals from civic participation. These barriers to civic involvement include such structural factors as levels of racism/discrimination, and the host society's beliefs about "ethnics" and/or immigrants. In addition, a number of socio-demographic factors as well as attitudes and beliefs are linked to low levels of civic awareness, knowledge and participation. Canadians are of

the view that without active participation on the part of citizens in equalitarian institutions, there will be no way to maintain the democratic character or the political culture of social and political institutions.

2.6 AFRICA'S EXPERIENCE IN CIVIC APATHY

Many African countries have experienced both good and bad practices as far as democracy is concerned. In some instances, the fibre of society and community structures has been destroyed. People are not organised and there is no service rendering. This is because many of these countries were and are embroiled in civil wars and some are struck by severe poverty. The level of interest in the political system and government activities or affairs may be low or not visible because of the following factors:

- Violation of basic human rights
- Continuous in-fighting between political parties and their opposition
- Struggle for freedom and democracy
- Struggle for power and positions
- Autocratic government rule
- Absolute poverty and unemployment
- Lack of resources and infrastructure
- Serving of self-interests by politicians and government officials (United Nations: 1990).

These are not necessarily the causes of apathy in African countries, but factors that may have influenced participation or non-participation in the activities of government and the political system such as voting.

2.6.1 South Africa in the 1980's (Political Participation in Fight for Liberation)

Many people by now know the political history of South Africa, which began many years ago. However, for the purposes of this dissertation the focus will be on the township resistance from the year 1980 onwards. The resistance during that time provides a very important and poignant point as far as public participation is concerned. The form of participation distinguished itself because of the armed struggle.

The resistance in South Africa provided many valuable lessons in terms of mass political participation. It is well known that the South African society was based on a system of apartheid, sustained by a large State bureaucracy. The white South African regime was engaged in a massive programme of social engineering regarding the lives of all its black citizens. Wealth, income and ownership of land were and are still to a large extent, concentrated heavily in the few people.

The first half of the 1980's saw the South African government responding to internal democratic opposition with constant repression (CIIR, 1987:12). Techniques such as the mass demonstration and stay-aways were repeated to a point beyond their effectiveness as repression took its toll. Government policy, especially since the advent of P.W Botha, was designed to reinforce divisions within the black community.

The African National Congress (ANC), on the other hand basing its programme of action on the 1955 Freedom Charter, has been strongly sponsoring a united black struggle involving all racial groups (CIIR, 1987:12). The formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 was a tangible sign of the broad black consensus for genuine democracy (CIIR 1983). The UDF was an umbrella organisation consisting of some 700 groups, including civic associations, Christian and Islamic groups, Trade Unions, youth and women's organisations and sporting and cultural bodies. It represented the greatest upsurge in black politics since the congress movement of the early 1950's.

The strength of the opposition the UDF organised to the constitutional proposals, and the success of its subsequent campaign for a boycott of the structures of the tri-cameral parliament, were testimony both to its vigour and to the seeds sown in generations of black resistance to apartheid (CIIR, 1987:13). The challenge then facing the UDF was to create a viable grass-roots organisation that would survive the government detention of its outstanding national leadership. However, the UDF was not intended as an underground organisation and was obliged to find new ways of organising under repression. But against the temporary setbacks, stood the tremendous gain of an unprecedented mobilisation of the black community as a result of the State's brutal tactics (CIIR, 1987:13).

Chapasula and Chilivumbo (1993) express clearly that most South Africans learnt from the preamble of the Freedom Charter that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the “will” of the “people” (Chapasula and Chilivumbo, 1993:7). Taking each as it arises in the statement, principles pertaining to citizenship, to rights of citizenship, to legitimacy and to democracy can be discerned.

The charterist democracy in South Africa was and is still driven by a participatory ethic: “the people shall govern” (Chapasula and Chilivumbo, 1993:8). The image is one of direct democracy, where all citizens govern collectively, debating, reaching joint decisions and subsequently implementing them as a single body. The citizenry behaves as a sovereign entity, with each and every member of society granted identical rights, and no one alienating any of his or her public duties. All participate as absolute equals, enjoying exactly the same basic equalities. The Freedom Charter provided for an ideal democracy for the new South Africa. However, Chapasula and Chilivumbo (1993) conclude by saying that although the image of direct democracy appears appealing and impeccably just, it can never be brought fully into play in societies nowadays, because the huge size of societies is the primary obstacle.

The important aspect is that the history of South Africa in the 1980’s provided useful lessons as far as public participation is concerned, although the form of participation was politically motivated and in the form of resistance, and was largely confined to politics and race issues. The question that one needs to ask now is: whether the spirit of collective participation is present in the new democratic South Africa, especially in a democracy? It is also necessary to ask: what are the issues that are being pursued by citizens in improving community life in the new dispensation? One may ask whether the forms of public participation have changed and whether black and white people are now fighting for common goals since they now live in the same neighbourhood? The other imperative question is: whether the levels of public and collective participation have improved or whether people are apathetic since the inception of a new democratic government in South Africa? These are some of the questions that need to be asked and answered given the changes that have taken place since 1994.

2.6.2 Zambia

Zambia has been struggling to find a viable way to move to the 21st century since the first democratic elections took place seven years ago. Since independence Zambia has been in a structural adjustment programme, with its visible negative effect on the poor and powerless countries. However, corruption in Zambia is on the rise in many sectors of society, with the government being seemingly incapable of addressing the underlying issues such as poverty and unemployment (Zambia News Agency, 1999). In the meantime, people are of necessity relying less on government structures and relying more on private and personal initiative to meet basic needs.

Although the country is stable at the moment, there is not much activity at the grass-roots level. The local government is not fully functional. Moreover, the people of Zambia are not politically active and are participating less in its political and community structures (Zambia Today, 1999). Zambia was a one party state before 1990, under the leadership of the former president Kenneth Kaunda. People did not have much say in the running of the country and some as a result have grown less or not at all interested in who runs the country and how it is being run. Hence they have opted to fend for themselves. Since 1991 when the first multi-party election was held, some people have started to take some interest in the elections; hence they voted out Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP), which had controlled Zambian politics as its only legal political party for thirty years. This saw the leader of the Multi-party Democracy, Frederick Chiluba elected president of Zambia with seventy five percent of the vote (Zambia News Agency, 1999).

However, there were no significant changes in the patterns of apathy in Zambia, though Zambia is now a multi-party country. The Constitution, largely drafted by the Multi-party Democracy (MMD), was not as democratic as it ought to have been. The recent government harassment of the independent press is a classic example. International donors, including the United States, froze more than a hundred million dollars in aid and threatened further cuts if the government failed to institute concrete reform measures (Zambia News Agency, 1999).

Although President Chiluba's administration has begun to strengthen the economy of Zambia through its investment policy reforms, Zambia still has a poor infrastructure and lack of skilled labour, and limited resources continue to thwart economic development. The people, as a result, have lost faith and confidence in the Zambian government and many have remained apathetic especially at local government level, where development is not seen to be happening (Zambia News Agency, 1999).

The United Nations (1990) asserted that the crisis currently engulfing Africa, is not only an economic crisis but also a human, legal, political and social crisis. It is a crisis of unprecedented and unacceptable proportions, manifested not only in abysmal declines in economic indicators and trends, but more tragically and glaringly in the suffering, hardship and impoverishment of the vast majority of African people (United Nations, 1990). At the same time, the political context of socio-economic development has been characterised, in many instances, by an over-centralisation of power and impediments to the effective participation of the overwhelming majority of the people in social, political and economic development.

As a result, the motivation of the majority of Zambian people and their community organisations to contribute their best to the development process, and to the betterment of their own well-being as well as their say in national development, has been severely constrained and curtailed and their collective and individual creativity has been undervalued and underutilized (United Nations, 1990). The political analysts in Zambia also affirmed that the nation could not be built without the support and full participation of the Zambian people, nor could the economic crisis be resolved and the human and economic conditions improved without the full and effective contribution, creativity and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people. After all, it is to the people that the very benefits of developments should and must accrue (Zambia News Agency, 1999).

The United Nations emphasised the point that Africa's perpetual economic crisis cannot be overcome, nor can a bright future for Africa and its people see the light of day unless, the structures, pattern and political context of the process of socio-economic development are appropriately altered (United Nations, 1990).

Therefore, there is no doubt that at the heart of Zambian development objectives must lie the ultimate and overriding goal of human-centred development that ensures the overall well-being of the Zambian people through sustained improvement in their living standards and the full and effective participation of the Zambian people in charting their development policies, programmes and processes, and contributing to their realisation.

The delegates who attended the International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa held in Tanzania from 12 to 16 February 1990, were in agreement that African countries must realise that, more than ever before, their greatest resource is their people and that it is through their active and full participation that Africa can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead (United Nations, 1990).

They were also convinced that the achievement of active and effective participation would require a redirection of resources to satisfy, in the first place, the critical needs of the people, to achieve economic and social justice and to emphasise self-reliance on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to empower the people to determine the direction and content of development (United Nations, 1990). One feels that talk is cheap because organisations like the United Nations, World Bank and IMF always talk about improving the economies of the African countries, but actually do nothing to uplift the economies of these countries. They are good at prescribing how African countries should be run and that they should adopt policies that favour western countries. There is no way a country like Tanzania and others, which are very poor, can manage to invest in training its people so that they can in return contribute to the development of the economy, as long as the World Bank and the IMF are not prepared to relieve African countries of huge debts, and also to invest billions of rand/dollars in these countries in order to improve their economies.

One is not trying to be political, but to be possible, public participation requires lot of resources. People are encouraged when they see that there is development taking place in their country and that resources are available to initiate other developments. But when a country is very poor, people also lose hope and stay away from any community or government activities. However, many Zambians are also convinced that to alleviate or

reduce apathy in Zambia, popular participation as an instrument of development should in fact become a driving force for collective commitment, for the determination of people-based development processes and the creation of willingness in the people to undertake sacrifices and expend their social energies for execution. To ensure active participation the Zambian government must remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in public affairs. An important element is that popular participation is the fundamental right of the people to fully and effectively participate in the determination of the decisions which affect their lives at all levels, and at all times.

2.6.3 Angola

Angola has a high rate of civic apathy, because of the civil war that has erupted since 1970. The Angolan government also had its own history of a one party system history. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), currently led by President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, has ruled Angola since its independence from Portugal in 1975, when Agostino Nato became the country's first president. Dos Santos, Angola's second president, assumed power in 1980. Shortly after gaining independence, Angola became embroiled in a protracted civil war between the MPLA government and the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) movement led by Jonas Malheiro Savimbi ([Angola Online](#), 1999).

In May 1991, Angola signed a quadripartite peace accord with South Africa, Cuba and the United States of America (USA) in Bicesse, Portugal. The Bicesse peace accord mandated the withdrawal of South African and Cuban troops from Angola and set forth the procedures for multi-party elections. In the September 1992 elections Dos Santos the MPLA presidential candidate received 49.6 percent of the popular vote over Savimbi's 40.1 percent gain. However, UNITA refused to accept these United Nation accredited results, arguing that neither candidate, had achieved an absolute majority of the vote, and the two parties returned to war ([Angola Online](#), 1999).

Despite the establishment of a coalition government in April 1994, UNITA and MPLA officials continued to clash over implementation of government policies. Serious discord also exists between Luanda-based UNITA politicians who were trying to make a go of

the peace process and hard-line generals outside the capital who remain loyal to Savimbi. Unfortunately the government does not generally respect constitutional provisions; thus Angola still maintains a poor human rights record. The government restricts freedom of expression, press, assembly and association, and inhibits the free movement of its citizens both inside and outside of Angola. The civil war has destroyed almost everything in Angola, including the structures of local government; segments of the population are displaced and as a result the people are forced to be apathetic, because of the circumstances and conditions in Angola, which have left the people very poor and with nowhere to voice their community or civic problems ([Angola Online](#), 1999).

The empowerment of the people in Angola to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programmes that serve the interest of all as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits, is in fact non-existent. The problem is that there is no opening up of the political process to accommodate freedom of opinions, tolerate differences, accept consensus on issues, as well to ensure the effective participation of the people and their organisations and associations. Political theorists from Angola and other countries have been saying all along that the people of Angola should start acting now, if they want to end the political feud in Angola, but equally important are the actions of the Angolan government and the international community to ensure that there is stability in Angola and to create the necessary conditions for citizens empowerment and to facilitate effective popular participation in societal and economic life ([Angola Online](#), 1999). This, however, requires that the political system evolve to allow for democracy and full participation by all sections of the Angolan society

The United Nations, General Assembly believes that popular participation is dependent on the nature of a state itself and on the ability of a government to respond to popular demand (United Nations, 1990). Since the Angolan government has a large and critical role to play in the promotion of popular participation, they have to yield space to the people, without which popular participation will be difficult to achieve. The social base of power and decision-making is too narrow in Angola; hence the urgent need to broaden these; to galvanise and tap the people's energy and commitment; and to promote political accountability by the government to the people ([Angola Online](#), 1999). This makes it

imperative that a new partnership between the Angolan government and its citizens in the common interests of societal and accelerated socio-economic development should be established without delay.

2.6.4 Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, by virtue of its Constitution has a relatively democratic system of government and allows for multiple parties. The difficulty is that existing opposition parties lack the finances and organization required to challenge Mugabe's regime. That is why it appears that Zimbabwe is a one party state because of the ZANU-PF dominance. However, recently the political ball game has changed in Zimbabwe with individuals and Unions now having more vigour to challenge the government and influence the policies of the government.

Zimbabwe's economy is primarily agricultural. Therefore many people in that country are not really interested in local government activities. They are mainly interested in agriculture and farming policies (ZimToday, 1998). The invasion of farms by the so-called "war veterans" bears testimony to this. President Robert Mugabe also knew that by inciting and encouraging the actions of the "war veterans" to invade the farms in Zimbabwe, the political interest would increase and some people would be keen to participate in the elections that were held in June 2000, to ensure that ZANU-PF won the elections, so that these could benefit from the distribution of farm land.

The level of apathy in Zimbabwe, especially in local government, was relatively high before the 2000 national elections. It remains to be seen whether the people of Zimbabwe will become very active in political and civic structures after the 2000 national elections, especially since the politics of Zimbabwe have broadened with the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) becoming the main opposition party in parliament. What poses a bigger challenge for the government of Zimbabwe is to ensure that the principles of democracy are maintained, and that the political process becomes inclusive through emphasising the role of the citizens and that they have to be fully involved, committed and, indeed, seize the initiative in the realisation of popular participation.

It is, therefore, essential that the people of Zimbabwe establish independent people's organisations at various levels that are genuinely grass-roots, voluntary, democratically administered and self-reliant and that are rooted in the tradition and culture of society so as to ensure community empowerment and self-development. One also believes that consultative machinery at various levels should be established with the Zimbabwean government on various aspects of democratic participation. As mentioned earlier, it remains to be seen that public participation will in fact improve in Zimbabwe after the 2000 national elections; or will the situation remain the same or worsen?

2.6.5 Tanzania

Tanzania is one of the world's poorest countries. The World Bank reports a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of 110 dollars for 1996. Between independence in 1961 and the mid-1980's economic policy makers focused on lifting the population out of illiteracy, poverty and disease. People of Tanzania are not active participants in political and government activities. In 1995 the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapunduzi (CCM), maintained power by winning 186 of the 232 seats in parliament and the CCM presidential candidate, Benjamin Mkapa, won a four-way race with 62 percent of the mainland vote in 1996 (World Bank report, 1998).

As much as Tanzania is striving to improve its economy, its service delivery at the local government level has collapsed and community structures are not effective because of lack of funds. Civil apathy in Tanzania can be explained in terms of the levels of poverty, lack of resources and infrastructure and the fact that the government limits freedom of the press, freedom of association and workers rights (World Bank Report, 1998). One important highlight about Tanzania as far as public participation is concerned is that the role and contribution of women in the development of society and the economy, has been made very insignificant. This highlights the extreme subordination and discrimination suffered by women not only in Tanzania but also in the whole of Africa (United Nations, 1990). Many agree that the attainment of equal rights by women in social, economic and political spheres must become a central feature of a democratic and participatory pattern of development.

In view of the vital and central role played by women in family well-being and maintenance, their special commitment to the survival, protection and development of children and survival of society and their important role in the process of African recovery and construction, a special emphasis should be placed by all people to eliminate biases, particularly with respect to the reduction of the burden on women and taking positive action to ensure their full equality and effective participation in the development process (United Nations, 1990). The underlining point is that it should be understood that popular participation begins, and must be earnestly practiced, at the family level, because the home is the base of development. Such participation must also be practiced at the work place, and in all organisations and in all walks of life.

2.6.6 Malawi

Malawi has also suffered the tyranny of one-party state-rule. Nearly all of Malawi's political history since gaining independence from Britain in 1964 was defined by one leader, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, who led Malawi until 1994. For most of that period, Banda was considered president for life and ruled Malawi with near absolute authority. Moreover Banda's regime was characterised by extreme corruption and human rights abuses. In May 1994, the Republic of Malawi held its first democratic multiparty elections, and Bakilo Muluzi was elected president. Before the 1994 elections most of the infrastructure and government organisational structures had been destroyed by the regime of Kamuzu Banda through corruption and maladministration ([Malawi News Online](#), 1999).

The new government tried to put government structures in place, but could not succeed due to lack of funds and the necessary resources. They even tried to revamp the local government by first holding local government elections, which were subsequently postponed in November 1996 until August 1997, due to funding shortages. However the government supported the ongoing reorganisation of Malawi's municipal government. Many Malawians, though, are still apathetic because of the suppression they suffered under the autocratic rule of Kamuzu Banda. The other main contributing factor is the lack of resources, infrastructure and community structures at the local level. As such Malawi remains one of the poorest amongst the world's poor countries and foreign aid

remains a primary source of income for the country (Malawi News Online, 1999).

Chisiza (cited in Mtewa, 1986:46) argued that while there is a need to respect the leadership, political and constitutional legitimacy could create a much better environment for politics than political coercion. Chisiza was reacting to the style of leadership displayed by the Banda's government until losing power. He further observed that legitimacy, equality and consensus are three basic ingredients that hold a democratic government together. A system based on legitimacy includes voluntary actions and promotes more private initiative than can ordinarily be expected under a different system (Chisiza in Mtewa, 1986:46). But, like illegitimacy, legitimacy raises some problems in the minds of those who prefer that government should do less and should least interfere with their lives. Illegitimacy, therefore, emerges when a government begins to argue that it has authority through statutes to do what is empowered to do. Illegitimacy is when individuals feel strongly justified that specific legal States infringe upon their sanctity and feel helpless to fight against government for the restoration of their rights (Chisiza in Mtewa, 1986:46).

Political participation in Malawi was constrained by personality cults, defined by the leadership and exercised by a limited few. Political participation is still precariously tied to normative accountability to the leadership, rather than to one's own constituency (Mtewa, 1986:48). The picture painted by Mtewa here is that in most situations or in any political environment, most politician's basic concern is not to say what the people "need", but what the party and government want. In this sense the party and a few ministerial scouts become instrumental in regulating constituency consensus according to the nominal requirements of the political environment, or alternatively according to the bounds stipulated by the leadership.

Whatever the reasons, political turnover and political participation is more arbitrary under a dictatorship than in a democracy. The participation of individuals in Malawi politics, whether by nomination or appointment, has come to be associated with the limited responsiveness of the leadership to the desires of constituencies, or to the potentiality of challenge (Mtewa, 1986:60). Public opinion in Malawi existed about the political performance of the regime but its articulation was non-existent. The Malawi

leadership did quite often refer to the ideograph term “my people”, but in a practical sense, meaning those that had access to power through the highly selective processes of the Malawi Congress Party which gave the impression that a visible majority of the people was in active consultation with the rank and file of the party and government leadership (Mtewa, 1986:67).

2.6.7 Mozambique

Most of Mozambique’s post independence history was defined by the civil war (1975–1992) between the Frelimo government and Mozambican national resistance (Renamo), an organisation established by the former Rhodesian government during the undeclared war between Rhodesia and Mozambique in 1976 to 1979. The United Nations, which supervised the 1994 elections results revealed those small-scale produces, supported Renamo with 38 percent of the votes (Mozambique News Online, February 1998). The ruling Frelimo Party won 129 of 250 seats of the National Assembly. Despite its election defeat in 1994, Renamo continues to exert effective control in some areas of the country, and continues to resist Frelimo efforts to bring it under central government control. The Mozambican Constitution was drafted in such a way that it provides for public participation and discussion forums on public or local issues. And the other aspect covered in the Constitution was the Reconciliation Forum, but this does not exert significant authority or foster independence from the executive branch.

Although Mozambique is one of the poorest countries, it has laid the foundation for re-organising the local government in the country and it even went to the extent of approving municipal law in December 1996, to ensure that local authorities are run effectively and that people are given the opportunity to participate in local government activities. Even though the Mozambican government tries to encourage public participation and effective governance, lack of resources impedes the realisation of these aims. This is due to the fact that the Portuguese colonial authority formerly controlled the administration and economy, which made it difficult for Mozambicans to participate in the economic sector. However, after independence little effort was made to correct the imbalances created by the Portuguese, until recently (Mozambique News Online, February 1998).

The United Nations rightfully pointed out that African countries such as Mozambique must adopt development strategies, approaches and viable programmes to ensure that they improve the economy and the lives of their people. These development strategies should be in line with the interests and aspirations of the people and incorporate, rather than alienate social, cultural, political, economic and environmental realities (United Nations, 1990).

The bottom line is that for public participation to be seen as happening in Mozambique, the government must seek to promote the formulation and implementation of development programmes at all levels within the framework of local aspirations, interests and realities, which develop as a result of a popular participatory process, and which aim at the transformation of the economy to achieve self-reliant and self-sustaining people-centred development, based on popular participation and democratic consensus. In implementing these endogenous and people-centered development strategies, an enabling environment must be created to facilitate broad-based participation, on a decentralised basis, in the development process. Such an enabling environment is an essential prerequisite for the stimulation of initiatives and creativity and for enhancing public participation (United Nations, 1990).

2.6.8 Botswana

Botswana is one of the four African countries that have experienced continuous civil rule since independence, which it gained from Britain in 1996. It has a long-standing multiparty democracy. The president, Sir Ketumile Masire, shares constitutional power with the 44-member popularly elected parliament. Botswana is one of the fastest developing countries with a promising economy on the African continent, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of about 43 billion dollars. It also has an effective democracy, especially at local level where most citizens are given the opportunity and the right to participate in their own local authorities and are encouraged to be active in community organisations or civic activities (Botswana News Agency, 1999).

The level of social services is also high, though there are some members of the Botswana population who are not classified as one of the eight “principal” tribes of the constitution,

who still do not have full access to social services and are marginalised in the political process. However, the Botswana government resolved to host a conference in late 1997 to discuss the plight of the San-Bushmen and to allow tribal representative to express their views of the situation (Botswana News Agency, 1999).

The government of Botswana to a certain extent has realised that in order to foster participation and democratic development, the people and their local civic organisations should establish autonomous grass-roots organisations to promote participatory, self-reliant development and increase the output and productivity of the masses. What is important, however, is for the people to develop their own capacity to participate effectively in debates on economic policy and development issues; this requires building people's capacity to formulate and analyse development programmes and approaches.

The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development (1990) carried recommendations that promoting education, literacy skill training and human resource development remains a key factor as a means of enhancing popular participation. The Charter also calls; as an urgent necessity, for involvement of the people in monitoring popular participation in Africa as a whole, on the basis of agreed indicators. These indicators are based on the literacy rate, which is an index of the capacity for mass participation in public debate, decision-making and general development processes. Freedom of association, especially political association, and the presence of democratic institutions, such as political parties, trade unions, people's grass-roots organisations and professional associations, and the guarantee of constitutional rights, need to be encouraged and protected (United Nations, 1990).

2.6.9 Namibia

Namibia, formerly known as South West Africa, was a German Protectorate from 1884 until the outbreak of World War I, when South Africa occupied the country and gained a League of Nations mandate to administrate the territory. In 1996, the United Nations General Assembly voted to terminate South Africa's mandate and to assume responsibility itself. The South African government refused to allow the United Nations (UN) guardianship of the country, and the South West Africa People's Organization

(SWAPO) began armed resistance against the South African Authorities ([Namibia News Online](#), February 1998).

In 1978, the Western Contact Group, consisting of Britain, Canada, France, West Germany and the United States, submitted a proposal, known as resolution 435, to the UN that sought to resolve the Namibian dispute. South Africa, Swapo and most internal parties' accepted the settlement plan, which ordered the parties withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, the withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia, the demobilization of Namibia military units, the registration of voters, and the election of a constituent assembly to draw up a constitution for an independent Namibia. In February 1990, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the constitution of the Republic of Namibia. Namibia was finally granted political autonomy in March 1990 ([Namibia News Online](#), February 1998). Today Namibia is a multiparty, multiracial democracy with a bicameral parliament. Its president, Sam Nujoma, leads Swapo, which won Namibia's first free elections in November 1989. Much as Namibia has struggled to gain independence, the relations between the government and the people of Namibia are positive. Generally, Namibia has a good human rights record, and its constitution provides for citizens' civil, political and economic liberties. As a result public participation at local level is relatively high, though lack of adequate resources is a major difficulty for people to actively and fully participate in local structures and government activities.

2.7 Summary and Conclusion

There are of course many reasons why people or citizens are apathetic. Some people feel there is no point in getting involved in how their town, country or state is run. Some will blame the government for doing nothing about crime and addressing unemployment in the country; therefore they resort to apathy because they feel they are powerless to address issues that are supposed to be dealt with by government. Some apathy is purely a question of being ignorant. Another factor is that countries have their own ways of dealing and addressing citizen's problems or grievances. Some countries allow their local citizens' to participate in the policy and decision-making processes and some don't. Civil wars, poverty and unemployment, for example, have engulfed many African countries.

Some are characterised by poor human rights records, lack of resources and poor infrastructures. The fact that these countries are the poorest countries, with poorly performing economies and lack of resources, does not discourage some people from participating in the government activities or in local community structures. Even if they do participate there may be insufficient funds to implement the plans and projects to improve their standard of living and to meet the needs of the local communities. Thus, sometimes citizens become apathetic, not because all of them want to be, but because of the severe social and economic conditions and circumstances.

Some countries, of course, drive their citizens to be apathetic through their harsh and unchallenged policies, bureaucracy and political systems. Most African countries have a one party state form of government. The leaders (Presidents) hold power for decades without being challenged or removed. In some instances people were not allowed to participate in the political system or decision-making processes, except to vote for the ruling party if elections were held.

Western countries paint a different picture compared to African countries. Many of them are well developed and have ample resources. Civic apathy in western countries may be the result of the complex government system or bureaucracy and ignorance, rather than of poverty, unemployment, lack of resources and infrastructure. Federal states in the United States of America (USA) have many different cities which operate differently from each other and some have autonomy in terms of governance. As a result they can determine the laws for creation and management of municipal governments. Some of these western countries have budgets that are four times larger than those of some of the African countries.

The factors that influence civic apathy may seem to be more easily and better explained in Western countries than in Africa. However, the view of critics in the United States of America (USA) seems to be that things would be better if only citizens participated more. This indicates that civic apathy also creates a problem in the United States of America (USA) to a certain degree. One explanation for apathy and civic participation in the United States of America (USA) comes from a cost benefit analysis, meaning that it

takes time and effort to learn what is going on in politics or to try and influence political events or the policies of government. Others have the perception that political involvement is ultimately futile, hence they lack interest. In countries like Britain, the government promotes the values of liberty, which protect the citizens from arbitrary rule and the over concentration of power. Thus equality is aided by giving every citizen the right and opportunity to vote and to take part in as many public bodies as possible. Civic apathy is indeed a problem experienced by countries all over the world. However the influencing factors and probable causes are different. The effects of civic apathy also vary in each country.

Highlighting the government background and history of the countries that are mentioned in this chapter was necessary for two reasons. Firstly, the actual causes of civic apathy in many of these countries, especially African countries are not clear, they are only speculated about. Secondly, it is difficult to explain or analyse civic apathy alone without also analysing other forms of apathy such as voter and political apathy, since in some instances they are blended together. The important point to note, however, is that this chapter provides an understanding of the conditions and circumstances of these countries and the probable causes of civic apathy, and considers factors that may have influenced lack of interest in citizens in politics and local government affairs or activities.

The African National Congress (ANC) was of the view, before it came into power in 1994, that policies for transformation have to be developed and must be aimed both at establishing a new and democratic political dispensation that replaces the racist and undemocratic systems of the past and also addresses the legacy of apartheid in the broader socio-economic sphere. These without any doubt are some of the challenges still facing South Africa even after the democratic elections which were held in 1994. This assertion is made because it is critical that all South Africans should honestly face up to the extent of the problems and challenges still confronting South Africa.

Mr Nelson Mandela also said, after being made President in 1994, that the problems that are faced by South Africa were not going to be solved overnight and that there are no easy, quick solutions. However, what is important now is to look at the efforts being made by the ANC as the government of the day, to remedy the imbalances of the past,

thus alleviating most of the problems facing South Africa. One, however, is interested in the mechanisms that are being used by the present government to ensure that every citizen of South Africa is given an equal opportunity to participate in matters of government and is realistically able to make a valuable input into the policy and decision-making processes in this country.

Chapter three focuses on the challenges of democracy in South Africa and on the level of participation and involvement. Furthermore, aspects such as attitudes to public participation and the role of councillors in public participation are also looked at.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1. Introduction

The challenges facing the South African democracy are enormous. This is so because despite the provisions made in the South African Constitutional (Act 108 of 1996), there is still no evidence that South Africans are participating in the policy and decision-making processes of government. One would have thought that in the new dispensation all South African citizens would be participating in the affairs of government in order to add legitimacy and value to the policy-making processes of government. The government on the other hand is not seen to be expending enough effort to make the whole governmental system accessible to the lowest of inhabitants. This has resulted in the still pervasive citizens apathy in South Africa. The fact that most citizens neglect to participate in the democratic process may lead to the demise of South Africa's fledging democracy.

As part of this dissertation the aim and objective is to understand exactly what the obstacles or barriers to active and effective citizen participation are, which ultimately will lead to finding the root cause/s of civic apathy. In many instances people will state their personal reasons as to why they are apathetic, but without stating clear common reasons for civic apathy. It is therefore imperative to first analyse and evaluate some of the factors that are supposedly contributing to civic apathy. Another important aspect that needs to be mentioned and analysed in this chapter is the human behaviour that often culminates in either positive or negative attitudes towards a matter, in this case public participation. These are some of the highlights discussed in chapter three. Special reference is also made to the effects of civic apathy in South Africa.

3.2. ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The role of any local authority is often taken for granted in many instances. This role is

normally explained in generic functions rather than in terms of social responsibility. One could ask: what exactly is the role of local government? Is a local authority only concerned with providing essential services to the local people or is it doing more than this? Furthermore, is it a local authority's business to consult local communities and encourage citizen involvement before making any policies or taking major decisions that have a direct impact on the local residents or vice-versa, and if that is the case, are the local communities consulted in any way? These are some of the questions that need closer examination. One of the objects of local government as enshrined in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the Municipal Systems Bill (1999) is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

3.2.1 Citizen Consultation

There is a saying that comments: "a person is never satisfied with everything and human wants are unlimited". In negotiations or bargaining, for example, there is always a compromise deal, if one party cannot get its way outright. Getting a consensus is normally difficult in such situations, because not everybody can be satisfied. Therefore, in a case of the relationship between a local authority and residents, the big question is how much consultation is enough? Many political scientists argue that the consultation process is a never-ending process. The question is: "who should consult whom?" The real issue is: what constitutes proper consultation? One could ask again; shouldn't residents be involved from the initial stages of policy and decision-making processes?

Some people of course may claim that they are not being consulted when decisions are being taken. Yet a local authority may claim that they did always consult the local people before taking any decision that had a direct bearing on the lives of local residents. The question is: should consultation be an ongoing process or should it be as and when necessary? One is led to believe that it is not practical to consult everyone in a large community. In some instances government will always argue that it is expensive to consult everybody and a time consuming exercise. However, some political theorists believe that, serving the people requires their input and approval on certain issues. By

definition, consultation means to have a discussion on a matter of concern or to seek advice on a particular matter. Therefore, does this imply that citizens should be consulted at all times and be invited by the local authority to become involved in the policy-making and decision-making processes? If yes, what would happen if citizens are just notified about the decision taken, rather than being involved?

3.3 CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Despite the fact that citizens' participation and involvement is important and crucial to sustain democracy, the right to participate is not exercised by all who possess it. The number of non-participants varies with time, place and circumstances, and also with the type of participation. It is sometimes difficult to explain why people are not participating or becoming involved in local government matters, even though they are granted full rights to do so by the South African Constitution Act (108 of 1996). The lack of participation and involvement, therefore, can only be explained in terms of human behaviour and perceptions. It is the individual who ultimately decides to participate in local government activities or not. Unfortunately, what goes on in a human mind is unpredictable.

One is also led to believe that human behaviour is informed or shaped by a "mind-set" and the immediate environment. People do different things for different reasons. The bottom line is that a person usually has a choice in life. Therefore, some citizens choose to participate or be involved in governmental activities or politics and some choose not to. One can only speculate why. On the other hand, the social environment to a certain extent may influence people to participate or not.

It is also argued that in general, participation tends to be higher among the better-educated, members of the higher occupational and income groups, the middle aged, the dominant ethnic and religious groups and members of voluntary associations (Dalk and Walker, 1977:24). South Africa, for example, is characterised by different cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups. The social environment is also not the same. In former white areas, for example, there were organised groups such as the Ratepayers Associations that even today are still in existence and participating and involved in local

government planning processes, with the aim of protecting their neighbourhood and environment. On the other hand in black townships there is still no evidence of organised ratepayers associations or neighbourhood watch structures, except for civic associations, many of which are largely still trapped in the ideology of fighting the political battles rather than solely concentrating on community development issues and protecting the environment in the post apartheid era. So the residents may be driven by different circumstances and conditions which are informed by their own immediate environments, to participate in public issues.

One believes that individuals are embedded in a matrix of social forces (status, education and so on) that orients them towards or away from political or public participation. In addition, characteristic differences in drives and capacities may cause individuals to vary in their readiness to respond to political stimuli or civic duty. Moreover, the degree to which these social and psychological predispositions find expression in a political environment, including the political structure and institutions such as local authorities differs. These three sets of variables are therefore closely linked and intermingled. A change in any of them can therefore increase or decrease apathy or participation, and an analysis based on only one of them is bound to be misleading and incomplete. It should be emphasised that the correlation between public participation and apathy is generally high, but could be low depending on varying cultural-political contexts.

3.3.1 Citizen Initiated Contacts

The question is often asked: that what is national, provincial or local governments doing practically to involve and encourage citizens to participate in its activities or programmes? It is rarely asked what are the citizens are doing to involve themselves in those planning activities and policy-making process of government or local authorities. How many citizens initiate contacts with the government? Usually it is found that the only time citizens make contact is when they have serious complaints to the local authority, such as a cut in their electricity or water supply. Other than this no contacts are made. However, some ratepayers associations do engage the local authorities in discussions on neighbourhood plans and other community problems from time to time. But they don't necessarily represent everybody in the area. They

often serve the interest of certain people in the area or selected areas. The researcher holds that on average most councillors have the equivalent of contact with one individual per day on council business. In some areas it could be much higher. Thus, contact between councillors and individuals may be a severely limited source of public opinion.

A political party is probably the most important link between a local authority and people outside local government, hence party politics form a bridge between the local organisational scene and the local council. The other major channel of communication between public and local authorities is the media. The general view is that councillors have a sensitive and volatile relationship with the press, although most of them will take care to read the local newspapers. The ideal scenario is that citizens are the ones who ought to make more contact with the local authorities in order to make inputs in planning and development of their areas. However, this seems more possible in theory than in practice.

3.3.2 Attitudes to Public Participation

People's attitudes are mainly informed by their beliefs and feelings toward something. If a person doesn't like something or someone he/she develops an attitude. Sometimes the attitudes are inherent (Dalk and Walker, 1977:16). A person with little or no education, for example, may not wish to associate with very educated people, maybe because of an inferiority complex or lack of confidence. As a result he/she may have perceptions about highly educated people, and those perceptions may develop into an attitude, which by definition is a way of thinking or behaviour reflecting a point of view. Some people have an attitude to public participation in which they simply do not see themselves as part of a local authority, for example. In some instances their experiences reflect their attitudes.

If, for example, a person has often attempted to submit a proposal or input to a local authority for consideration, but in return receives no reply or is ignored, surely that person will develop a perception, an attitude towards that local Authority and its officials, and may not dare to try again to submit proposals or give inputs. Such

problems may ultimately culminate in non-participation or apathy. On the other hand, participation of the public in decision-making may represent a threat to the system of government or to political office bearers.

One may argue that the consequence of public involvement is to strengthen positive attitudes within local government towards the public, or encourage the assumption that the outcome of cooperative arrangements will be more effective decisions and policies. The researcher believes that officials attitudes to public participation may be as ambivalent as those of councillors. Thus it seems that councillors are most likely to accept grass-roots opinion if it comes from established voluntary associations or agencies with a backing of public support, which have a commitment to service in the community and which present views not too far divorced from existing policies and commitment within the local authority.

As with being a political party member, if one is weaker in status, one is seldom heard and if one happens to say something perceived as not in line with the policies of the party, one "gets the chop" immediately. Though political parties have the image of appearing to be promoting the principles of democracy, participation and freedom of speech, they may practise the opposite. The point is that often individuals in power are the ones who thwart the good intentions of a political system or the law of the country or organisation. In some countries, proposals for greater public involvement in the government decision-making process have not only been a popular movement arising from public feeling, higher standards of education and the like, but has also matured within government itself.

It is important that people should be able to know that they can exert some influence on local decisions affecting their own lives. If the democratic process is to flourish, there must be a ready access to full information about a local authority's activities. The argument is that as local government activities expand they have more extensive and frequent impact upon people at the local level. In addition, municipal councillors ought to have information at their disposal, so that they can more than ever be prepared to provide information to the people they serve and to justify their decisions or actions when necessary. Yet the dark side of this is that, as the size and range of

government activity has grown, the elected representative has less opportunity to provide the public with such information and justification.

The need for supplementary means of involving the public in local decisions has been preoccupied as much by the expanding activities of local authorities as by public pressure. The pressures indicate the inability of current procedures and institutions to cope with an increasingly articulate public. Hence the calls for freedom of speech and a right to information. The fact that citizens' participation is a politically sensitive subject, reaffirms the point that when more actors are brought into decision and policy-making processes, the existing power balance in the organisation or political party may be threatened.

3.3.3 Citizens' Perceptions

It may seem that citizens' perceptions and attitudes to public participation revolve around the same issues. The difference is that citizens' perceptions have to do with the recognition of truth or understanding. People may formulate their own perceptions from what they see or hear. Most of the citizens do not know what is happening inside local authorities, so they end up having their theories of what is happening within local authorities, which they also judge by the quality of services rendered.

In South Africa the following perceptions amongst citizens are common:

- The local government operating system is complicated and not easy to comprehend. Therefore, citizens tend to think they cannot handle the amount of information they are expected to absorb and feel that this level of complexity keeps them at bay. A classic example is council meetings. An ordinary person finds it difficult to follow the procedure and discussions in the meeting, hence many don't bother to attend them;
- Some council or government officials and councillors are selfish. They are only serving their own interests at the expense of the local citizens;
- Lack of knowledge among citizens about how local decisions are made. Citizens are frustrated with the lack of unbiased, reliable information available to them;

- Citizens are only concerned with what directly affects them, for example, rates and taxes, and after they have solved the problem they disappear;
- The recognition is that citizen involvement is cynical. Citizens see no reason to become involved in the day-to-day affairs of their communities when things are running smoothly;
- The local government lacks consistency or responsiveness. Citizens are lucky if they receive a prompt response to their grievances or problems. Sometimes they receive nothing at all. Often they are taken from pillar to post; and from one department to another if they have problems that need to be sorted out;
- The local government lacks the characteristics of a responsive government: taking time to listen and treating citizens with respect (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2000).

The above are some of the perceptions that citizens have about the local authorities, and to a certain extent the national government. However, they are not necessarily accurate. It is believed by the researcher that most of the people stay away in participating in the local government activities because of these perceptions, hence civic apathy.

3.4 POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Most decisions taken by government affect individuals' day to day lives. Even a small decision may have a direct or indirect effect on the public. In terms of the social contract (constitution), citizens surrender their rights to government, meaning that they agree to give the government the mandate and power to govern and to take decisions on their behalf after electing it. This is a reason why democracy has limitations. No person has the right to do whatever he/she wishes because of the rules of this social contract (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993:68).

Notwithstanding any contradictions in this regard, the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) does make provisions for citizens to participate in the government activities. The point is that, irrespective of the social contract, the government is still required to act in good faith by informing people of their decisions and encouraging

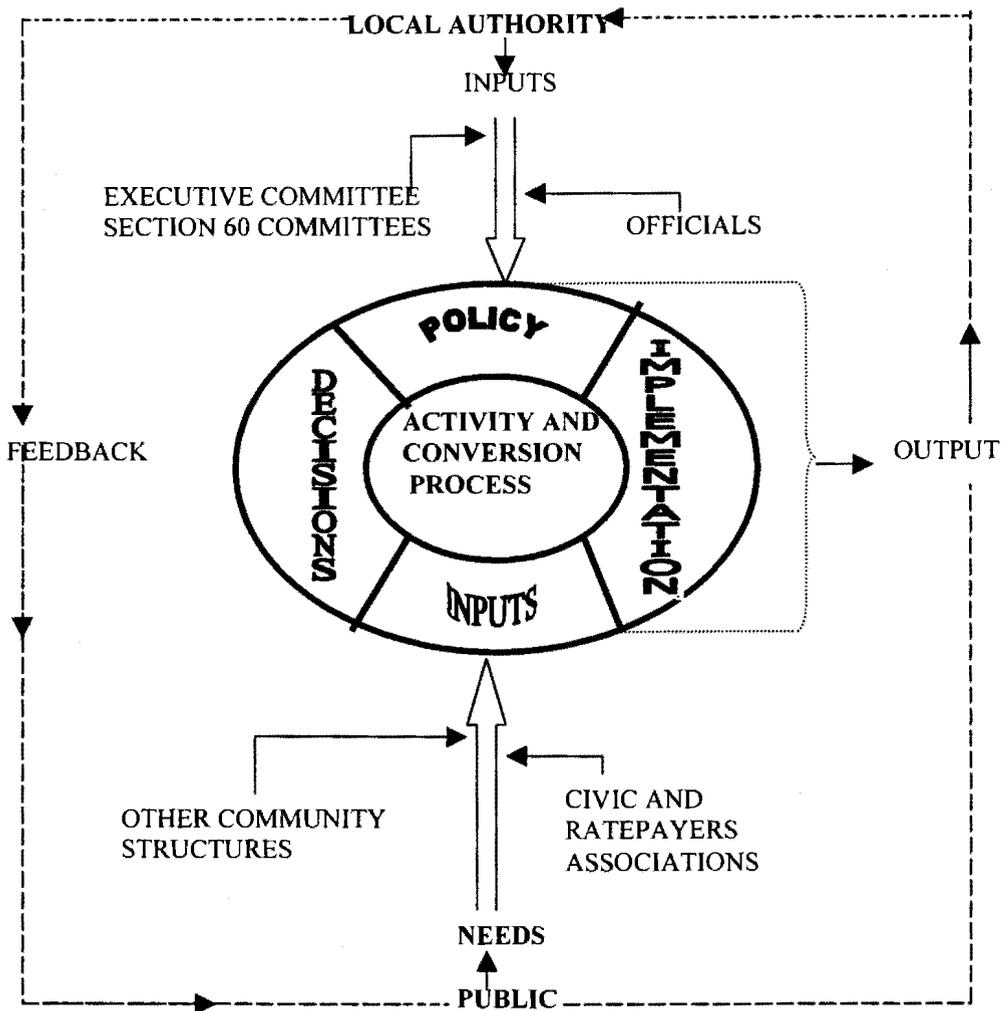
them to give inputs so that the government can take informed decisions on their behalf. The fact that the government encourages public participation, indicates that local authorities are not at liberty to take unilateral decisions, though in practice many of the crucial decisions are taken without the people affected being consulted. A project priority exercise could be given here as a perfect example of lack of citizen consultation. A local authority, for example, is requested to submit a priority list of projects to be undertaken in a certain area, then the officials decide to make their own priority list based on their intuition, without consulting the local residents or asking them what they really need. The possibility is that a local authority will make an error of judgement and end up prioritising a project not needed by the local community. For example, they may end up building a community hall instead of a main road that a local community desperately needs, for reasons of easy accessibility to town or places of work.

However, it should also be acknowledged that some local authorities do make efforts to invite suggestions or inputs from local communities, but not everybody will heed the call. This may lead to local authorities taking decisions without inputs from the public. Therefore, the above statement does not imply that all the local authorities take decisions or formulate policies without consulting the people. It could be that people are not interested in participating anyway or they are afraid that they will be ignored.

Figure 1 below illustrates that a policy and decisions-making process is a circle and a process at the same time. Inputs are made or submitted, meetings are held, policies are formulated and decisions are taken. Finally the implementation process follows. There is also much activity that takes place in the policy and decision-making processes, and after the process has been completed, either effective or ineffective policies, good or bad decisions may result. Normally citizens need to be given a feedback in terms of decisions taken concerning their needs, but in many instances there are claims made by residents that in most cases no feedback is received from the local authority. The process of interacting and communicating with the public stops at the local authority's meetings.

Figure 1 also shows the process and routine involved with policy and decision-making in most local councils. It should be noted that the model was designed by the author to give a broader picture or an idea of the processes and role-players involved in making policies and taking decisions in a local authority

FIGURE 1



Source: Edwin Mokgwatsana

Verba, Nie and Kim (1971:34) argued that citizens differ not only in the overall amounts of participation they perform but also as to the types of acts in which they choose to engage. Furthermore, these different types of acts are quite distinctive in form and function and can almost be thought of as alternative participatory systems that are used for different purposes, and are able to provide different types of benefits. Some people prefer to be passive and some prefer to be active. In the end, it is a question of choice, as earlier mentioned, though it is not ideal for citizens not to

participate in the government activities. However, in reality people do exercise their choices based on the benefits and opportunities at stake. In theory there is no single process that leads citizens to participate, but rather there are alternative processes that systematically differ, depending upon which mode of activity is to be considered.

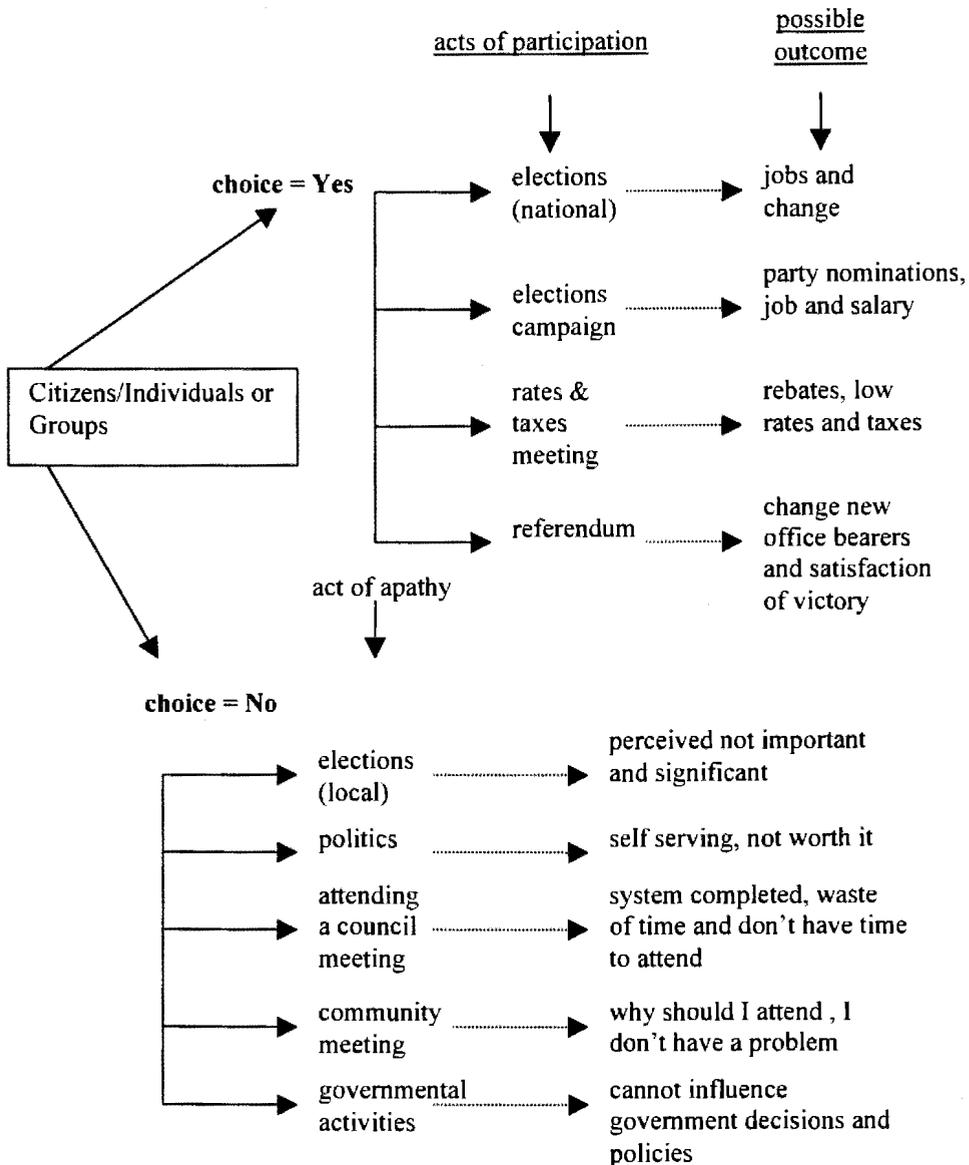
Verba, Nie and Kim (1971:36) clearly pointed out that for an individual or particular groups of citizens, the most important set of issues and political activities may be the myriad attempts to influence government decisions that are related to the specific problems faced by individuals, groups or the community. Policies may be changed or shaped because of people's influence. But that influence may only come when individuals or groups in the community experience problems. Other than this they may not bother to get involved, unless another problem surfaces.

The point is that a potential outcome is what draws people to participate in the policy and decision-making processes. Some political theorists believe that participation is largely a goal-orientated activity in which citizens take part in order to obtain some benefits from the government. Thus a major distinction among acts of participation has to do with the outcome that citizens expect from their acts or that the acts can, in fact, produce (Sherman, 1998:3).

The nature of the person is that one expects results from what she/he is doing. When people get involved in a political process, results are expected from their participation. People look at benefits before or after they have been involved in a political, or any other, process. An example could be high expectations for employment or a better quality of life after people have voted for a particular party.

Figure 2 shows different acts of participation and the possible outcome. It also shows types of choices people make as far as public participation is concerned, and the act of apathy that goes with these choices. **This model is the work of the author.**

Figure 2: The acts of participation and apathy



Source: Edwin Mokgwatsana

Figure 2 shows that participation, as opposed to apathy, is the means by which the interests, desires and demands of an ordinary citizen are communicated and discussed. By participation reference is made to all those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the decisions that they make. Based on their level of participation, citizens choose either to become gladiators, spectators or uninvolved.

3.5 DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES OF CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

The researcher is led to believe that debates over democracy revolve around citizens' participation. In an attempt to define democracy in simple terms, he ended up with the popular definition that the government is by the people for the people. To further simplify, this means that the people are the government and without them there would be no government. However, if the citizens fail to participate in the process of governing the country, then will that still constitute democracy? One needs to further ask if community representatives in parliament, the provincial legislature and in local authorities will still have a role or a purpose, if the people fail to play an active role in governing their communities, and do not voice out their problems or give inputs to their representatives.

In many countries around the world, people in the positions of power are said to be making unilateral decisions without any consultation. This statement could be challenged for its validity. But the reality of the matter is that political leaders and community representatives are voted into positions of power by the people, and if some of them, once they are in power, ignore the people and their views, then they are bound to make uninformed decisions. Then it will be appropriate to ask if people are only allowed to speak through voting and should they not be offered an opportunity to participate in the matters of government on a continuous basis? The point is when and how the significance of the role of citizens is to be measured, if the citizens are voiceless? Can an assurance be given that each and every decision taken by the politicians is in the interests of all citizens, even though they are voiceless? Most politicians normally use the phrase that "the people have spoken" after they have won the elections. What about if the citizens are not happy with decisions taken by the government? Will politicians still use the same phrase that the "people have spoken"?

3.5.1 Freedom of Expression and Association

The protection of basic human rights is an important and crucial component in a democratic system. In a democracy people are expected to exercise their rights freely

and to be able to criticise the government without any fear of being victimised. A country that does not protect the basic rights of its citizens cannot guarantee free and active public participation in its activities. The following are some of the basic rights that, if protected, stimulate and encourage active public participation, because people will know that they have a right to participate in and to have a say in, the processes of government without being prevented from doing so. Thus, as stated in the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), everyone has a right to:

- freedom of expression and association;
- freedom of the press and other media;
- freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; and
- freedom to artistic creativity, and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

These are some of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Though there are limitations to every right, freedom of expression and association are fundamental features in a democratic society and form essential values for governments, which governments with any claim to democracy are duty bound to maintain and protect.

Evidence shows that on contact with the public it appears that priority is given to the opinions of political peers rather than public opinion when considering policy matters or issues of importance. The argument could be that politicians and officials feel that the public has little to offer in the way of valid opinion. Many municipal councillors and officials may feel that the public is apathetic and uninterested in the work of the local authority. Therefore, the assumption is that it is doubtful that the public will ever have an opportunity to express themselves and have access to the partisan group discussions of policy, which normally take place prior to local authority's council meetings. Condemnation of public/ civic apathy seems to accompany secrecy in policy and decision-making processes and in the actions of municipal councillors and management. Some believe that in general, attitudes towards voluntary associations are more positive than attitudes to the public at large, especially when good working relationships exist between groups and a local authority.

3.5.2 Right to Information and Access to Information

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) states that every citizen has the right to or access to:

- Any information held by the state, and
- Any information that is held by another person or that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights.

The point is that secrecy in regard to the activities of government and the denial of access to governmental records and reports are a menace to democracy, and conformity to the rules of the democratic process also requires honesty in the presentation of information to the public. The withholding of facts and intentional misrepresentation on the part of officials, party leaders and municipal councillors constitute serious threats to democracy. Freedom of speech and of the press may result in spreading falsehood as well as the truth. People always trust a person or an organisation that tells the truth.

Some people may argue that a political party is probably the most important link between a local authority and other structures outside the government. People identify themselves with certain political parties. Party politics in this sense forms a bridge between the public and the local authority. Therefore, it would be surprising if there were not a considerable exchange of views between governors and the governed. Local government has the task of providing services and at the most basic level of “consumer” reaction there is need for an interchange of views on this function (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993:84).

Another reason for expecting contact and communication between the community and the local authority is the sheer number of potential points of pressure within the community. The pressure emanates from the variety of problems that members of the community have. If matters of potential impact and principle are raised by public representations, then formal discussion and decisions are required. Most of the time residents do have claims that when they have burning issues that they need to discuss, they have difficulty in getting their issues onto a council agenda and in having a positive commitment from the officials and management to act and respond

on these matters promptly. The individual or group who approaches the local authority may be considerably less happy with the treatment or a blank refusal to take an issue on board, than if the matter gets onto an agenda and maybe goes further, for example, onto a council agenda. In order to prove if there are positive or negative attitudes towards the public, one should begin by looking at evidence to prove whether there is any amount of contact between the community and the local authority and what the extent and nature of contact, or behaviour between the public and the local authority, as Dalk and Warker (1977:68) pointed out that to improve or adapt to the nature of two way communication between governors and the governed requires commitment on the part of all concerned. It is peoples' predisposition and attitudes, which ultimately explain authoritative responses to public demands and representations as well as the extent and nature of the information flowing from the local government to the public.

Rosenstone and Hansen (1993:87) argued that "a move towards greater public participation in government represents a challenge to the representative principle. In many instances it is suspected that many councillors would oppose such a movement. Nevertheless, the amount of contact between local government and the public is critical and is not merely in one direction". On the public side, the occasional routine inquiry that everyone makes from time to time forms one end of the spectrum. Petitions, lobbying and inviting local government politicians and officials to public meetings represent more emphatic forms of communication of public opinion.

It could be argued that apathy is a symptom of, as well as a cause of, weakness in a system of governance. It signifies a failure to involve all members of the society in their own governance. A failure by local government to inspire interest and loyalty may cause civic apathy among the local residents. Such failure may be dangerous to democracy, for whenever a large number of people exist outside the normal channels of politics and are unable to share in the decisions that shape their lives, the political atmosphere may become potentially explosive.

3.5.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

To link the right to information and access to information with modern technology: information technology provides an interesting and important paradigm for citizen participation. As mentioned earlier, some members of the public may claim that they are not being consulted by a local authority on matters that affect them directly, while on the other hand a local authority could claim it is not possible and expensive to consult every member of the community. The point is that modern technology offers easy and convenient communication tools that can be used to reach many people in a few seconds or simultaneously. Perfect examples are the Internet, e-mails, radio and television. Therefore, the question is: how well informed are citizens in this information age? How much more informed are these citizens today than they were ten years ago, if at all?

To examine questions of structure of policy and decision-making process is in effect to study information. Waggoner (1998:15) argued that the flows of information should provide people with access to government processes. That is, they provide the dynamic ingredients within the polity that help citizens to understand its essential relationships, whether that between government and citizens, between an executive branch and legislature or between bureaucracy and politicians. The bottom line is that information in this instance is the lifeblood of public administration.

The digitalisation of telecommunication, together with the advent of user-friendly desktop computing, has enabled important innovations to occur in both computing architecture and information systems. It is these technical innovations which are the source of so much “impact” which is claimed for ICTs. These innovations, in particular, are creating new, and still expanding, capabilities for computers to communicate with other computers and connecting far removed businesses, governments and individuals to communicate with each other instantaneously and independently of geographical distance (Taylor and Bellamy, 1998:148).

Most information age scenarios assume that new information systems will be used to support an ever-increasing range of electronic transactions between businesses,

governments and their customers. It is also important that the information age is being shaped as much by the economic, social and political arrangements from which it has emerged, as it is by the technological innovations on which so much emphasis is placed. One of the most important institutional dimensions of ICTs is that the way they are developed reflects and embeds dominant cultural assumptions about technologies.

Electronic citizenship and democracy is an important innovation that is occurring in the era of electronic democracy (Taylor and Bellamy, 1998:149). However, this innovation is the introduction into polity of ICT applications that are designed to strengthen the democratic process: applications such as electronic public meetings and policy forums, e-mailing elected representatives and officials and virtual community groups. In such ways, ICTs are involved in innovations designed to recast the relationships between citizens, community groups, politicians and government officials. The new information and communication capabilities with ICTs are also the source of enhanced capabilities to manage democratic processes, by permitting the deployment of refined market research techniques (Taylor and Bellamy, 1998:149).

Frissen (1992:19) believes that the conjunction of new capabilities and innovation in the workplace is permitting the technologies to become, at one and the same time, agents of employee empowerment and agents of control and of oppression. By the same token, if these scenarios are translated to the wider society, then there is a basis for more or less subtle forms of monitoring and control of citizens on the one hand, and for their liberation and enrichment on the other. It is for this reason that ICTs have been characterised as being inherently ambiguous technologies. However, ICTs offer fundamental choices to the institutions, a workplace for employees and a means of making decisions more open and engendering a stronger sense of ownership and engagement. Thus one of the best examples of an explicit commitment to open government via the medium of ICTs is to be found in the United States of America, where the Clinton/Gore administration has strongly promoted citizenship with its open access programme. The British central government and South Africa too have developed opportunities for access to information by citizens via the on-line

government information service.

3.5.4 Participatory Democracy

As mentioned earlier, the debate on democracy revolves around citizen participation. Therefore it is fitting to ask if participation does increase with “modernisation”, or are the citizens less active in complex modern societies? or; does citizen participation really matter? or does it have any effect on government decisions? If so, does it lead to a more equitable distribution of values or to policies that favour a small activist public? What does apathy and non- participation mean for the theory and practice of democracy? According to David Sills (1968), an alert, informed and wise citizenry rationally assesses the men and women who offer themselves for elections, chooses the best and removes or reappoints them after carefully weighing their performance.

Schulz (1977:24) asserted that the prevalent type of democratic government is “representative” rather than “direct” in character. The point is that an elected municipal councillor or member of a legislature, which represents the people, is generally considered an essential of democracy. One may ask what specific principles of representation and which modes of apportioning representatives are compatible with the democratic doctrine? The belief is that democracy is a process of governing characterised by:

- Freedom for all individuals and groups to influence the course of governmental action; and
- Organisational arrangements which provide for the making of formal policy-decisions by officials and councillors chosen for limited terms of service, and therefore replaceable from time to time by an electorate composed of persons able to meet voting requirements.

The idea of citizen participation arises from the classical theory of democracy, yet the structure of government may not be that of a pure democracy. Kweit and Kweit (1981:7) argued that citizens’ interests are often realised indirectly by actions of elected representatives, and the policies they determine are then to be implemented by bureaucrats acting in organisational structures that are the very antithesis of

democracy. In essence the anomaly of citizen participation is that democratic expectations have been imposed on governmental structures that were designed to function democratically. If citizens are to make policy directly, what then is the role of the elected representatives? It could then be assumed that the relationship between citizens and bureaucrats is even more problematic.

Historically many theorists maintain that democracy was workable only when the public possessed a high degree of political information and sophistication. Moreover, most theorists claimed that the citizenry should be supportive of the political and government system and share a deep commitment to democratic ideals such as pluralism, free expression and minority rights. Otherwise an informed and sophisticated electorate might be manipulated to distort the democratic process.

Dalton (1988:54) argued that democracy required an ever-attentive public. The public must be a paragon of civic virtue in order for democracy to survive. At local level, citizens' participation in local government is enshrined deeply in the political culture and is epitomised by the open council meetings. The value of an active citizenry in promoting the welfare of the people, of course, was recognised in ancient times. Aristotle, for example, placed greater faith in the collective wisdom of people than in the sagacity of any individual. Rousseau wrote:

“That the general will is always right and tends to the public advantage, but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people are always equally correct. Our will is always for our good, but we do not always see what that is. the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived on such occasions only does it seem to “will’ what is bad”.

(J.E Zimmerman, 1988:45)

Rousseau was enough of a realist to know that a true democracy is only an ideal. While there is agreement that citizens should play an informed and active role in the governance system, there is wide disagreement as to the forms and the extent that citizens' participation should take. At one extreme the view prevails that citizens should directly make laws and hold offices on a part-time basis. At the other

election campaigns (Rosenstone and Hansen,1993:57).

3.6.1 Voting

Many political scientists had difficulty in explaining the famous paradox of voting or more broadly the paradox of participation in politics. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993:68) argued that if people are rational, the paradox holds, and if they receive only collective benefits, they will not turn out to vote; and for a very good reason. They further pointed that the result of the election will be the same whether they participate or not. In essence, in any election, hundreds or thousands of millions of voters will cast ballots; the chance that a single ballot will determine the result is exceedingly small. Some people choose the most efficient means to achieve their goals. They do not knowingly waste their scarce resources. Therefore, these people may perceive voting as irrational with the argument that it consumes resources but achieves no results that would not be achieved otherwise.

The paradox above stems from the argument that one letter of complaint sent to a local authority, or one more person attending a local authority's council meeting, or one more rand sent to a campaign, or one more person persuaded to vote will not make a big difference to the results, but it might cost the participant in some way. It appears that if people receive only collective benefits from political outcomes, they are likely not to participate in politics.

3.6.2 Rational Ignorance

The second difficulty is rational ignorance. If political involvement is irrational, so is political learning for the same reason. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993:69) argued that, firstly, information about politics and government must be gathered and its cost is far above zero. In actual fact, they say, government is a complicated business and the press can be relied on to cover only a fraction of what the government is up to. Secondly, the value of information once obtained is very small, precisely because of the paradox of participation in politics. Even if voters had lots of issues debated in government and the opinions contested in campaigns, what good would it do them?

It makes no sense for them to act on the data anyway. The outcome would be the same. Thus citizens have few incentives to inform themselves about politics. They stay rationally ignorant (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993:69).

Some political theorists believe that the question of when people involve themselves in politics cannot be addressed solely within the context of individual motives and behaviours. What is evident is that political leaders do not try to mobilise everybody, and they do not try to mobilise all the time. Mobilisation after all is not their real goal, they have little interest in citizen activism per se, rather they seek to use public involvement to achieve other ends such as to win elections and to influence policies. Consequently citizen participation is a resource that political leaders use selectively in their fights for political advantage or power. For maximum effect they target their efforts at particular people and they time them for particular occasions (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993:81).

The researcher's theory is that people who belong to civic associations are more likely to be mobilised and more likely to participate than people who do not belong to civic associations. Group members are more visible and more influential. According to Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993:81) some people participate more in politics when other concerns do not demand their attention, such as making a living, spending time with a family and so forth. Often some opt to participate more in politics when important decisions are pending, such as elections. Others would participate more in politics when outcomes hang in the balance.

The fact is that every local, provincial or national government makes decisions that affect the lives of millions of people. They decide how to raise money and how to spend it, who will pay taxes and who will receive benefits. They also decide whether parking will be permitted on both sides of the street. Therefore, with so much at stake, politicians, political parties, interest groups and ordinary citizens all attempt to influence these government decisions. They try to persuade legislators, bureaucrats and judges to see things their way and mobilise others to do the same. The truth is that people participate in politics or take part in government activities when they can benefit something if they participate. More likely, citizens will write letters, attend

meetings and sign petitions when their actions are likely to have their largest impact on some governmental decisions.

3.7 ROLE OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

It is obvious that municipal councillors are elected as representatives of the people on the local level of government. Therefore, their role in influencing local residents to participate in governmental activities or politics cannot be insignificant. In essence, municipal councillors represent the views and demands of the people to local government and in the process they are tasked to improve the lives of the people in general. So the interaction between councillors and local citizens cannot be over-emphasised. Therefore, if councillors cannot be involved in citizen participation and do not know the needs and demands of the people they represent, then the whole principle of representation cannot work. The perception is that once councillors are elected to office, they forget about their constituencies; and no longer represent the interests of the people, but only their own.

It is also claimed that some municipal councillors only call public meetings when elections are looming. The fact of the matter, however, is that any functioning democratic system must incorporate and rest upon a system of representation. In some instances the only significant public will consists of one or more pressure groups. It may therefore be claimed that the process of discussions sometimes depends entirely upon pressure groups and at all times is likely to depend upon them to some extent. They may thus constitute public opinion on certain issues. Therefore, no discussion of representation is complete without account being taken of pressure groups (Schulz, 1977:34). All schemes of representation have one feature in common, viz., the representation of people.

3.7.1 Principle of Representation

Two primary functions are involved in the operation of any government, namely, policy determination and administration. The former consists of determination of the ends to be achieved through governmental actions and also of designation of the

general ways of attaining them. Administration is therefore, the function of exercising or carrying out whatever policies have been adopted (Schulz,1977:36). By definition representation and representative governments are indistinguishable. According to the *South African Oxford Pocket Dictionary (new edition, 1994)* to “represent” means to take or fill the place of another in some respect or for some purpose, like a lawyer representing a client. Representative government, therefore, occurs when control over governmental policies is actually exercised by a representative body.

Schulz (1977:55) pointed out that the following are the basic principles of representation:

- Equal representation of areas;
- Representation of areas according to population;
- Modified representation according to numbers;
- Functional representation granting of representation to groups of individuals engaged in the same occupation or sharing a common interest and collaborating in the pursuit of particular objectives; and
- Representation of the general public.

The notion of democracy requires that governments should be representative. In the same breath public representatives (councillors) have an obligation to fulfil. As elected *de facto* public representatives are a mouthpiece of the people and ought to be the initiators in development issues, and should encourage citizen participation in political government and voting processes. Any councillor, therefore, cannot claim to represent the views of the people if she/he cannot promote the welfare of the people and improve their standard of living. As such, councillors or community leaders may not claim that they are representing their communities if they are not advocating the views of the people in council meetings.

The main principle of representation implies that since people cannot talk all at once, therefore they need to be represented. Thus, representatives become the voice of the masses. However, evidence has shown that once representatives are elected they disengage themselves from the people who elected them. Once municipal councillors

or community leaders have disengaged themselves from the communities they serve the suspicion emerges that they are no longer acting in the best interests of the people. This creates a huge problem in terms of communication between a local Authority and the public. Practically, when the lines of communication and consultation break, many people eventually resort to apathy or lose faith in the system of government and ultimately mistrust their community leaders or their representatives. It is not certain whether any municipal councillor or community leader who disengages himself/herself from the community still qualifies to be the people's representative.

The other dilemma that a constituency has to deal with from time to time is the movement of municipal councillors from one political party to another. The fact is that most councillors/politicians are elected based on their party membership rather than on being independent candidates. So the electorate elect them based on the principles of the political party they support. Even though not everybody in a particular area or community may have voted for the same political party or ward councillor, the probability is that the majority of people in that area would vote for the same political party or ward councillor. Therefore, by virtue of being elected by the majority of people, municipal councillors have an obligation to inform the people when changing political parties. One may accept that it is a normal practice to change political parties, but what message is being sent to the person on the street? This creates the assumption that municipal councillors may be opportunists by changing political parties quite often and that they are not interested in the welfare of the people who elected them, but are concerned with their own interest and survival instead. This may be an assumption but it cannot be overlooked. The point is that once political leaders or politicians in general have been elected into public office, they should serve everybody irrespective of political affiliation or whether some people voted for them or not. This is a logical statement, which makes a lot of sense, but in many instances politicians will first try to serve the interests of the people whom they know voted them into power.

What is important about representation is that political equality should be commonly considered as a feature of democracy (Sugiyama, 1997:46). One of the requirements is an effective guarantee that the right to vote and speech shall be granted to every person possessing the qualifications prescribed by law. Another essential of political equality is that each individual's vote shall count the same as that of other persons in choosing among the candidates competing for a specific office. In return, all citizens should be represented equally and without prejudice.

3.8 INTERESTED AND DISINTERESTED CITIZENS

In every society there are those people who are interested or disinterested in politics or in a government system. It is highly improbable that all citizens would be interested and participate in politics or government activities. This is largely because people have different needs and expectations.

3.8.1 Rewards, Interests and Beliefs

The author's perception is that people participate in politics or government activities because they hope to get something out of it, though not everybody will get something out of it, but some do. The rewards take many forms. Participants sometimes enjoy material benefits and tangible rewards that are easily converted into money, like a government job or a tax break. In this respect participation can also yield purposive benefits, intrinsic rewards that derive from the act of participation itself, such as a sense of satisfaction from having contributed to a worthy cause.

Rosenstone and Hansen (1993:72) argued that there are collective rewards and selective rewards. The collective rewards benefit everyone such as residents. Selective rewards benefit only those who take part in politics or any other governmental activity. The probability is that people who have a direct stake in the political outcome are obviously more likely to participate in politics than people who do not have such an immediate stake. The other probability is that people who strongly prefer one political outcome to another are more likely to enter politics than people who have weaker preferences. Naturally, the idea of exercising a choice has

to do with the advantages and disadvantages that people weigh up. It is obvious that many people would want to do something that would benefit them or their family. So the whole exercise of participation has to do with the beliefs and preferences that people hold. Some people hold beliefs and preferences that motivate their participation internally. The most common is a sense of civic duty. In some cases people who identify closely with political candidates are more likely to participate in politics than people whose psychological identification is weaker.

3.8.2 Costs and Benefits

In economic life people with greater resources can consume more of (almost) everything. In social life people with greater resources can do more of (almost) everything. This situation is also true in political life (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993:76). Often people with abundant money, time, skill, knowledge and self confidence devote more resources to politics, not because politics gives them more in return (although it might), but because they can more easily afford it.

Furthermore, the perception is that the costs of political or governmental activity can also be measured in terms of opportunities foregone. Taking part in politics requires that people forfeit or postpone other activities, and these costs of participation are higher for some people than for others. Because the resources of the wealthy are more ample, they do not face the same hard trade-offs that the poor face every day of their lives. One example is that a car is not a necessary condition for political action, for example, but having one makes it much easier to get to a school board meeting, council meeting, a political rally or a community meeting. In short, for people whose resources are limited, politics or involvement is a luxury they often cannot afford, particularly when political outcomes may have only a modest impact on their economic situation.

Studies have shown that the more educated are more likely to take part in politics or participate than the less educated. Educational experience fosters democratic values and nurtures a sense of civic competence, both of which encourage participation. Therefore, education provides skills that facilitate participation in politics.

Furthermore, education imparts information about politics and a variety of skills, some of which facilitate political learning. Schooling, therefore, increases one's capacity for understanding and working with complex abstracts and tangible subjects, that is, subjects like politics. Moreover, skills in research, writing and speaking, developed through education, help citizens to negotiate the maze of demands that participation places on them (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993:78).

It is common knowledge that to be eligible to cast a ballot, citizens must figure out how to register to vote, they must make sense of candidates and issues. The argument is that the better educated have been better trained to understand political issues and participate in politics. Those with many years of formal schooling are substantially more likely to read newspapers, follow the news and be politically informed, all of which makes them more aware of the opportunities to participate and more likely to possess information with which to do so. This, however, is not to say that politically useful knowledge and skills derive only from the classroom.

The conclusion can therefore be reached that people with a sense of political efficacy are more likely to take a more active part in politics than those without this belief. By efficacy one means both a sense of personal competence in one's ability to understand politics and participate in politics, as well as a sense that one's political activities can influence what the government actually does (external efficacy). Therefore, participation becomes a waste of time if one does not believe that one's efforts make a difference to political outcomes. Thus, the costs of political activism affect different people in different ways depending on their resources.

A strong case can be made for citizens' involvement in an active and meaningful way, because governmental programmes and decisions directly affect their daily lives and government officials and processes are not always able to identify and solve the problems perceived as serious by groups of citizens. There is also another perception that a potential benefit of citizen involvement flows from the valuable input citizens can make into the planning and implementation processes based upon their detailed knowledge of local conditions, needs and desires. That is, citizens sharing with elected officials the responsibility for decision-making may have the

advantage of facilitating the implementation of plans and programmes. On the other hand residents will be more willing to accept and work for the successful completion of projects, if they have helped to plan projects since they will better understand the reasons for these projects.

Ideally, involvement by citizens has democratic value by making it easier for them to hold elected and appointed officials and politicians accountable for their actions. To many people knowledge is power and it goes without saying that informed citizens are better able to judge the quality of governmental performance of functions.

Zimmerman (1988:34) pointed out very clearly that citizen participation is not without its costs. The implication is that when costs are high, the tendency is to minimise public participation and the citizens may be at a disadvantage and the resources to enable citizens to participate fully may decrease or not be available at all. Zimmerman further stated the implications of the costs of citizen participation as follows:

- That Governmental expenses may be increased by the added costs of keeping the public fully informed and in some instances holding referenda;
- Citizens' demands on occasion for additional studies may delay the preparation and implementation of plans, thereby resulting in significantly higher costs in a period of inflation;
- Some citizens may not possess the competence required to judge adequately the technical aspects of plans and programmes and major delays may be caused by attempts by governmental officials to explain subtle nuances;
- The danger exists that citizens participating in the planning and/or implementation process may be parochial in outlook and concerned only with the impact of plans and programmes on their neighbourhoods; therefore generating a conflict about what is best for a wider geographical area;
- Individuals participating in programmes and decision-making may not be representative of citizens at large; and
- A value conflict may occur if participants hold values differing substantially from the values held by a majority of elected politicians.

Such a conflict, however, may be viewed as healthy if elected officers and politicians are forced to rethink their values. They obviously will become responsible to the citizenry if they change their values to conform to those held by citizens (Zimmerman,1988:34).

3.8.3 Reluctant Citizens

There are two classes of apathetic citizens, namely, those who fail to participate out of political indifference, exclusion and incapacity and those who consciously choose not to participate (Zimmerman, 1988:64). Some people disdain politics because it seems to them that some politicians and officials are self-serving and corrupt, hence many of them remain reluctant to participate in governmental activities and politics. Jefferson (1982)(cited in Zimmerman, 1988:65) wrote that:

In every government on earth is some trace of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy, which cunning will discover. Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain extent.

It is true that people will always have perceptions and opinions about the government and political office bearers. However, some people are much less likely to feel obligated to take part in electoral politics or any other governmental activity Jefferson (1982) (cited in Zimmerman, 1988:70). The declining trend of public confidence in government parallels the downward trend of public involvement. Some of the perceptions or arguments of those who are not troubled by the dangers of apathy in particular political and civic apathy may be summarised as follows:

- Little is gained by encouraging the involvement of men and women who are politically uninformed and uninterested. Such people are likely to misperceive their own society's best interests. They are likely to have the poorest understanding of the requirements of a democratic system. Encouraging them to participate may actually cause harm to democratic governments;

- To insist that all must participate because all are affected by politics is to substitute piety for judgement. Little is gained merely by increasing the number of voters. Political activity may be addressed to undesirable as well as to desirable ends. In a democracy, moreover, a citizen has a right to disdain politics if he/she chooses. Better apathy than heedless participation;
- The great mass of the electorate never possesses the awareness of the threat which complex political judgements now demand;
- Widespread political activity, while desirable in some respects also carries disadvantages. A too active electorate or citizenry may impede those who rule from making the decisions they are best qualified to make. A highly politicised electorate may lead to excessive controversy, fragmentation and instability; and
- The existence of a large number of “indifferent” among the electorate lends flexibility to the system by permitting power to shift from one administration or political party to another without generating unusual tension or anger. The decisions of the new political office bearers are thus more easily accepted and accommodated (Jefferson cited in Zimmerman, 1988:70).

One may be guessing that those who fail to participate are not properly represented. If so, then the government is thereby deprived of its broadest possible assessment and the benefit of whatever these non-participants have learned from their experience. If one believes that participatory democracy is a powerful tool, then rulers cannot afford to ignore the needs and interests of non-participants. If people are alienated, ignorance accumulates and the general level of political vitality and vigilance declines. In practice it will typically be the poor and the socially deprived that are most likely to be underrepresented.

The researcher believes that participation on the other hand reminds those who govern that they must attend to their duties and serve the electorate. Whenever apathy prevails, it becomes more difficult to organise and maintain a political opposition. Even if the opinions of the non-participants are presently ill informed, there is no better way to improve the quality of their judgement than by the experience of participation. In the course of participating, one is compelled to acquire the knowledge needed for sound judgement. In this sense voters looking for

guidance are prompted to seek out information, to discuss politics with others and so on. Therefore, participation does not only stimulate political learning, but also heightens responsibility, deepens awareness and increases one's sense of political effectiveness.

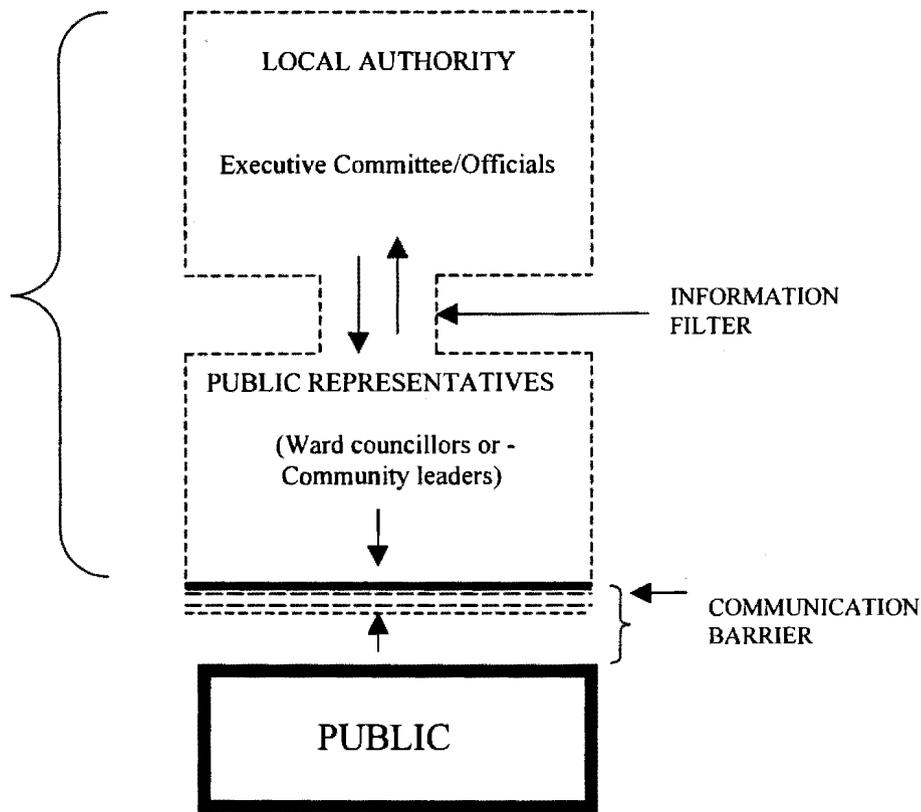
The writer believes that one of the reasons that leads to citizen's apathy is the lack of interaction between the local government, public representatives and the public. If there is no interaction, then it is likely that there will be no active communication between the governors and the governed.

Figure 3 illustrates the lack of interaction or communication between key role-players and stakeholders in government. Note that there is no solid line between the council (executive members/officials) and the public representatives (ward councillors). However, there is a filter that allows easy flow of information between them, but the same is not applicable between the council and the public. In practice all councillors are part of council which is the ultimate decision making body. **Please note that this model² is the work of the author.**

Municipal councillors because they are *de facto* public representatives, as earlier stated, are supposed to represent the views and interests of the communities in council and report back to the people on a regular basis. In practice though, it seems there is little or no effective communication or interaction between councillors and the public, hence a communication barrier. However, what is alleged to be seen is active communication and contact between municipal councillors and municipal officials on regular basis. Figure 3 does not suggest that all municipal councillors are not representing their communities or are not doing their job. It merely indicates that in certain instances some councillors are not effectively communicating with the people with regard to the problems and inputs that they may have. This may result in non-participation of residents because they are being disregarded.

2 Figure 3: Interactive model

FIGURE 3: THE INTERACTIVE MODEL



Source: Edwin Mokgwatsana

3.9 EFFECTS OF CIVIC APATHY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Hilliard and Kemp (1999:84) pointed out that the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) makes provision for, *inter alia*, considerable constitutional and political rights which support grassroots democracy and encourage large-scale citizens' participation, thereby fostering openness and transparency in all spheres of government. It is evident that South Africans under the new dispensation are being urged and encouraged to participate in the affairs of government. This was done purely to ensure that every citizen is afforded an opportunity to contribute to and influence the policy and decision-making processes. However, there is still pervasive citizen apathy, despite the provision made in the constitution. As such, citizens neglect to participate in the democratic process, which could ultimately lead to the total demise of South Africa's fledging democracy. It is also acknowledged that in the past history of South Africa some sectors of the society had no right to vote, let

alone to participate in the affairs of government. However, that may not preclude them now, from taking part in the government policy and decision-making processes. Hilliard and Kemp (1999:89) have repeatedly emphasised that since the inception of a democratic dispensation in 1994, the new government has set out in earnest to ensure that South African citizens have the opportunity of making inputs into the policy and decision-making processes. The reason for this is that South Africa had emerged from a unilateral, top-down approach of policy making, which resulted in the imposition of policies on the majority of the population without consultation. The practices and effects of the past apartheid government cannot be over emphasised. But what is important at this stage are the present attitudes and perceptions of the new South Africa and its democratic system.

Hilliard and Kemp (1999:89) contend that public accountability means that public functionaries have to pursue objectives determined not by themselves, but by the people. He also stated that the citizens have an indispensable role to play in exerting accountability. This in effect implies that public functionaries have to provide explanations to justify positive or negative results obtained in their performance or their daily activities. The citizens thus have a surveillance role to play to ensure that the public functionaries comply with the mandate that was granted to them by the people.

Some people believe that democracy is only viable and possible if citizens are consistently participating or fully represented in government policy and decision-making structures and bodies. Without public access to, and active involvement in government, it cannot be claimed that a country is democratic. For a country to be democratic, it does not necessarily mean that a government should have been democratically elected, but it does mean that a government should be accessible, transparent and accountable. The fact that most South African citizens fail to participate in the activities of government should be worrying, especially after the new dispensation. Hilliard and Kemp (1999:45) emphasised that South Africans have to participate in governance and administration to prevent the government from becoming authoritarian yet again, and such a degenerative tendency is by no means so far-fetched. Indeed a progressive constitution is no guarantee that things cannot go

awry. It is not clear whether many people in South Africa today are neglecting their civic duty to participate in governance or whether they are just ignorant. As said before it can only be speculated at this stage why most South Africans are apathetic, even though there are mechanisms put in place to ensure that they have an opportunity to participate. The researcher also believes that civic apathy in South Africa not only affects democracy, but also service delivery, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and good governance. Without citizens' participation, it is implied that public officials and politicians will take advantage of apathy and do what they wish. On the other hand they will not be accountable to the public. Moreover, there will be no checks and balances built into the governmental and administrative systems so that the various constitutional principles are seen to be upheld. This will not be possible without including citizen participation and broad-based consultations with the role-players and stakeholders in the governmental and administrative processes.

Many political analysts have acknowledged that it is not feasible to have a direct democracy in a large populated country; only representative democracy is workable, and South Africa is not an exception. However, even in a representative democracy, citizens are still entitled to give inputs to and influence the policies of government (Hilliard and Kemp, 1996:45). Besides the fact that citizens are able to become involved in all spheres of government, they are also permitted in terms of section 195 (1) of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), to become involved in public administration. Section 195(1) (e) further states that people's needs must be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making. Section 195 (c) (f) states that public administration must be accountable; while section 195 (c) (g) states that transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.

Clearly this indicates that despite the fact that representative democracy is a feasible model for South Africa, citizens still have a duty to participate and ensure that their representatives know what they need. Otherwise it would be difficult to hold public office bearers accountable and responsible. Clapper (1997:35) also gave testimony to the fact that when citizens neglect to participate in the affairs of the local

government, they simply allow the municipal officials and public representatives to set their own agendas. The administrators and rulers may regard this as an open invitation to act on their own initiative, sometimes irresponsibly.

The researcher believes that in order for democracy to be effective, the maximum degree of public participation should be encouraged in all spheres of government to restrict unbridled power. What is clear from this statement is that ultimately every citizen is indirectly responsible for the manner in which a country is run. Without strong public participation, good, clean government and administration may not materialise and politicians may be tempted to pursue their own interests instead of public interests.

However, Hilliard and Binzin (1997:15) pointed out the following as shortcomings of direct participatory democracy:

- It is time consuming, costly and slow;
- It may not always work well in a pluralistic society if too many people want to have their say;
- It could evoke a negative reaction (apathy) in citizens who regard participation as waste of time and energy, because they think that their inputs may be ignored by the policy makers; and
- Citizens' apathy of any sort could be compounded if inhabitants are habitually misled by policy makers who promise one thing but deliver another or entirely neglect to deliver basic services or fail to fulfil their promises.

Despite these shortcomings, Hilliard and Binzin (1997:16) also believe that public participation in governance and administration of a country is indispensable (if the nation is to function effectively) for the following reasons:

- It prevents the abuse and/or misuse of administrative authority and political power;
- It stops the government dominating its subjects;
- It allows a diversity of viewpoints to be aired;
- It permits citizens to challenge, refute or oppose unsubstantial claims made by particular parties or groups;

- It serves as a check on the activities of the administrators and politicians;
- It helps ordinary citizens to grasp the nuts and bolts of government and administration;
- It generates a sense of civic pride when citizens eventually see that their inputs have been implemented; and
- It creates a sense of ownership when citizens are afforded the opportunity to have their say.

It is indeed true that citizens develop a sense of patriotism and purpose when they are allowed to make a contribution to civic affairs, no matter how insignificant their input(s) may seem. In other words, citizens' participation is crucial not only to promoting but also to sustaining democracy. Moreover, the role of the citizens is to ensure that democratic values and principles are achieved and/or sustained by the public service. Citizens act as guardians to challenge the actions or inaction of public functionaries, to determine whether the public service is operating within constitutional provisions; and to see whether it is actually promoting the population's general welfare. In other words citizens have to ensure that as taxpayers they are getting value for money.

There are various avenues open to citizens to participate or get involved, but involvement is achieved primarily through voter control, which boils down to voters being able to exercise their preferences in periodic general or local government elections. Socio-economic status, educational level, a sense of civic duty may also influence voting preferences, *inter alia*, as well as pride, apathy and lack of interest (Clapper, 1997:66). The point is that the voter should have the final say in the way the central, provincial and local governments are run. If the voter is dissatisfied with the representatives who are elected to office, then the voter should ensure that these representatives are ousted in the next central, provincial and local government elections. The author believes that every South African should in some or other way become involved in governmental and administration, in order to keep the public functionaries accountable.

3.10 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It has already been established that South Africa is faced with many challenges, especially in the new dispensation. In the light of the fact that South Africa has one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world, that protects the rights of all citizens. However, given all the provisions in the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996, South Africans are still not seen to be fully participating in governmental affairs. There is still pervasive civic apathy in South Africa. It can only be speculated at this stage why most South Africans are not interested in participating in the activities of local government. Despite the fact that citizen participation and involvement is important and crucial to sustain democracy, the right to participate is not always exercised by all who possess it.

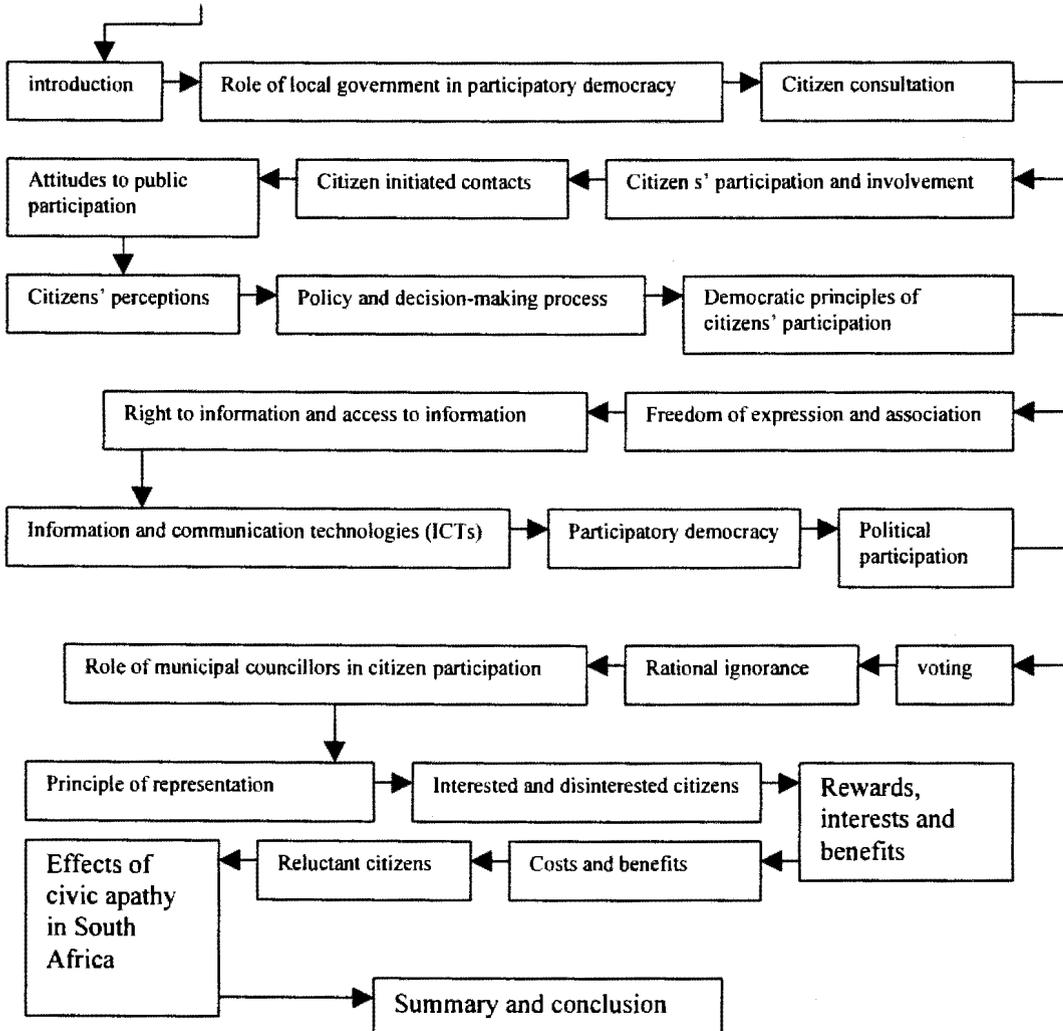
However, it is an individual that ultimately decides to participate in local government activities or not. A person usually has a choice in life. On the other hand, the social environment to a certain extent influences people to participate or not. It is often asked how many local residents initiate contacts with the local government officials or councillors. Maybe somebody might say that nobody cares what happens in the community as long as it is not affecting him or her.

Usually it is found that residents only make contact when they have serious complaints to the local authority, such as rates or tax increases. The ideal situation is that local residents are the ones who ought to make more contact with the local authorities, in other that they can contribute to the planning and development of their areas. Some people do have the attitude to public participation, that they simply do not see themselves as part of a municipality. Moreover, most of the local residents may not know what is happening inside the buildings of a local authority. So they end up formulating their own theories on what is perceived to be happening. Some local authorities do make efforts to solicit suggestions or inputs from the public, but it is not everyone that will heed the call. This may lead to local authorities having carte blanche to do whatever they please and what they think is right for the local communities.

It is also true that some people prefer to be passive and others prefer to be active. In the end, it is a question of choice, though it is not ideal for citizens not to participate in government affairs. In reality, however, people do exercise their choices based on the benefits and opportunities at stake. The potential outcome is what drives people to participate in the policy and decision-making processes of government.

It seems that participation is largely a goal-orientated activity in which citizens take part in order to obtain some benefits from the government. Thus a major distinction among acts of participation has to do with the outcome that citizens expect from their acts and what they can in fact produce. The point is how the significance of the role of citizens is to be measured if they are voiceless?

Outline of chapter three:



CHAPTER FOUR: CITIZEN GOVERNANCE

4.1 Introduction

Some people might think that certain people talk about public participation as if it is something novel, when in fact most people are involved with their local government in some way or other. People pay rates, vote in local elections, write to newspapers on particular issues and join political parties or voluntary groups, or else contact municipal councillors or officials on some matter. Indeed, it might be argued that people participate simply as users of services. The use of social and health services provides interesting examples where user participation is a particularly important category. Despite this, surveys in South Africa repeatedly suggest that the number of people participating on any issue is generally low, especially at local government level, and that those who participate tend to be overwhelmingly, but not, exclusively, middle class, better educated, long term residents well established in their community. In other words, participation in local affairs depends not only upon the opportunities, but also on the skills and motivation which people have for participation.

Undoubtedly there are variations in people's willingness and ability to become involved in political discussion. However, there has to be some basis of focus for participation. This may be provided at a real level, where there is identification with a particular locality, which encourages people to become involved, as with residents' associations or community groups; or it may be in terms of some shared interest or activity as happens with music lovers, good food enthusiasts or soccer fans. On the other hand the basis for participation may be functional or service orientated.

4.2 MODES OF PARTICIPATION

Much has been said about political and citizen participation in this dissertation; but what has not yet been explained are the modes of participation. How effective are the modes of participation and can ordinary people or communities be able to influence the policies and decisions of local authorities through active participation? These are

some of the questions that need to be answered. However, one is tempted to conclude that without the active participation of the public in governmental affairs, government policies and decisions are meaningless, because they are not the true reflection of the wishes and "will" of the ordinary people. When it is said that "people's voices" must be heard, what is meant exactly? Does it imply that ordinary people must be given a platform to speak whenever they have issues of concern to raise with government officials or politicians or that they should comment on governmental policies and functionaries? Many political theorists agree that before crucial policies and decisions are to be made, the consent of the people has to be obtained to legitimise government actions. Verba and Nie (1992:91) contend that voting (within the electoral process) is the most widespread and regularised political activity that enables citizens to express their views or opinions on governmental issues or proposed action.

The other type of activity that needs mentioning involves group or organisational activity by citizens to deal with social and political problems. In this case the individual does not act alone as he does in citizen-initiated contacts, but rather joins with others to influence the actions of government. It is indeed true that an individual acting alone in trying to influence the policies of government has little chance in succeeding. There is also a belief that many governmental bodies tend to listen to the more organised groups (Brady,1997:2). However, it should be mentioned that sometimes it takes a whole community to act before government responds to the demands of a particular community or local residents.

Some political commentators assert that low levels of popular participation of citizens in political, policy and decision-making processes are the *de facto* expressions of a preference for non-involvement. However, what is not told is that in many instances people's intentions to participate may be frustrated by the actions of government officials or ward councillors; thus preventing them from playing an effective role in the affairs of government. [It is also suggested that modern institutional structures of government actually frustrate attempts by citizens to become involved in the decision-making process (Verba and Nie 1972; Scholzman 1993; Brady 1997).]

The extreme viewpoint of the "elitists" is that participation by the "masses" would be debilitating to political systems. It is also interesting to note that actually there are officials and some politicians in government who still think that the views of the "masses" are not worth noting. Almond and Verba (1993:51) consider political participation to be closest to the spirit and purpose of classical democracy, as it has been refined through centuries and experimentation. It is also acknowledged that there is willingness in some sections of any community to accept whatever opportunities are offered by the formal caucuses of decision-makers to promote and foster change by peaceful and responsible action. Even so, not everybody is willing to get involved in politics.

Events throughout the world and in many areas of government have demonstrated that the availability of opportunities for participation by a wider section of the community has led to more and better articulated claims for the extension of power-sharing between the citizens and those in power. The question, therefore, is whether citizens in South Africa are always offered opportunities to participate in the affairs of government? Lipset (1994:103) has pointed out that the matter of citizen participation may be viewed from at least two distinct and opposite positions, such as whether participation is expected to result in consensus or whether it is suspected of resulting in political cleavage. Lipset (1994:103) asked: "under what conditions can a society have 'sufficient' participation to maintain the democratic system without introducing sources of cleavage which undermine the cohesion?" Public participation becomes a complex issue when a local authority is not able to devise a mechanism as to how and when citizens should participate. ✓

Pranger (1968:61), however, described democracy as 'elite' governance with periodic election ceremonials. This statement is debatable, but not everyone in this regard is equally qualified to decide intelligently upon all issues. Individual differences exist. The point is whether citizens in a democracy are able to exercise their democratic right to actively participate in the process of policy and decision-making processes without being marginalised or excluded from these processes by the so-called "elitists" in government. Furthermore, how important are the views of the citizens in a democratic system?

In the United States of America (USA) and elsewhere, citizens are involved in making key decisions, such as which schools to close or where a new highway should be built. They help develop budgets and regulations. They also volunteer their services to government and receive governmental services (Pranger 1968:63). However, this form of citizen participation is not evident in South Africa. Moreover, in the United States of America (USA), for example, all levels of government are required to institute procedures for encouraging citizens to participate in public decision-making processes through local ordinances and state law. In this instance what is important is that decision-makers need to know what the officials are doing so that they can hold them responsible. The public also must know the reasons for governmental decisions if it is to retain confidence in the soundness and equity of those decisions.

4.3 RESPONSIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The comment was made earlier in this study that every day there are people who will complain about something, such as bad quality service or poor quality products. Many people want to have what they desire and some are not prepared to accept half or less of what they want. It is, therefore, natural that people will often have something to complain about: some genuine issues and some not. Therefore, national, provincial and local governments do receive numerous letters of complaints on a daily basis. Based on this assumption the question should be asked: how responsive are these governments, in particular the local government; which is assumed by the author to be receiving more complaints than the national and provincial governments? In daily newspapers, for example, reports of complaints are found, in which many people are alleging that some local authorities are neglecting their duties and do not readily respond to the needs of the people. On a daily basis in newspapers local residents allege that their local authorities are not responsive and often fail to respond to calls made by local residents to come, for example, and repair potholes or burst sewerage and water pipes.

✓ By definition a responsive government means a government shaped in response to citizens' desires for lean and efficient government. This is a government that only does those things citizens want done and does so in a user-friendly manner rather than as a ponderous bureaucracy. Many citizens have a different view of the role of a local government, and some of them wish to take part in determining the way their communities are governed. Among other things, this means that often citizens, rather than elected representatives choose which public services they want, in what quantities, and how they want them delivered. They choose whether action about particular issues should be taken by individuals or neighbourhood groups without expenditure of public monies or by local government with public expenditure. In an ideal public governance environment, citizens are involved in finding the answers to questions such as whether to have a full, serviced park and recreation system or just a few parks in crucial areas. This demonstrates that even small decisions matter to the public.

In many instances where the government is unable to meet the needs of the people, it is said that there are no funds or resources available. The point is taken that for the government to be able to meet the needs of the people, in return the people should also help the government by paying for services rendered and for taxes. But are the people informed in time that government cannot meet the needs or demands made by the public? Any government for that matter could be labelled as being irresponsible when failing to do what it is supposed to do. The question therefore remains how responsive is the government?

4.4 PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

The governance of every community by any standards requires some sort of co-] operation between the government, community representatives and the communities (Box, 1998:3). It has been proven elsewhere in the world that this kind of co-operation is necessary for proper and effective governance. The challenges of the future are better addressed by the working together of all people concerned in governing local communities (Box, 1998:3).

Richard Box (1998:3) also mentioned the following principles of community governance as necessary for effective governance:

- **The scale principle** many issues of public policy are best handled at national levels of government. However, as a rule it is preferable to keep public decision-making and policy implementation as close as possible to the people who are affected by it. This allows citizens to participate directly and meaningfully in governance. What Richard Box is attempting to illustrate with his scale principle is that any government programme or structures should allow for some flexibility in response to change. In short, when deciding about the level of government appropriate to solve a public policy problem, the scale principle calls for a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach.
- **The democracy principle** Richard Box contends that the "best" public policy decisions are those resulting from public access to information and free and open discussion, rather than from the preferences of elite groups or deliberations limited to elected representatives. Box's contention may be valid on the basis that this principle places moral and ethical value on allowing people in their communities as much opportunity as they choose to exercise in shaping the future.
- **The accountability principle** local residents are the "owners" of their communities; so they should be the people to make the necessary decisions about which public services to offer and how to operate them. This principle acknowledges that elected representatives as servants of the public have an important role to play in community life, but, as Richard Box puts it, they should be supportive of, rather than superior to, the roles of local residents acting together as a community.

Achieving governmental accountability to the public requires that citizens be involved in the policy process along with community representatives, beginning with discussion of action options, and moving through to making programmatic decisions to administering programmes and to making changes based on observed performance. The responsibility of making decisions and governing the

community does not necessarily fall on the shoulders of the local government or elected representatives under this principle of accountability. Instead everyone who is part of a governmental decision-making process should be responsible for the action(s) taken. Therefore, it implies that if local residents were involved in these processes, they cannot hold elected representatives solely accountable. ✓

- **The rationality principle** Richard Box (1998:4) once again argues that in making decisions about public policies and programmes citizens, elected representatives and public service officials should understand and clearly express their values, assumptions and reasons for the choices they make. Rationality is about recognising that public decision-making is an important enterprise, one that deserves time, careful thought, opportunities for people to express themselves and to be listened to, and to respect the views of others. ✓

4.5 ERA OF CITIZEN GOVERNANCE

Every person one way or the other, reluctantly or not, will accept that change does occur at some point, whether in organisations, environment or in their personal lives. However, some people take time to accept or adapt to change. Change could be from one era to another, from one stage to the next or involve doing things in a new different way; especially with new technology change is always imminent. The point is that life and everything around it, is affected by change. Therefore, change is part of life (Thomas, 1995:83).

Democracy also brings change as a type of governance. Governments, for example, may move, because of change of political circumstances, from a completely authoritarian type of government to a democratic type of government. This kind of change introduces a new ball game altogether, especially in governance and the lives of the people in general. Under an authoritative government, for example, there is little or no public participation in government affairs. Citizens are prevented from exercising their power to influence the policy decisions of government. They are told what should be done or what has been done by government; probably without their consent or approval. In a democracy citizens at least have a right to govern

themselves. By self-governing, one refers to the fact that citizens by participating have the power to influence the policy decisions of government; and they can more easily remove community representatives from their elected positions, if they don't serve the interests of the people who elected them. Democracy also empowers people to exercise their rights and choices (Thomas, 1995:84).

One is led to believe that it is easy to hold government officials and elected representatives accountable in a participatory democracy. The other beneficial factor about the era of citizen governance and democracy is that, the way government makes decisions has changed to the extent that it is no longer acceptable for decisions to be made by a few leaders who purport to act on behalf of the many, but who refuse to involve the many in their deliberations. Situations often occur in which some leaders, whether in a community or in government, would want to manipulate the people, the making of policy and the decision-making processes of government. However, because not everybody can be fooled or manipulated, some citizens frequently question the actions and decisions of government officials and community representatives.

In a democracy the law of a country also compels the public officials to involve the public more in the affairs of government. Therefore, they are left with no choice but to do as the law prescribes. Many political theorists are in agreement that unless the public's demands for involvement are heeded, decisions can prove meaningless in the face of the public's apathy or active opposition. This undertaking in actual fact compels contemporary public officials and politicians to know how to work with all kinds of publics, from individual citizens to small community groups and to large national public interest groups. They must also be able to work with these publics in a variety of forums, ranging from informal conversations to open public meetings, to civic organisations or committees.

In South Africa, for example, some sections of the communities have become more vocal since the inception of a new democratic dispensation. Citizens are now able to openly criticise the government when it is failing to deliver on promises; and they can also challenge government policy decisions. This does not mean that all South

Africans are now active participants in government affairs. There is still a large proportion of citizens who are apathetic. The point is that the era of citizen governance and public involvement in South Africa should in fact pose challenges to the effectiveness of public officials and councillors. There are two parts to this challenge with regard to public involvement. First, there is the need to understand why public involvement has become essential. Second, even when public officials have a full understanding of the necessity for public participation, public officials and managers may be mystified about when and how to invite that participation.

Many people would agree that South Africa still has a long way to go in achieving acceptable levels of democracy and self-governance. The word acceptable is used because democracy cannot be complete or one hundred percent achievable. On the other hand full public participation is not likely when people have a right to exercise their choice as to whether to participate or not. Some people will always be apathetic.

Public participation can bring substantial benefits: a more effective public decisions, a supportive and supportive public; but when it fails, public participation can leave in its wake a dissatisfied and even restive public, ineffective decisions and a weakened if not faltering democracy (Thomas 1995:89). Thomas (1995:89) further states that, to achieve a strong democracy, decision-making procedures especially in the public realm, must be overhauled to accommodate more extensive and effective participation of citizens. Thomas may be correct in his assertion, but it should be pointed out that this need for overhaul is not limited to the policy formulation process. Much can happen to policies as they are implemented. The other point to note is that excluding the public from the policy deliberations and implementation may be tantamount to denying any democratic influence on the most important questions about a policy. It may also be a recipe for failed implementation, since spurned citizens may refuse to comply with a policy adopted without their advice or consent (Thomas,1995:89).

The era of citizen governance and democracy doesn't call for public involvement in the affairs of government for its own sake, but it bestows the power on the ordinary people to steer the course of government, especially in their respective communities

(Thomas,1995:91). It is true that a strong democracy should promote strong citizenship and a strong society. Thus, though one may believe that citizens are strong and powerful when acting together for a common purpose, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of democracy and citizenship when people are acting on an individual basis. The writer believes that giving people more and better opportunities to take part in their own governance can transform them from subjects of particular governmental arrangements to citizens vested in and supportive of those arrangements. Similarly, the broadening of participatory opportunities can strengthen society by assuring that the actions of government are embedded in society, rather than imposed on society. Thomas (1995:90) asserted that public involvement can also be emotionally draining, because public administrators are often greeted by distrust and hostility from the citizens who become involved. Citizen involvement can fluctuate between intense interest and apathy; or the citizens who participate this year may differ greatly from those who were involved last year.

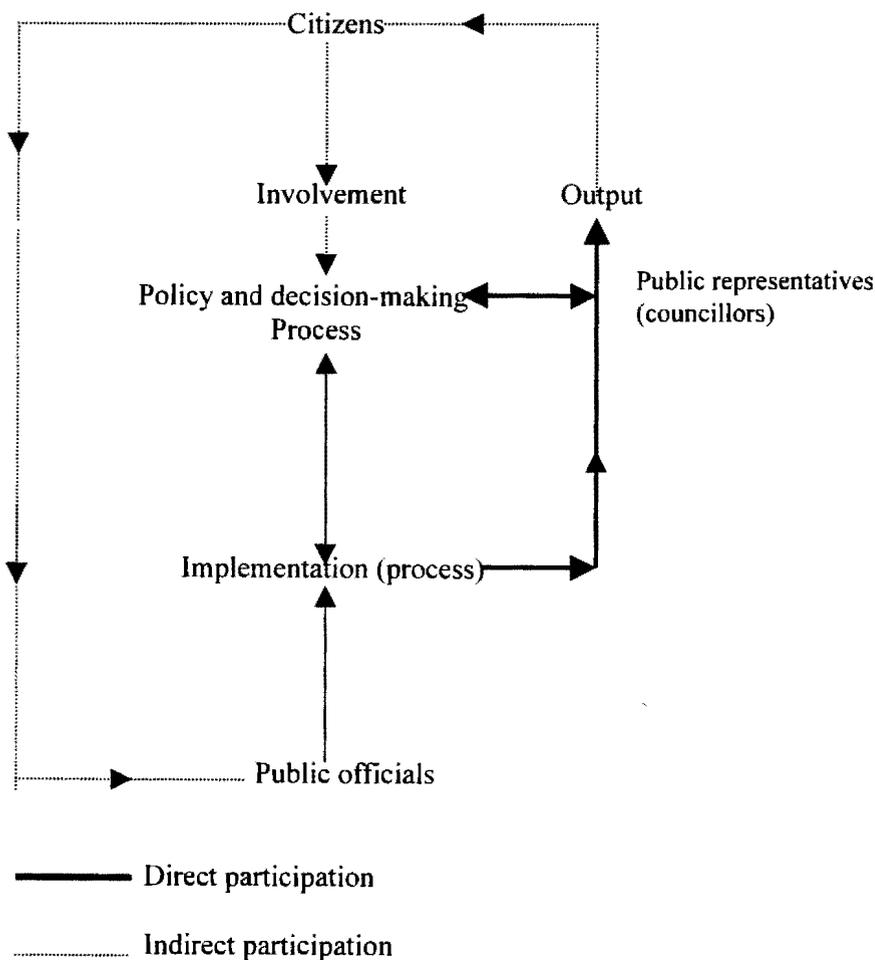
Many public administrators tend to avoid or minimise public involvement in the policy decisions and implementation, because they believe that the risk of failure is maximised when there is too much public involvement (Oldfield, 1990:11). As a matter of fact, decision-making with public involvement can require more time because more people must be satisfied before a decision can be approved. What public administrators don't realise is that if citizens are not satisfied with a policy, they may delay its implementation anyway, adding to the time at that stage. Common sense dictates that the need for information to enhance quality service provision usually calls for more involvement not less.

Figure 4 below shows that the more citizens get involved in the processes of government, the more the principle of citizen governance becomes a reality. Note that the citizens either get directly or indirectly involved in the policy and decision-making process; and that public officials are directly responsible, as shown by the solid line, for implementing those policies or decisions. The point is that policy decisions only become legitimate when accepted by a larger public. One also has to acknowledge that it is human nature to want to be part of something, whether being part of a particular social or elite group, institution, management or soccer team;

people will generally feel honoured and proud to be part of whatever they wish to be part of. Hence most people may not like to be left out of important processes such as the policy and decision-making process, especially if those decisions directly affect them, their future or immediate environment.

Following the discussion above, the following model (**figure 4**) illustrates how citizen governance ought to be in order to be practical and effective:

FIGURE 4: CITIZEN GOVERNANCE MODEL



Source:Edwin Mokgwatsana

The citizen governance model (**figure 4**) also shows that public involvement in government affairs or activities ought to be an inclusive and continuous process. Many concepts in theory sometimes aren't realised in practice. What is important is that the citizen governance process includes many other processes, such as the policy

and decision-making process and the implementation of policy. The other important element in this process is the role-players. The principle of citizen governance may not be acceptable or effective if some of the key role-players are not part of the whole process of governance. The principle of inclusion applies to any type of government. In every local authority, for example, there are three role-players.

The first, being the council's officials, secondly public representatives (councillors) and thirdly the ordinary local residents (the public). In fact, the role-players are what makes a local authority. Therefore, if any of them is excluded in the decision-making process, then any decisions taken may not be regarded as legitimate and valid. Although the public representatives (councillors), as the name suggests, are representing the interests and the views of the people, citizens, as enshrined in the Constitution, have a right to get directly or indirectly involved in the affairs of government and be party to a process of governance.

4.6 WILL OF THE PEOPLE

According to Locke's theory of the political "contract", no society could be formed unless there were universal recognition of its necessity. That is, a political "contract" to form a government requires only a majority decision, and the subsequent actions of government are legitimate, says Locke, so long as they are based upon the will of the majority of the people. In terms of Locke's theory, government is instituted only as a trustee of society and can therefore act only upon what the majority of that society desires. Therefore, since government is merely a trustee of societal values, its powers cannot be absolute. It is limited by the rights and liberties that the citizen carries with him into society. Unlike Hobbes' political "contract", then, the terms of Locke's "contract" are: Some rights must be turned over to government, others remain with the individuals who comprise society.

In politics, the "will" of the people is a determining factor, especially through a vote. The "will" of the people determines who should govern and what should be done. Elections and referendums are processes where people/citizens normally exercise their "will". However, this does not necessarily mean that people only exercise their

'will' when there are elections or referendums. People are also entitled at any time to challenge decisions taken by the government or policies that are not in line with their needs or wishes. Following Rousseau and Kant, (cited in Oldfield, 1990:18), argument that the concept of "will" means that the self's "will" is not subject to; or unstrained by, that of another, to say that a person's actions are authentic is to say that the "will" which he/she exercises belongs to the self, and not to somebody else (Oldfield, 1990:17). In short this means that the autonomous individuals' actions, therefore, to the extent that they are self-determined, are expressions of what individuals desire. What Rousseau and Kant are emphasising is that any person as self is entitled to exercise his/her right or a choice. A person can also choose not to exercise his or her "will". Thus being autonomous entitles one to exercise a "will". However, people as a collective are able to exercise their "will" effectively. It is, therefore, difficult for a person in his/her own right to influence policy decisions.

However, there are three major objections that can be made to autonomy. First, it can be argued that the inequality in the distribution of economic, political and social resources seriously limits the opportunities for self-determined actions, which are available to the majority of men and women. Another objection is derived from Karl Marx, to the effect that ideology imprisons people within a particular way, so that they will serve to sustain, or at best not to disturb a particular set of economic, political and social arrangements (Oldfield, 1990:21). Marx and Engels (cited in Oldfield, 1990:21) remarked that "a class which has the means of material production at its disposal, also has control over the means of mental production". This assertion clearly shows that certain issues are different in practice from how they appear in theory. Citizens may have a right to participate or to get involved in the governmental decision-making process or activities, but won't have a chance to do so, because there are those people who will manipulate these processes, using their power or positions and status to do so.

The final objection to authenticity, and thus to autonomy, derives from elaboration upon the fact already noted, that human beings are social beings. The argument is that men and women are born into a pre-existing social world, that they are "socialised" into a variety of roles, and that these roles provide them with as full an

identity as they have. Some people may feel it is not their role to participate in the affairs of government, because there are people elected to play that role. The political practice in respect to the peoples' "will" has implications. The comment was made earlier that lack of resources can impede citizens from exercising their right or "will" or deny them opportunities to participate in government affairs or local government activities. Surely citizenship requires all citizens to perform their civic responsibilities or duties, to ensure that communities are managed effectively. However, citizens may lack resources for engaging in the practice of citizenship. On the other hand, citizens may also lack the opportunities, and the appropriate attitudes of mind, in other words motivation to participate. Therefore, resources can be seen as enabling or empowering individuals to be active agents in this world.

Many would agree that for activity of any kind, including their involvement in the practice of citizenship, people need certain resources. Some of these resources have to do with what liberal individuals identify as civic, political and legal rights. Others have to do with economic and social resources. That is, without health, education and a reasonable living income, for instance, individuals do not have the capacity to be effective agents in their communities or in government, and the possibilities of a practice of citizenship are thus foreclosed in advance. Such rights and resources have to be secured for citizens.

4.7 GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT

By definition consent means agreement or approval (*South African Pocket Oxford English Dictionary, new edition, 1994*). When a democratic government is conceived to be a form of "self-governance" in which the laws represent the "will" of the people, then the very meaning of democratic government involves the idea of consent as the means by which each citizen embodies his/her "will" in the law. Consenting to obey the law is thus the means by which citizens become self-governing because when an individual has consented to government, then the government's acts become his/her own acts, and hence he/she in effect governs himself/herself and is politically free (Partridge, 1971:19). The principle of consent is complicated and sometimes not clear, but Steinberg (1978:24) believes that the

association of a democratic government with the idea of consent is often expressed in terms of the ideas that democratic governments should somehow express the “will” of those governed. The principle of consent becomes complicated if the laws of the country are imposed on the people and they don’t obey the law. The assumption that the people who formulate or write the law take into account the interests of each and every citizen may be argued otherwise. Their objectivity and fairness and even the process of writing the law may be manipulated by a few powerful and influential people who are only concerned with promoting their own needs and interests. The element of consent is absent in this regard. The other complication is that many people will give consent only if they were involved or were part of a process that requires their consent

(Partridge, 1971:18). The absence of public involvement may imply that consent was not obtained. Therefore, consent is not automatic, but it needs to be obtained, through widespread consultation and public participation. Partridge (1971:19) also pointed out that governments ought to be founded on the consent of the governed and that only those governments which enjoy the consent of their subjects possess rightful authority and can legitimately demand or expect obedience. This is an aspect that is naturally considered as an essential part of a democratic society.

Rousseau (cited in Partridge, 1971) held that any community ruled by the authority of the “general will”, (and his was in a sense a doctrine of government by consent, but of a special kind that departed far from ordinary notions of consent), must be small enough to enable all its members to take part in the making of decisions and he would not allow that representative government could be governed by the “general will”. But such conceptions are only of limited relevance in this dissertation. The areas that are of concern are characterised by their great geographic extent, the size of their populations and other qualities which are at first sight just as unpromising to the idea of government by consent. Moreover, the complexity of these areas includes the enormous variety of organisations, civil groups, activities, aspirations and interests that divide their populations. Partridge (1971:21) also agrees that “consent”, like many other general terms of political theory and apologetics, is capable of a multitude of ambiguities and meanings. However, historians of this doctrine have

usually distinguished two different forms of the contract in the thought of the social contract theorists: the social contract itself, by which individuals agree to form themselves into an organised society; and the contract of government, by which the members of a society place themselves under the rule of a political authority for the purpose of better achieving their common good. Both these forms of the contract introduce the idea that society itself, and also government, rests on the consent of the members of a society and upon some measure of agreement or consensus among them.

Some political philosophers, however, have concluded that the doctrine of "consent" of the governed is no more than an impractical ideal. On the other hand, J.S Mill "wrote that a state never is, until mankind are vastly improved, or can hope to be, for any long time, exempt from internal dissension, for neither is, nor has ever been, any state of society in which collisions did not occur between immediate interests and passions of powerful sections of the people" (Partridge, 1971:24). The point is that citizens have an equal right to govern themselves, and that for this reason people ought to obey only those forms of government in which all citizens have an equal share. The fact that a decision or procedure is a fair compromise gives the dissenter a reason, not just for obeying the decision, but also for participating in the decision or procedure.

The essence of the fair compromise is that everyone gives up his own claim to have more than an equal say in deciding issues, but retain his claim to have an equal say. Public participation in respect of consent makes a difference in that it arouses expectations in other persons. On the other hand, an individual will normally accept the result of the process, such as taking part in voting. This is a reasonable expectation, since without general acceptance of the result of the process by those participating, the process would soon be abandoned.

7.8 BARRIERS TO CITIZEN GOVERNANCE

It has already been argued that governmental decisions may only be achieved in terms of consent, and not necessarily in terms of consensus. This should be

satisfactory, given that its realisation should diminish the citizens' sense of frustration and point to effective government as well as pointing the way to proper oversight of the government. Moreover, it should be remembered that government by consent includes government action amended under criticism. The main point of concern is: whether there are any barriers to citizen governance? Certain general and important statements can be made about modern citizenship. These generalisations relate to what appears to be a central political problem of contemporary life, the balance between the politics of power and the politics of participation. This balance now tilts in the direction of hierarchical power.

The other generalisation is that two types of political cultures may be envisaged: One that gives citizens primary responsibility for governing themselves directly, "a politics of participation", and one that grants the most important governmental responsibilities for making authoritative decisions to a selected few acting on behalf of or in spite of the citizens: "a politics of power." Pranger (1968:74) commented that the severity of hierarchical restrictions on action varies, but everywhere spontaneity yields to official channels and procedures developed in the complexities of power. What Pranger is not mentioning is that power is a dangerous element, and that once some people cling to it, they misuse it.

The reason that politicians and government are unable to deliver on their promises because there is a lack of funds, is irrelevant. What is relevant is what is being done by politicians and government bodies to involve the citizens and ensure that they become part of the broader government decision-making processes. Transparency is regarded as an important key factor in a democracy: A politician or public representative may simply go to the people and say government does not have enough funds, therefore, essential services cannot be delivered. However, if the whole process of government is not transparent and inclusive, it will be difficult for those people to believe that statement, because they may not be sure if it is true or not. Representation may rightly be regarded as a form of democracy where ordinary citizens govern themselves, as some will argue, but in practice representation may be a form of suppressing people's views. This simply means that once public representatives have been elected into positions of power, they tend to disregard or

ignore the opinions and views of the people who elected them, thus creating a politics of power rather than a politics of participating. In the process citizens become alienated or estranged from authoritarian political decisions created in elaborate governmental structures; an alienation leading first to powerlessness and then to political incapacity.

The potent force of representative democracy clearly places its governmental form within the politics of power. As long as the participating area can intrude itself into the area of vital decisions, one can speak of some balance between power and participation. Where participation becomes irrelevant to the most vital decisions, then the politics of power has clearly won the day. The latter exigency, unfortunately, is now occurring everywhere even within the context of representative democracy. Pranger (1968:94) was probably right when arguing that voting provides the main political cement, the strongest bond of obligation, between governors and governed in democracy. However, voting may be competitive, equal and so forth, but still relatively meaningless in terms of how it affects political objects and how it satisfies political expectations among citizens.

Distance, space, communication and choice, as Pranger puts it, are variables that affect participation. But before agreeing with this statement, it is necessary to examine how these variables affect participation (Pranger, 1968:95). According to Pranger (1968) the distance between governors and governed is usually taken to mean geographical separation of representatives and constituencies. In other words an elected representative may choose to live in another area far from his/her constituency, which has become a trend lately in South Africa. A ward councillor, for example, might move from a township to a suburb in town. Such moves separate the local residents from their representatives. It should be pointed out that there is nothing wrong with people, including public representatives, exercising their choice

by living where they wish; but the difficulty is that elected public representatives are elected on the basis that they do, or ought to, represent and promote the interests and views of the people that they represent. On top of this they are expected to know all the problems of the areas they represent. Therefore, how on earth are elected public

representatives able to know the problems in their areas if they are not part of the community any more, let alone calling ward meetings and having time to attend community meetings. The second variable is space, which refers to the amount of room, in relative terms, given to participation and power within a political culture (Pranger, 1968:95). Some people may find it difficult to understand how space could affect participation. One is led to believe that space in this instance means an opportunity given to the public to voice views or opinions concerning issues of importance that have a direct effect on them or their communities. In many instances ordinary citizens are not given such an opportunity to say what they have to say or at least give an opinion on various community issues. Public representatives normally use their intuition or consult only a few people when making important policy decisions.

The third variable is communication which in this instance relates to socialisation and education; and at the same time socialisation is related to power and education to participation.. A further argument is that educated people are able to communicate with politicians and “powerful” office bearers because they meet each other frequently at social gatherings or functions or the politicians are likely to ask for opinions from educated people, of whom some are considered experts on social or political issues. Also, the opinions of educated people are likely to be valued more than that of ordinary people.

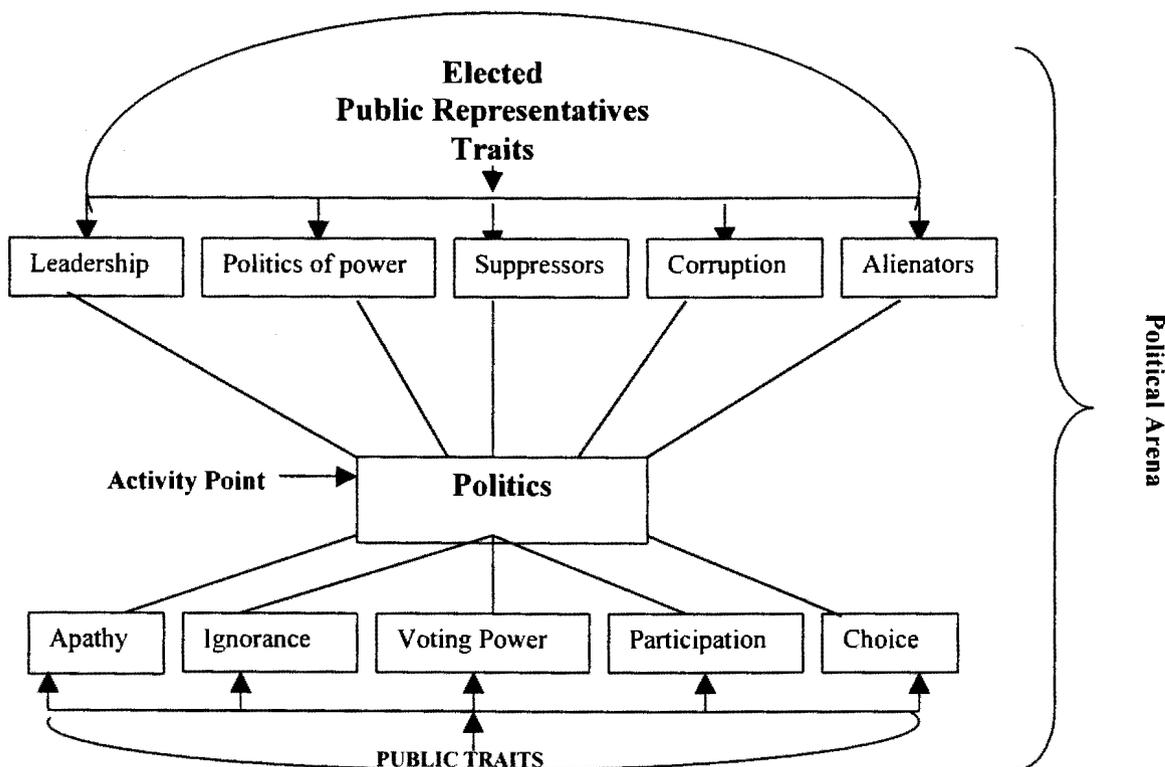
The fourth and last variable is choice. It is said that the only meaningful choices by an electorate encourage a true responsibility of leaders to followers. A choice with meaning is one where a voter can follow his candidate into public office and affect his or her policy decisions. Some might argue that the latter is accomplished by voters as members of plural interest groups rather than strictly as voters, and thus democracy is preserved (Pranger,1968:95).

Emanating from the arguments above, the sketch below (**figure 5**) shows the factors that characterise the attitudes and behaviour of the elected representatives and the public. These factors may be the dividing elements between the public and the

elected public representatives and they may prevent ordinary citizens from taking part in politics or participation processes.

Figure 5 below also illustrates clearly that because of politics both the public representatives and the public can develop certain traits that may distance each party from another, but on the contrary this may enhance or discourage public participation. If, for example, some of the public representatives, after being elected, develop a tendency to ignore the views and opinions of the ordinary people when decisions are to be made, then they would be characterised as suppressing the views of the people and alienating them. They may also be seen to be exercising a politics of power. At the same time if they squander public funds, they would be characterised as corrupt public representatives, hence the issue corruption. On the other hand if citizens, for example, exercise their choice not to participate in politics or not, they would be characterised as being apathetic or ignorant.

FIGURE 5: POLITICS OF POWER.



Source: Edwin Mokgwatsana)

In a democracy, citizens as participators are expected to be in control and fully involved in the political process and any other governmental process that has a direct

effect on their welfare. On the other hand elected public representatives are expected to show a strong leadership that will persuade the people to participate and guide them towards effective governance and better life for all. Failure to participate in these processes suggests that citizen governance is not possible.

4.9 NATURE OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

There are different views on the nature of community representatives, especially in different political systems. However, some would agree that any community representative has a responsibility to represent the views and promote the interests of the community, since direct participation may be difficult to realise under certain circumstances. Conceptually too, direct democracy is a basic form of democracy. The idea of representative democracy implies representatives who “take the place of” or “are present instead of others”. Representative democracy is therefore a virtue of the meaning of the term, a “substitute” for something else, and this something else can only be direct democracy. A question that could be asked about this ‘substitute’ is whether the reason for obedience that holds in a direct democracy also holds in a representative democracy.

There are, however, difficulties in this notion of representation; doing as those the representative represents would have done. If the citizen, for example, wants something (say, lower taxes) which the representative knows to be incompatible with other things the citizen wants (more tarred roads); but the citizen does not appreciate this incompatibility, what is the representative to do? The citizen, if he/she were present, would vote for both lower taxes and more tarred roads, but the representative can hardly do this. Edmund Burke (cited in Singer, 1973) once told his electors that, “if governments were a matter of “will” upon any side, yours (electorate) without question, ought to be superior, but government and legislation are matters of reason and judgement” (Singer, 1973:108). Burke’s view is that a member of parliament or local authority, once elected, is free to exercise his or her own judgement independently. The electors in this view are voting for a person they think will make the best decisions, rather than for a person who will express or promote their own interests. Singer (1973:34) believes that if the representatives, after being elected,

were to act in a manner contrary to the way they had led those who elected them to believe they would act, the obligation created by participation would no longer hold. Thus, assuming people voted for a representative who said he/she would vote for proposals X,Y,Z, and the representative votes against proposal X,Y,Z, the people may well maintain that their votes were obtained by a kind of fraud, and that they are therefore under no obligation to accept the outcome.

4.10 NEED FOR INFORMED PUBLIC

The importance of the individual in a community cannot be overemphasised. The fact that a government is not the only organisation for solving problems in our communities confirms the importance of individuals. Sooner or later efforts to solve problems involving large numbers of people bring most organisations or individuals into contact with one or more agencies of state or local government. Therefore, without an informed public, the constitution is unlikely to serve as an adequate check on the abuse of power. Many would agree that the public must learn the rules and insist that they be followed. Moreover, when a significant portion of the public pays attention to and remembers the promises of the candidates and reminds them occasionally what they promised to do or not to do, then constitutional government is protected.

Stouffe, Orpheus and Bland (eds.) (1996:29) were probably right when they said "that all of us as people must know at least something and all of us must be prepared to vote the 'rascals' out when it seems appropriate." In short, if no one attends the open meetings, reads the open records, consults the free press or makes themselves heard, government officials, and for that matter people with a lot of political power can operate pretty much as they please. What one likes about the American political system is that, despite mounting concerns about apathy supported by low and falling voter turnouts, the desire on the part of particular segments of the citizens to participate in both public and private sector activities affecting their welfare is not dormant.

Participation in government is most direct and most frequent at the local level. Governments of higher levels (states), the federal government and regional organisations inevitably have relied much more heavily upon representative mechanisms; and local governments have moved more to this form of democracy as they have grown in size. The American tradition in direct participation in government has been strong and states have provided for it within the local government structures. They created and have adopted it in various ways in their own operations (Bennett, 1986:96).

Currently some thirty one different forms of participation are being used by one or more segments of the USA population in their contacts with government (Bennet,1986:96). These are geared to meeting one or more of the following objectives:

- Giving information to citizens;
- Getting information from and about the citizens;
- Improving public decisions, programmes, projects and services;
- Enhancing acceptance of public decisions, programmes, projects and services;
- Supplementing agency work;
- Altering political power patterns and allocations of public resources;
- Protecting individual and minority group rights and interests; and
- Delaying or avoiding the making of different public decisions.

While few can object to the goal of involving citizens in governmental decision-making, the procedures used to encourage this interaction are subject to numerous criticisms including the following:

- They are often time consuming and costly and sometimes they yield little by way of tangible results;
- Citizens who are drawn to the citizen participation processes are not truly representative of the general citizenry. They tend to represent merely special interests or concerns;
- By instituting citizen participation procedures, the government fulfils a desire for more citizen involvement; yet in many cases procedures are implemented in a “pro-forma” manner encouraging little real participation; and

- Citizen participation procedures may undermine the representative system already in place where people elect officials who presumably speak and act for them (Dalton, 1988:126).

Taking the above points into account, it should be pointed out that providing simpler and clearer decision processes, more adequate training of citizens and officials involved in the participation process, better staff and technical assistance and economic assistance or incentives for participation can or might improve the participation, but at a cost. More of the affected persons could participate in governmental decision-making processes, and this could result in a greater understanding of the processes of local government and creating a greater capability to enter into a create and constructive analogue. It has already been established that the main task of a municipal councillor is to transmit the views of the electorate to the council, to debate those views and to make authoritative decisions for the local government community concerned (Dalton, 1988:127). However, on top of municipal councillors being accountable and responsible for their actions, they also have a fiduciary responsibility that has four facets:

- Informatory - to give information to the people at all times;
- Explanatory - explain policy to the electorate;
- Amendatory - admission of error and amending the mistake; and
- Resignatory - resign if required to, especially if policy went totally wrong or if they committed criminal offences.

There is no doubt that information plays an important role in citizen governance. Citizens are not able to participate actively and meaningfully if they do not have enough information at their disposal. Some municipal councillors may argue that it is not their duty or an obligation to knock on every residents' door asking what problems in the community that need to be addressed. If this is their argument, then those councillors forget that communication is a two way process. On one hand municipal councillors need information, to be able to transmit the views of the people they represent to the council and to make informed and appropriate decisions on behalf of the community. On the other hand the local residents need to be informed of government activities and policy decisions, to enable them to actively

participate and judge such actions with an informed mind. Therefore, it is required that both municipal councillors and the public must make an effort to contact each other and become informed.

4.11 FACILITATING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Although certain issues of public participation have been exhausted to a certain extent, there are others that still need clarity. One such issue as far as public participation is concerned is: how public or community participation is to be facilitated and by whom? It may be taken for granted that since public representatives act on behalf of the community, therefore it is their responsibility to facilitate public participation. But it may also be argued that public representatives are not the only role-players in the political process and governance. It must also be taken into account that participation in governmental affairs or the administrative process may assume the form of individual or public participation. Individual participation relates to the effect of a decision on the individual; for example, the adjudicative process whereby an affected person may submit an objection to a rezoning application that may have an impact on his/her property, and present his or her case to the Town Planning Tribunal in question. Therefore, participation by the public at large may be of a more formal nature, relating to general administrative policy matters that affect the public interests.

Administrative efficiency and public participation are very often regarded as being in conflict; and although it should not be taken as read that public participation automatically excludes abuse of power, it appears to render administrative decisions more acceptable to the public generally. At present, public participation in South Africa is confined to elections, contracts and agreements, mediating, adjudication, investigation and consultation. Redford (1969:17) sees participation as one of the tenets of a democratic morality, which raises three problems, namely: (1) Who should participate? (2) The scope of participation? (which ranges from elections to single issues); and (3) The problem of the interests of the few, in particular during policy confrontations. In essence, the problem is one of a balance in the representation of interests of varied quantities. Responsiveness is the central theme

of democratic morality, but wisdom, tranquillity and order are compelling claims of political purpose (Redford, 1969:19). What is required in facilitating public involvement is that it should not be difficult for the public to participate in the governmental affairs and decision-making processes. Hill (1972:41) stated clearly that the participation argument is not just about consultation, but also about power and its distribution. Craythorne (1997:98) further suggests that what is really meant by public participation is allowing the public, if it wishes, to state in a general way what it thinks about some or other important policy or issue; and public consultation amounts to the process such as the means by which there is communication with the public on these issues.

Many people would agree that it may be concluded that public participation is concerned with communication and that it is more likely to come from the local authority itself, than to be requested spontaneously by some or all of the citizens in the area, unless the issue is a dramatic or highly politicised one. Craythorne (1997:98) further states that the problem of public participation is also strongly related to the problem of civic apathy. Furthermore, the next point relating to public participation is: what method can be used for facilitating public involvement? The answer to some extent depends on whether the local authority is merely seeking to convey information to its citizens, or whether it requires some answer from them. If it is the latter, then the means of giving the answer must be provided.

Craythorne (1997:99) believes that the following are some methods that could be used in public participation programmes:

- The institution of formal advisory boards concerning a facility such as a nature reserve. This enables diverse viewpoints to meet and discuss the issues concerned with the particular facility, but excludes those who are not interested;
- Social surveys of popular needs, opinions and attitudes. These have to be devised by market research experts, and are costly. However, they can be regarded as a useful check on technocrats who often have a captive audience and can impose their ideas on them;
- Requesting by advertisements and publicity in the media, interested persons or groups to make written representations or submissions on a particular topic;

- Forming a special committee and inviting persons or representative of groups to appear before it, so that the special committee can have the benefit of a wide spread of views before formulating any recommendations;
- In conjunction with any of the methods listed above, requesting ratepayers or civil associations, community organisations, chambers of commerce and industry to give the council their views; and
- Forming or encouraging the formation of area neighbourhood bodies to act as a link between the council and the broad mass of the citizens (Craythorne, 1997:100).

It may not be disputed that the role of communities is very important and that their involvement is necessary to legitimise the governmental policy decisions. However, the difficulty is how effectively local citizens should be encouraged to get involved and how far should they be involved. The methods listed above may not be adequate or appropriate under certain circumstances to get local citizens involved in the government policy and decision-making processes. In other instances the needs of communities differ in context and nature. Some communities are propelled by certain issues, which may be regarded as crucial or threatening to their welfare or immediate environment. In another community, those issues may not be as important and crucial. So it is very important that such methods or mechanisms be designed to encourage or facilitate public participation or involvement in government affairs and that they should be in line with the needs and interests of the particular communities.

4.12 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Indeed, it might be argued that many people are simply users of services rather than participants. Undoubtedly there are variations in people's willingness and ability to become involved in political discussion. The question of when people should get involved and participate in the affairs of local government is an important one. In many instances residents often accuse the local authorities of ignoring them when they approach the latter with genuine problems, and of doing nothing to uplift their living conditions in their respective areas. On the other hand local authorities may blame residents for being ignorant and unwilling to participate in activities of

government. These are some of the wrangles experienced on a daily basis by both residents and most local authorities. To say there are no problems being experienced as far as public participation and civic apathy are concerned is an understatement.

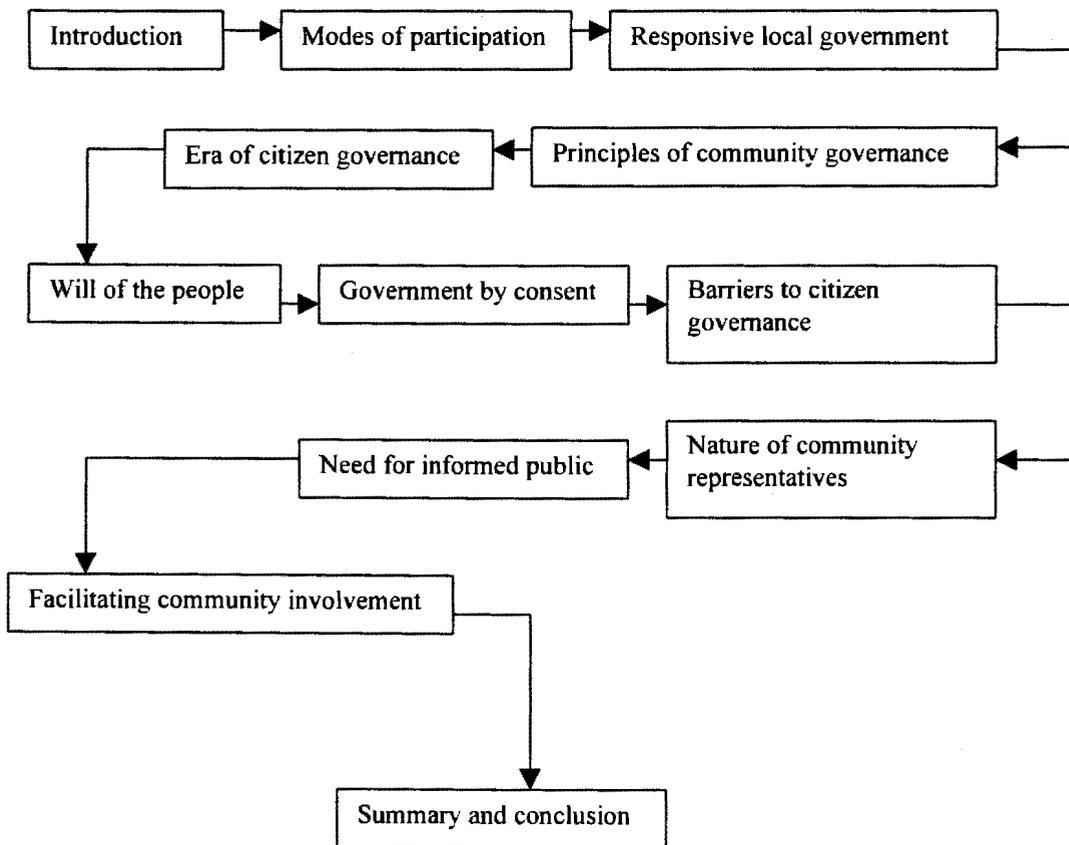
The argument is that low levels of popular participation of citizens in political, policy and decision-making processes are the *de facto* expressions of a preference for non-involvement. In fact, it is suggested that modern institutional structures of government actually frustrate attempts by citizens to become involved in a decision-making process. This actually means that as much as communities are being represented the nature of public representation should also be flexible to allow much active public participation in local government affairs or activities. The other important factor highlighted in this chapter is the need for information. This is important in the sense that information plays an important role in facilitating public participation, because if residents are not informed about public meetings, for example, they will not participate. But if they are constantly invited to those meetings, they may develop an interest to participate more in community structures and in local government affairs.

Facilitating community involvement is not an easy task, but it is an important exercise that needs to be fulfilled by all public representative or community leaders. So the role of citizens in communities cannot be emphasised enough, because without citizens governments cannot be conceived. People make governments. This supports the point that it should not be difficult for the public to participate in governmental affairs and decision-making processes.

People need to know that their input is important and will be considered in making any decision, which also improves and encourages greater public participation. As earlier stated in this study, many people feel isolated by their local authorities when it comes to involvement in the policy and decision-making processes, thus they feel that getting involved in government affairs is a waste of time. There are, however, many theories about what exactly constitute public participation and when and how citizens should get involved in the government activities or processes mentioned above.

Many people would agree that getting many as possible involved in the local government policy and decision-making processes is ideal, but how to achieve this ideal situation is a different matter altogether. The mechanisms used by many local authorities to encourage public participation proves to be not effective, because many citizens claim that often they are not contacted or invited to participate in the affairs of their local authority.

Outline of Chapter Four



CHAPTER FIVE: CIVIC APATHY: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Before entering into the interpretation of the research findings, it is imperative at this stage to point out again that the aim of this dissertation is to establish the roots of civic apathy in local government; or in simple terms, to find out why many South-African citizens are not interested in participating in the affairs and activities of local government. The other purpose is to validate the primary hypothesis³. The occurrence of civic apathy suggests that there is non-participation. Therefore, one cannot research civic apathy in its entirety, without referring to public participation to a large extent. This is because the evaluation of public participation recognises the political nature of the participation process and reflects in the way the evaluation itself is conducted, and the importance on enabling different voices to be heard. A survey was conducted using questionnaires as a tool to test the hypothesis³ (see **addendum for sample**). As has been highlighted in this study, the purposes of public participation are not just concerned with the achievement of service or policy outcomes, but also relate to social exclusion and social cohesion and the achievement of democratic renewal.

Some forms of public participation are intended to provide an opportunity for any citizen to take part in local government activities. Hence, public meetings and citizen's juries are intended to provide opportunities for citizens in a wide range of circumstances to become involved, although public meetings depend on people deciding to take part or not. The question is whether the local government is accessible to all people? If not, frustration and helplessness may be the order of the day, as a result of exclusion.

³ Civic apathy is a phenomenon intensified by ignorance and a feeling of powerlessness and frustration on the part of the electorate.

5.2 Stratified Sampling

A random stratified sampling was used in this study to ensure representation. Respondents were randomly drawn from selected areas within the Northern Metropolitan Local Council area of jurisdiction, and the units of analysis were South Africans, both males and females, over the age of eighteen (18) years. Data on the employment status of respondents was also gathered to measure if unemployment and unprofessional persons were more hostile and negative toward the local government than professional persons (**see addendum**). By professional persons, one means persons with tertiary education and employed in professions such as nursing, engineering, teaching, etcetera, or to express this aim differently, whether educated persons (professionals) participate in local government affairs and politics more than non-professionals and unemployed persons? The other focus was to measure if more young people participate in politics or affairs of local government than older persons.

5.3 Pilot Study

On February 7, 2000 a pilot study was conducted, and 30 questionnaires were issued out randomly to individuals in all five zones in the Northern Metropolitan area (Johannesburg); 28 questionnaires were realised after two weeks. Thereafter, 500 questionnaires were issued to respondents at schools, libraries and work places in each zone (**see addendum**). Municipal councillors, civic and ratepayers associations were also used to distribute questionnaires. The reason for using municipal councillors, civic and ratepayers associations was that they were in contact with the communities on a regular basis through meetings and other forms. A group interview was also conducted with the participants in Zone five. The reason was that most of the people in Zone five could not read or write, so they preferred to be interviewed. 304 questionnaires were realised with a 60.8 response rate.

5.4 Research Method

The survey was conducted through issuing questionnaires randomly to respondents in each zone; the unit of analysis was South African individuals, 18 years and older. The population sampled was stratified according to the five zones and the population number within the jurisdiction of the Northern Metropolitan Local Council area in Johannesburg (see addendum). Seventy five percent of data was obtained through literature study, the main sources were books, both local and international, the Internet and journals. Articles and official documents were also used. The emphasis was on analysis, and providing a theoretical background to the global and local experiences of civic apathy, public participation and citizen involvement in local government activities. However, the aim and final analysis in this study is to establish the cause(s) of civic apathy, although only in South Africa, yet with generic application value elsewhere in the world.

In many instances it is argued that the youth is less interested in politics nor in government activities, because they don't think that the government serves their interests. Table 2 below, however, shows that the youth is willing to participate in any form of government activity as long there are given an opportunity to express themselves in terms of voicing to the government what they need as youth. This point was expressed when young people were interviewed in this study. By youth the researcher is referring to people between the age 18-30. The issue may not be that the youth is apathetic when they fail to participate, such as in voting in the elections or in any other government activity, but they may be dissatisfied with the way their needs as youth are being addressed by the government. Many young people, especially black youth, highlight the fact that they have sacrificed to go to school, yet they are still without jobs after they have finished their tertiary education. However, many young people fail to distinguish between the role of the National government and of a local government. They believe that any form of government is responsible for everything.

The roots of civic apathy in local government

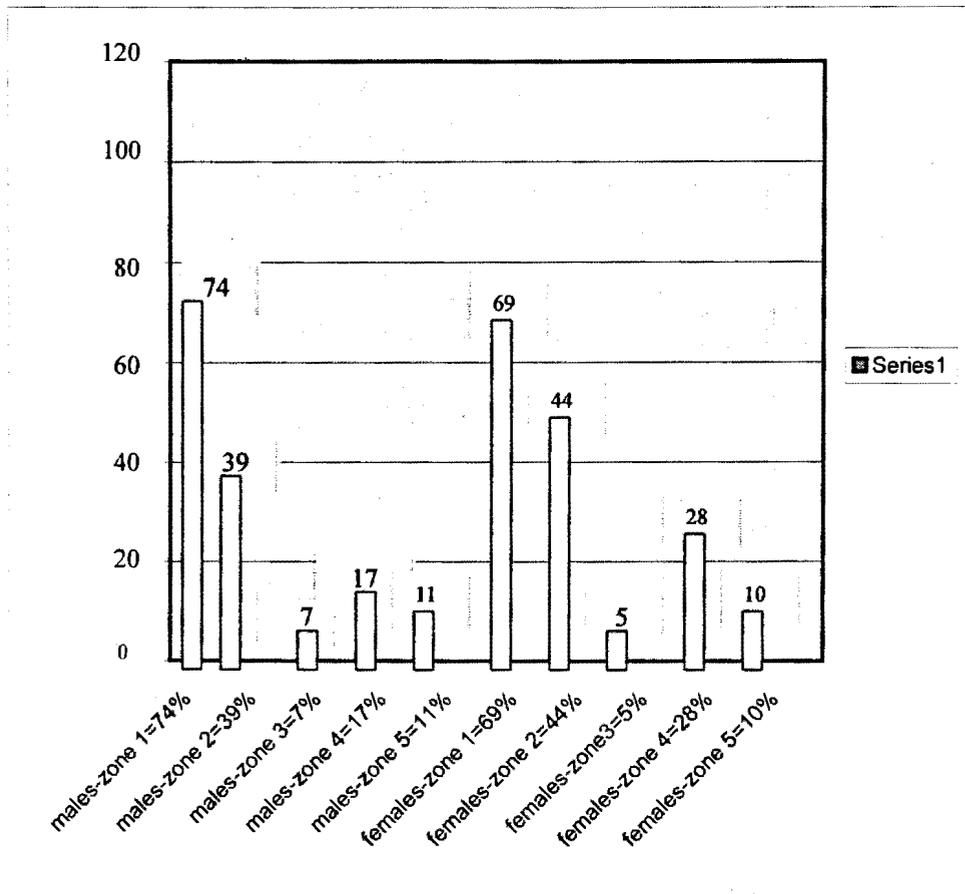
Variables	Zone 1			Zone 2			Zone 3			Zone 4			Zone 5		
Males	74			39			7			17			11		
Females	69			44			5			28			10		
<u>Age</u>	18-30	31-40	41-100	18-30	31-40	41-100	18-30	31-40	41-100	18-30	31-40	41-100	18-30	31-40	41-100
	61	49	33	36	29	18	2	4	6	14	14	17	6	3	12
<u>Occupation</u>															
Professional	34			50			8			34			3		
Non-Professional	11			6			1			3			9		
Unemployed	18			21			2			7			4		
Students	20			3			0			1			2		
Not specified	9			3			1			0			3		

Table 2

Table 2 above shows that this study is representative, although in terms of gender participation in all zones, the numbers are not equal, but the difference is nominal. It also shows that people of all ages have participated in this study, especially the youth. Also shown is the greater participation by professionals as compared to non-professionals, unemployed persons and students.

The point made here is that as much as the youth has participated in this study, but it is often difficult for any other person to convince the youth that it is important for them to participate in local government activities so that they can contribute in improving service delivery where they live.

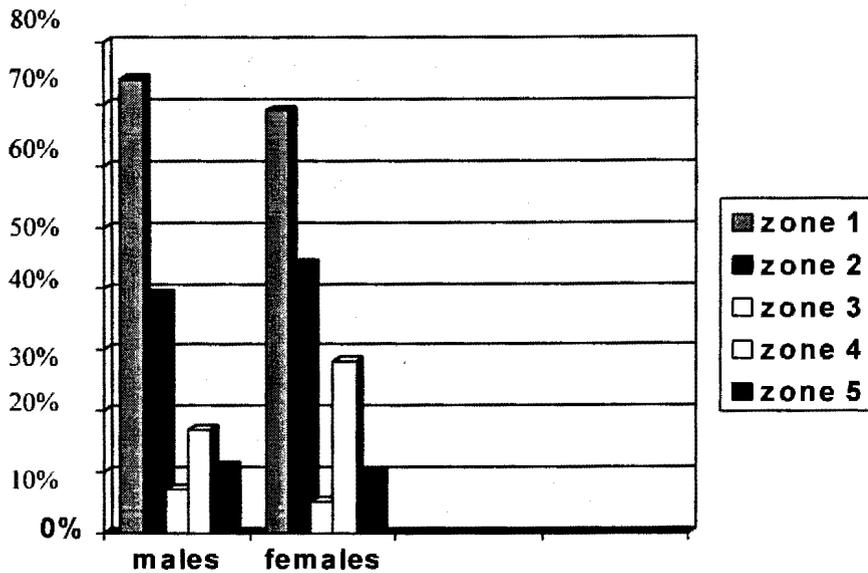
Graph 1: Gender Participation in each Zone



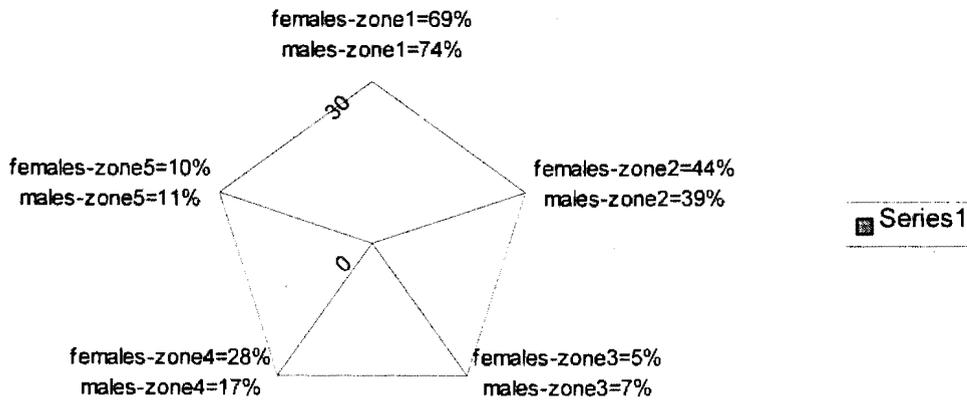
Graph 1 shows the gender participation in each zone. There is a perception that women often don't show a willingness to participate in exercises that involve politics and government matters. Graph 1, however, refutes this perception, showing a huge but not equal number of female participants as compared to males, especially in zone one. Nowadays women are indeed more and more becoming vocal and showing a greater interest in participating in local government matters.

Graph 2 below shows the percentages of participation for both males and females in each zone. The graph clearly shows where the majority of participants are. This is because zones one and two have the majority of people. Although females are in a majority in general, but they still participate less in politics and in matters of government.

Graph 2: Gender participation



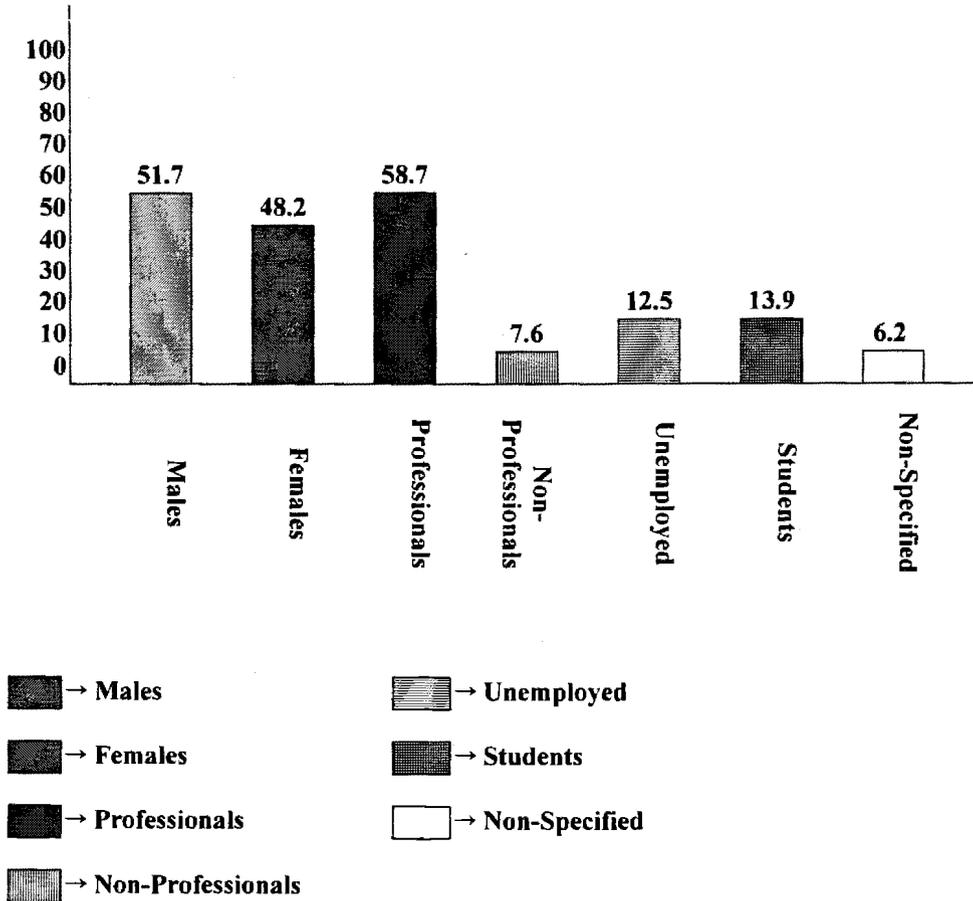
Graph.3: Radar Chart



The radar chart indicates where males and females participants in each zone are plotted. The chart does not necessarily change anything in terms of the pattern of participation of both males and females, but it reflects the axis of each zone to enable the reader to see the percentage difference in terms of participation between males and females on all zones mentioned above.

Graph four (4) shows the levels of participation in each zone, but in terms of gender, profession and employment status.

Graph 4: Participation in Zone 1



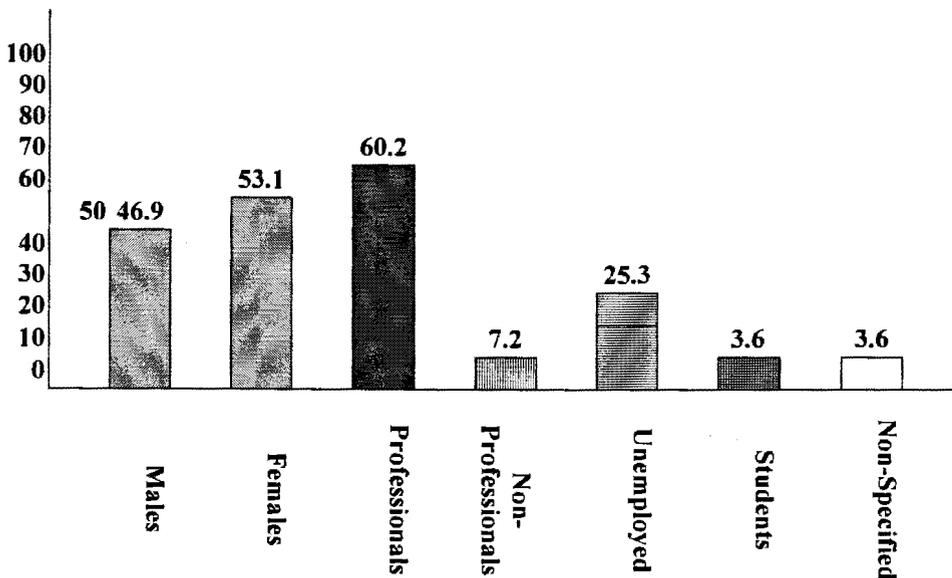
These graphs are based on the levels of participation in each zone. There is no much distinction between these graphs except for the fact that graph four (4) to eight (8) tells a story of the type of people who participated in this study. It has served a particular purpose to categorizing respondents according to their employment status and profession. This has shown that professional people had participated the most in this study, particularly in zone four (4) and three (3) as shown in graphs six (6) and seven (7).

Graph five (5) also shows that unemployed people in zone two had a large percentage in participation in this study. However, the perception is that the unemployed is often not

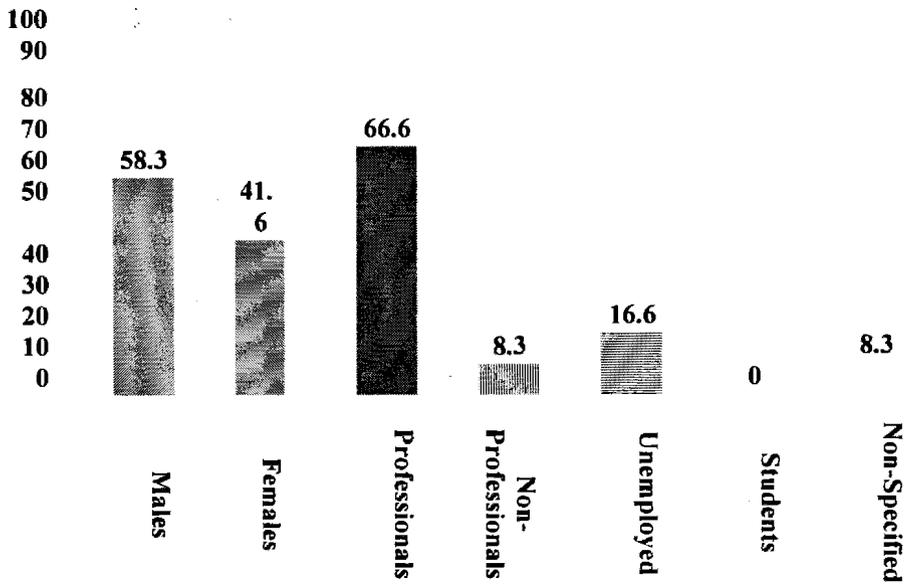
keen to participate in social issues because the majority of them are not educated and on the other hand most of them are concerned with getting employment rather than participating in issues with less or indirect impact on their financial being. This is a debatable statement but it has some validity.

Graphs five (5) six (6) seven (7) and eight (8) also show levels of participation in each zone, but in terms of gender, profession and employment status.

Graph 5: Participation in Zone 2

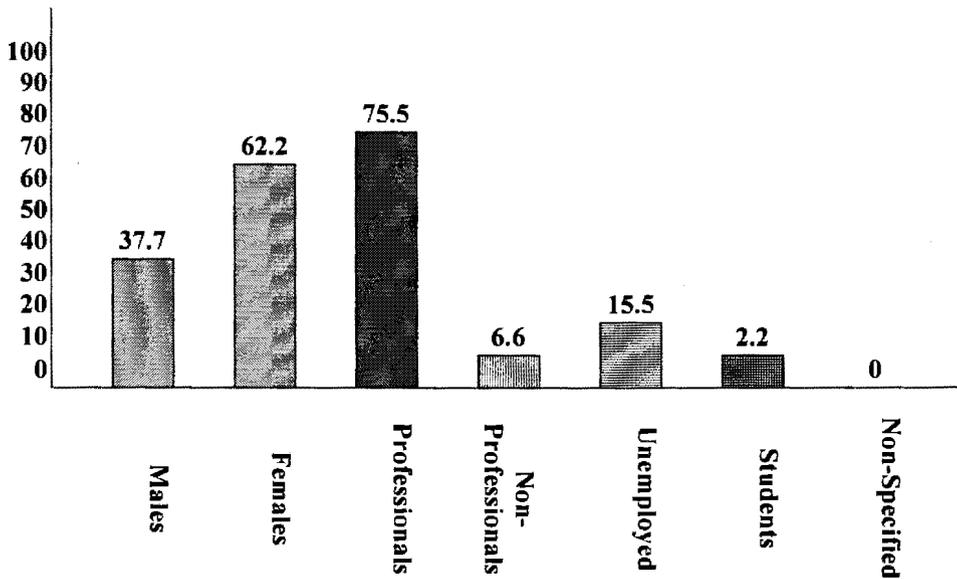


Graph 6: Participation in Zone 3

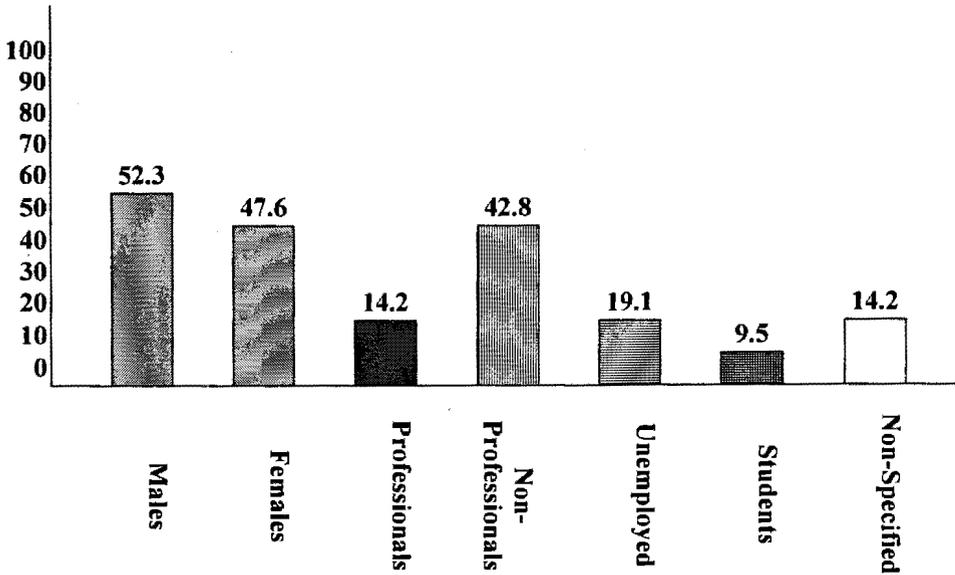


Graphs four (4) to eight (8) are self-explanatory in the sense that they show clearly the type of participants as reflected in Table 2 in this study.

Graph 7: Participation in Zone 4



Graph 8: Participation in Zone 5



5.5 Measurement

As a premise for this study, the necessity of local government was measured by asking respondents whether they thought local government is necessary. The assumption was that almost every adult knew what a local authority is. The relevance of the question asked in relation to measuring the levels of civic apathy in local government is that it forms the basis of this study, in the sense that if all the respondents answered by saying local government is not necessary, then they might not see the need or necessity to participate in the affairs or activities of local government. On the other hand, people who think local government is necessary may justify the need to participate in local government structures. Furthermore, there may be people who don't know the difference between national, provincial and local governments as spheres of government. They may think that there is only one type of government. The fact that some people don't understand why there should be local government elections when they have already voted for a national government confirms the above statement.

5.6 Univariate Analysis

An univariate analysis was used in this study to gauge the necessity of local government in the new democratic South Africa. Respondents were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to whether it is necessary to have a local government in South Africa.

5.6.1. Results

Table 3
Agreement with the (statement)

	Frequency	%	% excluding those who did not answer
It is necessary	275	90.5	91.9
It is not necessary	24	7.9	8.1
Did not answer	5	1.7	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

Table 3 shows that 91.9% of the respondents, excluding those who did not answer, thought it is necessary to have a local government. Table 4 below shows that 88.9% of the 266 respondents felt that people should participate in the affairs and activities of local government. Those who did not answer were excluded.

Table 4
Agreement with the following questions

	Frequency	%	% excluding uncertain
People should participate in local government	266	87.5	88.9
Don't think people should participate in local government	33	10.8	11.1
Did not answer/uncertain	5	1.7	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

Table 5

**Is ignorance a cause of civic apathy?
(agreement with the following questions)**

	Frequency	%	% excluding uncertain
Ignorance is the cause of civic apathy	212	69.7	79.5
Ignorance is not the cause of civic apathy	55	18.1	20.5
Did not answer/uncertain	37	12.2	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

Table 5 indicates that 79.5% of the 267 respondents excluding the uncertain category, thought that ignorance is a cause of civic apathy in local government. The respondents who answered that ignorance is not a cause of civic apathy were further asked to indicate what they thought a cause of civic apathy is. Some of the responses are summarised as follows:

- Civic apathy is caused when communities are not informed of what is happening around them, and of what the local authority is doing in terms of development and plans;
- When local authorities do not meet the expectations of the communities, civic apathy emerges;
- Lack of communication between municipal councillors, local authorities and the local residents is the cause of civic apathy;
- People are too lazy to participate and to help themselves, hence they are apathetic;
- Lack of knowledge about local authorities is the cause of civic apathy;
- People always make excuses when they have to participate and be involved in the activities of local authorities;
- When people are ignored by municipal councillors most of the time, except when elections are looming, this drives people to be apathetic;
- People have become apathetic because of the false promises and selfishness of municipal councillors and council officials;
- The incompetence of council officials has driven people to be apathetic;
- Lack of commitment from municipal councillors to involve the community has driven people to civic apathy;

- The poor performance of municipal councillors has made local residents to lose interest in participating in community activities and affairs of local authorities;
- People feel alienated and hopeless, hence they don't participate;
- People do not want to participate when municipal councillors are no longer trusted;
- People have lost interest because decisions affecting them are taken in council meetings without giving feedback;
- Power struggles in the local authorities have made people lose interest in local government;
- People are not given a chance to make inputs in decision-making and policy-making processes;
- Despondency is a cause of civic apathy;
- Lack of service delivery is the cause of civic apathy;
- Some people don't have time to participate in these processes;
- Illiteracy is a cause of civic apathy;
- Bureaucracy and red tape are preventing people from getting involved. So people see involvement as a waste of time, and no one wants to waste his or her time;
- Little confidence in many local authorities is contributing to civic apathy;
- Paying lip-service to community concerns is pushing people away from the local authority;
- Too much talk and no action has made people to be apathetic;
- Lack of education is the root cause of civic apathy;
- People know nothing about local government, hence they are not interested.

Besides the fact that 79.5% of respondents thought that ignorance is the cause of civic apathy, other factors had to be evaluated. The findings also suggest that lack of knowledge about how local authorities function, and poor education is actually the root cause of civic apathy. However, in the light of the responses given above, it is clear that ignorance is not entirely the cause of civic apathy. This is because many respondents blamed the local authority and local municipal councillors for the lack of interest in and participation of local residents in the affairs or activities of local government. Some of the responses above

suggest that citizens are willing to participate, but that they are being alienated and ignored by the local authority. Some also suggest that citizens are not being involved when important decisions are made that directly affect them, hence they end up feeling frustrated and hopeless through these processes. Therefore, it is necessary that these findings should be further probed in order to be conclusive.

Table 6

Agreement with whether a local authority is providing a good service

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer
The local authority is providing good service	88	28.9	30.1
The local authority is not providing good service	205	67.4	69.9
Refused to answer	11	3.7	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

Respondents were asked whether their local authority was providing good service in their areas, and 30.1% of the 293 respondents, excluding the refused to answer category, as shown in Table 6, felt that the local authority was providing a good service, as opposed to the 69.9 respondents who thought it was not providing good service. It seemed that those who thought the local authority was not providing a good service tend to lose confidence in the local authority and municipal councillors alike; and they are not willing to pay for services, because they believe that they are not getting value for money.

Table 7 shows that 45.5% of the 248 respondents, excluding the “refused to answer” category, said they were members of local community structures and 54.5% respondents, excluding the “refused to answer”, said they actively participate in local community structures. The probability is that one could be a member of a local community structure, just like being a political party member, but still become less active or inactive participant.

Table 7

Active membership and participation in local community structures

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer
Active membership in local community structure	113	42.3	45.5
Active participation in community structures	135	50.6	54.5
Refused to answer	19	7.1	n/a
Total	267	100%	100%

Table 7 also indicates the probability that local residents may be active participants in community structures, such as civic associations, without necessarily being members. By active participation one means regular and consistent involvement and participation in these structures. If it is only once or twice, then it does not justify the term active participation. Table 8 below indicates whether local residents have any community representatives in their areas who represent them in local council meetings. The assumption is that every ward in a metropolitan area has representatives that represent the views and interests of the communities they serve in the local council. By community representatives one refers to ward councillors, otherwise known as *de facto* public representatives.

Table 8

Indication of presence of community representatives in the local council

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
(Yes) have community representatives in the council	180	59.2	61.8
(No) don't have people representing us in the council	111	36.5	38.2
Refused to answer/don't know	13	4.3	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

Table 9

Indication if residents knew their ward councillors

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
(Yes) I know my ward councillor	153	50.4	52.2
(No) I don't know my ward councillor	140	46	47.8
Refused to answer/don't know	11	3.6	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

One would have expected that those respondents who answered that they knew their ward councillors would also have known that they have community representatives, representing them in the council. So the numbers would tally. However, the probability is that some of respondents they did not know, or are sure they did know, their ward councillors. The other probability is that maybe some of the respondents didn't know what role ward councillors were playing in their community.

Table 10

Satisfied that community views and problems put forward by community representatives are being heard and satisfactorily attended to by the local council and that community interests are well served by the local authority

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
Satisfied	87	28.6	30.2
Not satisfied	201	66.1	69.8
Refused to answer	16	5.3	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

It is clear from table 10 above that 69.8% of the 288 respondents, excluding the "refused to answer" category, said they were not satisfied with the local authority in the way their community problems and interests are dealt with. Respondents were further asked to explain why and what could be the reasons why their problems or interests are not attended to or well served by their local authority. Some of the responses can be summarised as follows:

- The local authority was not responsive;

- Residents are not always included when important decisions, affecting the residents, are taken; and communities are disregarded by the local authority;
- Residents are always ignored and their demands are put aside;
- There are many things that the council was failing to attend to, such as refuse removal, repairing water leaks, seeing to sewerage blockage and constructing proper roads;
- Residents are not included anywhere;
- Nothing has changed in the townships;
- Only promises, but no action;
- The poor people are not considered, but only the rich;
- The local authority always says there is no money available when they have to attend to community needs;
- The local authority doesn't have a clue what the residents want;
- The local council and municipal councillors are isolated from the people they serve;
- Municipal councillors desert their constituencies once elected into power, by moving to the suburbs or town;
- Things are done without empowering the people;
- Not enough is done by the local authority;
- Some places/areas are given more priority than others;
- There is no working relationship between the local authority and the community;
- No one is showing any concern on the state of our township;
- There is no visible change in some areas;
- Municipal councillors don't work for the people, but themselves;
- A lot of money is being wasted on useless expenditure and projects that don't benefit the residents;
- There are no regular meetings to inform people of any developments going to take place or taking place in our areas;
- Service delivery has dropped dramatically;
- Important issues such as crime, roads are not attended to;
- How can the local authority deliver if municipal councillors don't call ward meetings?
- There are a lot of delays when a local authority has to do something;

- Local authority’s employees lack training and motivation. That is why they are not efficient and there is no visible service delivery; and
- Wrong priorities are the order of the day.

It should be noted that these are only summaries of the responses given by respondents. Some of these responses, though based on what people see and feel about the effectiveness and efficiency of both the municipal councillors and the local authority, could be challenged by the local authority as not true. Some of these responses were further tested by asking respondents, for example, whether they normally receive responses concerning their demands or problems, from the local authority?

Table 11
Responses received from the Local Authority from time to time

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
Responses received from time to time	105	34.5	35.9
Nothing is received at all	187	61.5	64.1
Refused to answer		4	n/a
Total	12	100%	100%

It is clear from table 11 that 64.1% out of 292 respondents, excluding the refused to answer category, confirm the statement that the local council was not responsive. It is not clear under what circumstances the 35.9% of respondents did receive responses from the council and what the nature of their problems was. In table 12 below respondents were asked to indicate whether they were, or are ever, informed of projects taking place in their

areas. To further test these responses, respondents were asked if their ward councillors ever call ward meetings and whether local residents do attend these meetings if called? Table 12 clearly shows that 37.6% of the 220 respondents excluding the “refused to answer” category, said ward councillors don’t call regular ward meetings and 37.2 respondents said they don’t attend ward meetings because they are not informed, if there are any. Only 11.7% of the respondents said ward meetings are held on a regular basis. The idea could, therefore, be dismissed that it is not true that ward meetings are not held at

all in these areas; but the problem could be that residents are not properly informed of these meetings, hence many are not aware of such meetings.

Table 12

Indication if regular ward meetings are held

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
Regular ward meetings are called	69	11.4	11.7
No regular ward meetings are called	220	36.2	37.6
Attend ward meetings	78	12.8	13.3
Don't attend ward meetings	218	36.8	37.2
Refused to answer	23	3.8	n/a
Total	608	100%	99.8%

Round-up error = 2%

Note that the frequency was multiplied by two: because questions were asked to the same respondents, two sets of responses were received, which were expected to be different in some instances. The probability is that some respondents may have known or been informed about a ward meeting called for a particular date, but never attended that meeting. Given the responses in Table 12, it was necessary to gauge further if local residents were in fact willing and interested to engage with their local authority into discussions to resolve community problems and other issues that might be affecting them.

Table 13 below shows that 84.1% of the 208 respondents, excluding the “refused to answer” category, indicated that they were interested in having discussions with their local authority to resolve or help to resolve issues affecting them as a community, and 15.9% said they were not interested. This indicates that there could be a problem with the

approach or mechanisms used to encourage public participation, or that there is no effort made by the local authority concerned to encourage public participation.

Table 13

Interest shown by residents in discussing community issues with their local authority

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
Interested	255	83.8	84.1
Not interested	48	15.8	15.9
Refused to answer	1	0.4	n/a
Total	304	100%	100%

One of the factors suspected to be the root cause of civic apathy is the lack of awareness and knowledge amongst many local residents about how local authorities function. To test this statement, respondents were, therefore, asked if they knew or were aware of the functions performed by their local authority and how it operates. They were further asked if they were interested in knowing how the council operates, in the case that they didn't know.

Table 14

Indications whether residents knew how their council functions and whether they were interested to know how it functions

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
Knows and aware	141	23.1	23.7
Did not and not aware	154	25.3	25.9
Interested know to know	264	43.6	44.5
Not interested	34	5.6	5.7
Refused to answer	14	2.4	n/a
Total	608	100%	99.8%

Round-up error = 2%

As indicated in Table 14, 25.9% of the 154 respondents said they didn't know or were not aware of how a local authority operates, and 23.7% said they knew. However, 44.5% of the 265, excluding the refused to answer category, said they were interested to know how a local authority function. In comparing Table 13 with Table 14, it is clear that a large percentage of respondents are interested to discuss community issues or problems them with their local authority, and they are also interested to know how a local authority

functions or operates. This is an indication that many local residents want to understand the nature of the problems experienced by their local authority on a day-to-day basis. This

is a positive sign, considering that many local authorities are accused of failing to deliver proper services. So if residents are not aware of the problems encountered by these local authorities when they try to deliver services to them, they would constantly accuse the local authorities of failing to deliver services.

Respondents were further asked whether they thought it was necessary for residents or a community to participate in the local authority’s policy and decision-making processes? In response 90.3% of the 279 respondents, excluding the “refused to answer” category said it was necessary and 9.6% said it was not necessary.

Table 15

Necessity to participate in policy and decision-making processes

	Frequency	%	% excluding refused to answer/don't know
It is necessary	252	32.8	90.3
It is not necessary	27	8.9	9.6
Refused to answer	25	8.3	n/a
Total	304	100%	99.8%

Round-up error = 2%

90.3% of the respondents said it was necessary to participate in the local government policy and decision-making processes; it is therefore essential to further note the reasons given by the respondents in this regard. They are summarised as follows:

- People have a right to participate, irrespective of whether they are represented or not in these processes;
- To enable residents to get first hand information about new developments and projects in their areas;
- Residents should be given a chance to participate because they are affected by decisions taken by the local authority;
- Participation is very important, people’s voices must be heard;
- Active involvement and sharing of ideas ought to be a norm for every community, not only during elections;

- Residents are the ones who know what they want or don't want, so they must participate to contribute;
- Residents should get involved to have control over decisions concerning them;
- Municipal councillors don't care, therefore, they must get the people to participate and make suggestions and decisions that suit their daily lives;
- People should control the government because they voted for it;
- Residents should participate in order to make their views known to the council, and policies and decisions should be informed by the needs and values of the community;
- Citizens should participate in these processes to make improvements in service delivery and their quality of life in their respective communities;
- Positive participation by residents could benefit them;
- Municipal councillors tend to make unilateral decisions, that residents are not in agreement with, therefore, residents will own the decision-making process once involved;
- Residents should understand what is happening in their local authority's meetings through active participation;
- The involvement of the community could assist in solving local problems because they know better;
- Informed decisions would ensure proper service delivery;
- Views from residents could constructively develop municipal councillors and community at large;
- Public or community participation would ensure that everyone has a part to play and enable residents to realise their goals and objectives in a community; and
- Municipal councillors should be mandated by the people who voted for them.

Many of the respondents acknowledged that although ward councillors act as *de facto* public representatives, residents still have to participate or get involved in the policy and decision-making processes to ensure accountability, because many ward councillors were not doing as expected by the residents or communities. It is clear that most of the residents are willing to participate in the affairs of local government, but for other,

unknown reasons, they are not able to do so. To further test the above statement respondents were asked, in what way should they participate in these processes? The following responses were obtained:

- By regular invitation to ward and council's meetings;
- Attending ward meetings;
- Giving information to elected representatives to enhance proper governance;
- By constructively criticising council's actions and challenging their unfair decisions;
- Getting involved in community projects;
- Through voting;
- Submitting ideas, suggestions and opinions to the local Authority;
- Residents must be part of the policy and decision-making processes;
- Citizens must be allowed to give input in meetings; and
- Residents should be consulted more often.

The findings suggest that many local residents are willing and think it is necessary to participate actively in the affairs and activities of local government, but because they lack knowledge and education about the role of local government, they are unable to participate. One could conclusively say that ignorance is not a root cause of civic apathy, but that it intensifies civic apathy. The results also concurred with the hypothesis that civic apathy is a phenomenon intensified by ignorance and a feeling of powerlessness and frustration on the part of the electorate. In other words people tend to lose interest in government activities when they know that they cannot change decisions or policies made by politicians and public/government officials. They also become frustrated when their views and opinions are constantly being ignored by these politicians and public officials, and also when they are being isolated. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the roots of civic apathy consist of many factors and elements, which collectively can cause civic apathy. In other words there is no one cause of civic apathy, but there are many factors that contribute to the cause.

5.7 Study Limitations

It should be mentioned, however, that the measurement instrument used in this study had limitations in the sense that it did not enable the researcher to probe the respondents further about some of the responses they had given. On the other hand, it was not possible to code the responses given by respondents in Zone 5, who were interviewed in a group. The difficulty was that, because these respondents were illiterate, it was not possible to interview them one by one in order to obtain personalised views, but instead their views were to a larger extent influenced by the views and thoughts of others in the group. Thus, most of the responses were similar and general. So the measurement instrument used in this study did not provide much flexibility in probing for answers. However, these limitations do not suggest that this study is flawed in any way.

5.8 Eradicating Civic Apathy

The findings of this study call for the consideration of a way forward in addressing the root cause/s of civic apathy and eradicating civic apathy. But the question is, can civic apathy be eradicated? The answer to this question depends on adhering to all the requirements for public participation. Crosby, Kelly and Schaefer, (1986); Kathlene and Martin, (1991); Kweit and Kweit, (1981, 1987); Parsons, (1990) (*cited in the Bangkok Post, 2000:29*) pointed out that there is considerable evidence to suggest that efforts to increase public participation are not effective in many countries. They say some efforts appear to be ineffective because of poor planning or execution. Other efforts may not work because administrative systems that are based upon expertise and professionalism leave little room for participatory processes de Leon, (1992); Fisher, (1993); Forester, (1989); White and McSwain, (1993), cited in the *Bangkok Post, 2000:29*.

The findings of research done by King, Feltey and O'Neill in 1998 indicated that effective, or authentic, public participation implies more than simply finding the right tools and techniques for increasing public involvement in public decisions. Authentic public participation, that is, participation that works for all parties and stimulates interest and

investment in both administrators and citizens, requires rethinking the underlying roles of, and relationships between, administrators and citizens. Paralleling the increased practitioner interest in public participation, contemporary theorists have increasingly focused on participation in their theories of the role, legitimacy and definitions of the field in what some call “post-modern” times Frederickson, (1982); Stivers, (1990); Cooper, (1991); Farmer, (1995); Fox and Miller, (1995); Wamsley and Wolf, (1996), cited in the *Bangkok Post*, 2000:31.

In an attempt to find a way to overcome the problems of traditional models of public administration, some researchers call for shifts in the governance process. Stivers (1990:247) calls these changed relationships “active accountability”:

Administrative legitimacy requires active accountability to citizens, from whom the ends of government derive. Accountability, in turn, requires a shared framework for the interpretation of basic values, one that must be developed jointly by bureaucrats and citizens in real world situations, rather than assumed. The legitimate administrative state in other words, is one inhabited by active citizens.

As the Kettering Foundation study (1989:21) showed: an “undeniable tension” exists between the public’s right to greater involvement and the prerogative of public officials to act as administrative decision-makers. Citizens report feeling isolated from public administrative processes. Although they care about the issues facing their communities and the nation, citizens feel “pushed out” of the public process (Kettering Foundation, 1989). Thus citizens mistrust public officials and municipal councillors. The mistrust often leads to citizen cynicism or what Matthews (1994) calls an impotence that causes interest in participation to decline.

The participants in this study, public officials and citizens alike, agreed that participation in affairs of local government is necessary and desirable. Some respondents actually said that participation was “the necessary opportunity to be a part of something bigger than oneself, or part of one’s responsibility to one’s community”. Others said, “it is very important to have an opportunity to influence and to know that our influence has the

potential to make a difference". Most respondents agreed that the main problem with public participation as it is currently practised and framed is that it doesn't work. They believed that finding better ways to engender public participation will make it more meaningful for all involved. In some way public officials or administrators recognise the need for participation, but they cannot find some ways to fit the public into policy and decision making processes. As earlier mentioned, that citizens also believe that greater participation is needed, but they are rendered cynical or apathetic by vacuous or false efforts to stimulate public participation that ask for, yet discount, public input. However, there is hope that civic apathy can be eradicated.

The bone of contention, as Forester put it, is that in the context of conventional participation, the public official or administrator controls the ability of the citizen to influence the situation or the process. The administrative structures and processes are the politically and socially constructed frameworks within which the administrator must operate. These frameworks give the administrator the authority to formulate decisions only after the issue has been defined. Thus, the administrator has no real power to redefine the issue or to alter administrative processes to allow for greater citizen involvement Forester (1989:124).

An interesting fact, as illustrated by White and McSwain (1993:22) is that in the context of conventional participation the administrator plays the role of the expert. They also suggest that public participation within this context is structured to maintain the centrality of the administrator while publicly presenting the administrator as representative, consultative, or participatory. The citizen becomes the "client" of the professional administrator, ill equipped to question the professional's authority and technical knowledge. This process establishes what Fisher calls a "practitioner-client hierarchy" (1993: 165). In this falsely dualistic relationship the administrator is separated from the "demands, needs and values" of the people who he or she is presumed to be serving (de Leon, 1992:126). It should be mentioned that public participation in this context is ineffective and conflictual, and it happens too late in the process, that is, after the issues have been framed and most decisions have been made.

Therefore, rather than co-operating to decide how best to address issues, citizens are reactive and judgmental, often sabotaging administrators' best efforts. Many people would agree that authentic public participation should be a deep and continuous involvement in administrative processes with the potential for all involved to have an effect on the situation of governance. Authentic public participation could also be defined as "the ability and the opportunity for citizens to have an impact on the decision-making process". At another level, authentic public participation should be an on-going process, active involvement, not a one-shot deal, and definitely not just pulling the lever; needs to go out and reach out to every part of a community. The bottom line is that people need to know that their inputs are important and will be considered in making important decisions concerning their communities.

One would also concur that one of the keys for effective participation at the citizen and community level is for decision-makers to be interested; to really listen the people's needs. Roberts (1997) asserted that a critical step to maintaining people's trust is to demonstrate to them that they're being heard, and that their ideas are shaping whatever is developed by the local authority. To achieve all of this, according to Roberts (1997), citizens and administrators "need to have a partnership". This suggests that authentic participation requires that administrators focus on both process and outcome. That is, authentic participating means that the public is part of the deliberation process, from issue framing to decision-making. (Roberts, 1997: 136).

Many would also agree that from the very beginning people need to be involved. Roberts (1997:136) said that "if an administrator or ward councillor for that matter, goes to a community with a totally pre-set agenda, it doesn't work. Bringing people into a process too late does not work either". The idea is that citizens should be given the opportunity, prior to the decision being made, to provide input. This means that citizens must have enough time to process that information.

It can not be emphasised enough that addressing the limitations of current participatory efforts requires that public administrators become “interpretative mediators”. They must move beyond the technical issue at hand by involving citizens in “dialectical exchange”, Fisher, (1993: 183), and by engaging with citizens in discourse, Fox and Miller, (1995:87), rather than simply obtaining citizens’ input. Then, the public administrator becomes a co-operative participant, assisting citizens in examining their interests, working together with them to arrive at decisions, and engaging them in open and authentic deliberation.

Habermas (1975) said that a citizen offers a compelling summary of the tensions involved in public participations: “You have to get in there and ask their opinion,” he commented. What Habermas is illustrating here is that if public officials and municipal councillors are criticised for the poor job they are doing, then they should be willing to deal with the critique, that is, to put up with it. Of course some public officials don’t like criticism. They will naturally avoid it, and forget to go out into the field to attain democracy. Achieving democracy seems to lie at the core of why authentic participation is important. Research by Bhavani Krishna Iyer showed that the desire for participation is strong, and local residents or participants recognise its importance; but that there are barriers to effective public participation. Three categories of barriers were identified in the analysis: the nature of life in contemporary society, administrative processes, and current practices and techniques of participation (New Straits Times, February 2000).

The barriers stemming from the practical realities of daily life, concern the social class of citizens and include factors such as lack of transportation, time constraints, family structure and economic disadvantages. The findings in the Kettering Foundation report (1989:35) indicated that some people expressed a desire to participate more fully in their communities and in the activities of local government, but that the demands of day-to-day life got in the way. As one citizen said, “A lot of people are holding down two jobs and both people work in the family, and are too tired (from) trying to survive a day at a time”.

The second barrier consists of difficulties in government administrative processes. These barriers are paradoxical. While most people define citizen participation as desirable, any

participation seen as challenging the administrative status quo is blocked by the very public officials who desire more participatory processes. Some citizens who participated in this study felt that information is usually managed, controlled and manipulated, limiting their capacity to participate. As one citizen explained, "By the time we hear about issues it's too late to affect the decision". This suggests that citizens might hear about these issues if they read newspapers or if someone in their community is sufficiently on top of matters enough to know what is going on. But if this is not the case, citizens may regard public officials and municipal councillors as adversaries.

Accessibility is another important issue. Many agree that people who have been historically excluded from processes of decision-making and have scarce resources, need to be increasingly included in these processes. In other words, in order to have true public participation, those who have some authority have to be more active in bringing people, who have perceived themselves as excluded, into the process. It is clear from this study that many respondents wanted authentic participation, but many barriers restrict their active participation.

It is also clear from this study that there is a causal relationship between civic apathy and public participation. If public participation is absent, then civic apathy is the norm. However, one of the aims in this study is to determine the impact that civic apathy has on the South African democratic system, in particular at the local level. To a certain extent, the findings of this study indicate that South Africa still reflects a history of the diverse nature of organisations of public participation or civil society, which have been largely influenced by circumstances peculiar to societies experiencing a transition from exclusive authoritarian rule to inclusive democratic governance. One would also agree with Reitzes (1998:129) that South African cities still show a legacy of geographical fragmentation, racially defined institutional difference, inclusion and exclusion, different political cultures resulting, in part, from differential participation within and outside formal social, political and economic structures, and unequal resource distribution.

Friedman and Reitzes (1995:133) argued that, for South Africa to minimise civic apathy, democracy for ordinary citizens must not end with formal rights and periodic elections. The democratic order, which governments envisage must foster a wide range of institutions of participatory democracy in partnership with civil society, and facilitate direct democracy. The impact of civic apathy is that when democracy is not enforced, it is reduced to paper. Thus, the process of consolidating democracy poses a challenge to many governments, and to achieve this, the role of civil society is seen as a necessary feature of democratic societies since it provides a vehicle for citizens' participation in public life and a check on the exercise of state power. This statement suggests that one of the prime purposes of civil society is to "civilise" the democratic state, such as South Africa. The concern is to hold the state accountable but not take it over. This assumes the necessary conditions of an inclusive formal/legal constitutional framework; inclusive legal citizenship; inclusive representative democracy; formal legal equality of all individuals; and a legitimate government and state.

Moosa (1997), cited in Reitzes (1998:131), said the transition to fully democratic, accountable, efficient and effective developmental local governments is far from being completed in South Africa. This confirms the challenges faced by local authorities to encourage and facilitate public participation in their structures to ensure that democracy is consolidated and that civic apathy is eliminated if not minimised. According to Larry Diamond:

"The democratic regime is usefully construed as the process of achieving broad and deep legitimation, such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe it is appropriate for their society, better than any other realistic alternative they can imagine. This legitimacy must be more than a commitment to democracy in the abstract; it must also involve a shared normative and behavioural commitment to the specific rules and practices of the country's constitutional system" (Diamond, 1997:14).

Organisations of civil society, such as some civics, remain disengaged from local authorities and community members continue to view local governments as adversarial and unacceptable agents of service delivery (Kihato, 1997:17). The legitimation of

government structures as a cornerstone of democratic consolidation is closely allied to the extent to which they are able to guarantee the rights of citizens and fulfil their constitutional mandate of ensuring the delivery of services to which citizens are entitled (Reitzes, 1998:136). However, equally important for democratic consolidation is the concomitant recognition of and fulfilment by citizens of their obligations to the state. To narrow down the discussion on the elements and factors that cause and/or influence civic apathy, which is the direct result of lack of interest and non-participation in the affairs of government or any other structure that requires public participation, it is, therefore necessary to highlight factors that are necessary to improve citizen participation, thus eliminating civic apathy in local government. Plummer (1999) stated that in order to build capacity for community participation it is necessary for local authorities to enhance their understanding of what participation is and what it involves. }

This study also highlighted the problem of the lack of understanding the role of public/community participation amongst both citizens and the local authority, in the sense that many respondents claimed that the local authority was not informing them of anything and likewise many local residents were not initiating any contacts with the local authority to facilitate public participation. Plummer (1999:25) further contended that it is essential that local authorities develop a more detailed understanding of the livelihoods of the poor, the characteristics of poverty and the needs perceived by the poor themselves. This will be informed by a greater knowledge of the dynamics and social relations within poor communities and households and the identification of factors that affect the capacity of men and women to participate. In other words it is essential that local authorities develop a more informal understanding of the objectives of participation, the potential of community participation (when participation can take place, in what form, at what stage of the service delivery process) and what makes participation more sustainable. m

One would agree that the underlying rationale of any government for the promotion of or responding to community participation is often “instrumental” to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of investments, for example. In the delivery of services and infrastructure, this is intended to result in interventions that are more sustainable, targeted and

appropriate than those delivered through traditional top-down municipal mechanisms. Some commonly cited instrumental or output-oriented objectives for involving communities in the delivery of services and infrastructure are:

- to provide an infrastructure which is relevant to poor people's needs and priorities;
- to ensure that the infrastructure meets the needs of women and other marginalised groups;
- to improve the maintenance of infrastructure and services and decrease government responsibility for maintenance;
- to establish cost sharing arrangements; and
- to increase people's "ownership" of services (Plummer, 1999:27).

Plummer (1999:27) also asserted that traditional service projects focused on infrastructure alone often aim at physical ends and do not place people at the centre of the process. This is one of the shortfalls of many local authorities in South Africa. The other problem is that often the needs of ordinary and poor people are not well understood or addressed appropriately. It should also be acknowledged that one of the reasons for lack of interest and participation in many areas is that inhabitants are impoverished, hence they cannot afford to effectively take part in the structures of governance.

It is argued by Plummer (1999:28) that broader multi-sectoral poverty reduction initiatives which integrate education, health, income generation and/or community development together with environmental improvements shift the focus to the people and that such efforts have led the way to greater empowerment through delivery processes. Developing the local authority's understanding of community needs and priorities will provide an early opportunity to promote community participation. In identifying participatory problem and conducting needs assessments, partnerships can be formed with communities to collect information. This implies local authorities embarking on assessments of how the poor themselves perceive their poverty. Methods such as a focus group discussion, social mapping, individual and household discussions, preference ranking and transit walks will provide information to supplement conventional quantitative

statistical surveys, which may already be available. The process of collecting the information increases understanding and builds community confidence and capacity.

As Reitzes (1998:142) puts it, public participation also runs the risk of becoming unaffordable. The point as argued by Plummer (1999) is that employment status may also significantly influence the amount of time the poor, in particular, are willing to spend participating in government activities and projects. It is believed that men and women are less likely to be able and/or interested in giving time to participatory processes if they are in low wage employment with long working hours. Their work commitment may also mean that they can only attend meetings at certain times. Therefore, specific mechanisms need to be developed to suit the employment profile of these people and to secure as much public participation as possible.

Plummer (1999:33) endorses the fact that education and literacy levels are key factors affecting a community's willingness and ability to participate and influencing the degree and form of participation adopted. Literacy levels should affect the choice of strategies and mechanisms used to facilitate participation and micro-planning tools and techniques may need to vary from literate to illiterate areas. Thus, local authorities also need to play a leading role in improving education and literacy levels, especially of poor people, to increase public participation and alleviate ignorance.

5.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As has been highlighted in this chapter that the purposes of public participation are not just concerned with the achievement of service or policy outcomes, but also relate to social exclusion, cohesion and the achievement of a democratic renewal. Some forms of public participation are intended to provide an opportunity for any citizen to take part in local government activities. However, the question is whether the local government is accessible to all people? If not, frustration and helplessness may be the order of the day, as a result of exclusion.

Resulting from findings of this study, the lack of knowledge about how local authorities function and poor education are actually the root causes of civic apathy. Thus ignorance is not entirely the cause of civic apathy. The findings also shows that citizens are willing to participate in the activities of local government, but they are being alienated and ignored by their local authorities. There is an indication that there could be a problem with the approach or mechanism used by many local authorities to encourage public participation. The bone of contention as Forester (1989:124) puts it, is that in the context of conventional participation, the public officials or administrators controls the ability of citizens to influence the administrative process as far as public participation is concerned.

A point is made in this chapter that citizens who thought that their local authority was not providing a good service tend to lose confidence in the local authority and municipal councillors alike. They are also not willing to pay for services because they believe they are not getting value for money.

Accessibility is also an important issue. That is, people who have been historically excluded from the processes of decision and policy-making and have scarce resources, need to be increasingly included in these processes. In other words, in order to have true public participation, those who have authority have to be more active in bringing people who were excluded, into the processes of decision and policy-making.

It is also clear from this study that there is also a causal relationship between civic apathy and public participation. If public participation is not visible, then civic apathy becomes visible. To a certain extent, the findings of this study indicated that South Africa still reflects a history of diverse nature of organisationa of public participation and civil society which have been largely influenced by circumstances peculiar to societies experiencing a transition from exclusive authoritarian rule to inclusive democratic governance.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview and understanding of the research conducted by the author by means of a summary, together with the conclusions and recommendations relating to the abovementioned research. The global analysis of literature relating to public participation and civic apathy as part of the approach in this research provided a valuable baseline to conduct further field research to determine the probable root causes of civic apathy in local government. The theory of apathy has many facets, such as political, civic and business, that are often not separated for analytical purposes. This is because one would not necessarily talk of business apathy as a direct result of political apathy. However, the fact that people may not be interested in politics or governmental issues has a direct impact on the development of civic structures.

Thus, the role of citizens in shaping and influencing the decisions that affect their lives cannot be further emphasised. On the other hand, the assumption is made that in a democratic system, the government also has a critical role to play, to ensure that every citizen is afforded a right to participate and make inputs in the policy and decision-making processes of government. Therefore, a democratic system implies that both the government and citizens have a dual responsibility to encourage citizen participation and for citizens to ensure that they give meaning to government processes by participating actively.

Emanating from the conclusions and the validation of the hypothesis⁴ tested in the dissertation, several recommendations are made, based on the analysis of the root causes of civic apathy in local government. Also arising from the recommendations, gaps may be identified to provide opportunities for further research in the subject.

4 Civic apathy is a phenomenon intensified by ignorance and a feeling of powerlessness and frustration on the part of the electorate

Civic apathy as a subject study has serious implications for the future development and sustainability of local government. Further research studies on the subject may also contribute tremendously to the fields of policy analysis, strategic management, public administration and political studies. Globalisation as an important aspect in the 21st century also broadens the scope of research opportunities in the abovementioned fields of study and many others.

6.2 Summary

A summary of all the chapters presented in the dissertation is provided within the context of the structural framework of this study.

6.2.1 Global experiences in civic apathy

In chapter two a global view of civic apathy was provided. The discussion was based on the then recent experiences in civic apathy. It has been established that civic apathy is a widespread phenomenon that has serious implications for the effectiveness of local governments, especially in a democratic system. The point made regarding the experiences of different countries with civic apathy is that their experiences are informed by the circumstances prevailing in their respective countries.

The political system of the United States of America (USA) for example, is vast and complex; its complexity deriving partly from the fact that the USA is a federation of fifty states. Each of the fifty states can determine its own laws for creation and management of municipal governments. Many of the early social scientists in the United States of America (USA) who studied the phenomenon (apathy) tended to equate apathy with non-voting.

What has been highlighted in chapter two, is that a human being may not be a completely rational political actor, but people do like to think there would be at least the possibility of a successful payoff to their involvement. But as communities become less well defined,

participation aimed at influencing social issues declines. What is also shown is that socio-economic status is a particularly strong predictor of participation by citizens in government matters. Furthermore, as communities change, it is critically important to develop a mechanism that promotes participation and to understand its benefits. One factor promoting participation may be the individual's own psychological benefit. Psychological benefits which are attributed to participation include a sense of belonging to the community and empowerment.

Power may be an important variable affecting the degree to which citizens are willing to participate in public affairs. Evidence has suggested that participation can lead to empowerment that can ultimately produce community improvements. The claim is that participation, by providing a mechanism for citizen input into policy formulation and the decision-making process, promotes a feeling of control.

In a democratic state it is a common feature that apathy tends to give political decision-makers leeway to bargain and compromise. Some persons may dearly wish to take part in politics, for example, by voting, but avoid doing so because they fear harassment, intimidation, or even outright violence. However, a more tendentious point is made by those who regard non-participation, especially by the most disadvantaged segments of society, as a justified reaction to politics that is meaningless in its electoral content and disappointing in its policy results. To describe levels of political interest across a large population, a continuum of awareness, interest and attention is given as an example. At one end is the individual who is so engrossed with his own psychological needs or the affairs of his family, his work or even his recreational activities, that he has little or no psychic energy left for interest in public affairs or community activities. When such an individual declares that he/she "hardly thinks about politics at all", or does not "follow public or community affairs much at all", he/she can be classified as politically disinterested or apathetic. At the opposite end of the continuum is a person who says he/she follows public affairs very closely or thinks about politics "most of the time".

It is argued that the basic tenets of representative institutions are (i) free elections, majority rule, (ii) protection of minorities, subject to the majority's plural say, and (iii) the assumption that governments function on informed public opinion. Representative institutions in Britain are said to be truly democratic, where all kinds of people can take part. Although only a relatively small number of people actually stand for elections in Britain, or exercise their right to vote, the system and the theory of democracy are justified because everyone can share in government. A claim was also made that British leaders seemed too remote and could not be restrained, before they acted. So even in countries like Britain and the United States of America (USA) where public participation and involvement is claimed to be relatively high, there are, however, instances where local leaders and politicians in general are accused by citizens of being remote from the masses and often alienating them.

The dilemma is that non-participation in elections or civic affairs can express political alienation, but it can also mean that people are satisfied with their government. The traditional idea in the western democracies has been that it is desirable for the effective functioning of the democratic system that the individual be disposed to play an active part in the working of the system, as voter, community participant, worker, activist or political party member. In the end, all members of society should be able to judge the efficiency of various points of view and act on the basis of what seemed to be the wisest course of action. This allows each citizen to make wise decisions and for society to function in a stable manner.

Additionally, it was argued in chapter two that the form of apathy in general and the level of public participation in many western countries may not necessarily be the same as in African countries. It was demonstrated that in the latter, factors such as the violation of basic human rights, continuous in-fighting between political parties, struggle for power and positions, autocratic rule, poverty and unemployment, lack of resources and infrastructure may have prevented active participation of citizens in the activities of government and in the political system, such as voting.

6.2.2 Challenges of democracy in South Africa

It was argued in chapter three that since the new dispensation in South Africa, citizens are still not seen to be exercising their rights in terms of actively participating in the policy and decision-making processes of government. This failure to participate in these processes has led to the possible demise of South Africa's fledgling democracy. The role of any local authority is often taken for granted in many instances. What is demonstrated in chapter three is that, despite the fact that citizen participation and involvement is important and crucial to sustain democracy, the right to participate is not exercised by all who possess it. It is sometimes difficult to explain why people are not participating or getting involved, especially in local government matters, even though they are granted full rights to do so by the constitution of the country. The bottom line, however, is that all people have some choice in life. Therefore, some citizens choose to participate in governmental activities and some choose not to. It can only be speculated why.

Another discussion in respect of lack of active public participation is that the social environment to a certain extent may influence people to participate or not. It is also argued that in general, participation tends to be higher among the better-educated members of the higher occupational and income groups, the middle aged, the dominant ethnic and religious groups and members of voluntary associations. South Africa, for example, is characterised by different cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups. The researcher believes that individuals are embedded in a matrix of social forces (status, education and so on) that orients them towards or away from political or public participation. In addition to this, characteristic differences in drives and capacities may cause individuals to vary in their readiness to respond to political stimuli or civic duty.

In relation to citizen initiated contacts, the question is asked in this dissertation about what are the citizens doing to involve themselves in planning activities and decision-making processes of government? Usually it is found that the only time citizens make contact is when they have serious complaints about something affecting them directly.

What is also captured in chapter three are the attitudes to public participation. This is an important factor, because people's attitudes may influence or determine whether people participate in government activities or not. Some people, for example, do not see themselves as part of a local authority; and in some instances their experiences reflect their attitudes.

It is also demonstrated in chapter three that it is important that people should know that they are able to exert some influence on local decisions affecting their own lives. If the democratic process is to flourish, there must be a ready access to full information about activities in local authorities. The argument made is that as local government activities expand they have more extensive and frequent impact upon people at the local level. It is also argued that most decisions taken by governments affect individuals' day-to-day lives. Even a small decision does have a direct or indirect effect on the public.

It was argued in chapter three that for an individual the most important set of issues and political activities may be the myriad attempts to influence government decisions that are related to the specific problems faced by individuals, groups, or the community. The argument is made that a potential outcome is what draws people to participate in the policy and decision-making processes. Based on the level of participation, citizens either choose to become gladiators, spectators and or uninvolved.

Additionally, it was noted in chapter three that most of the time residents do claim that when they have burning issues that they need to discuss, they have difficulty in getting their issues onto the agenda of a local authority's council meeting and in getting a positive commitment from the municipal officials and management to respond to these matters promptly. It was also argued that the amount of contact between local authorities and the public is critical and is not merely in one direction. That is, on the public side the occasional routine inquiry that everyone makes from time to time forms one end of the spectrum. Petitions, lobbying and inviting municipal politicians and officials to public meetings represent more emphatic forms of communication of public opinion.

To examine question of structure of policy and decision-making process is in effect to study information. That is, the flow of information should provide people with access to government processes. The point made here is that an alert, informed and wise citizenry rationally assesses election candidates, chooses the best and removes or reappoints them after carefully weighing their performance. The other point is that an elected municipal councillor or member of a legislature, which represents the people, is generally considered an essential of democracy. The belief is that democracy is a process of governing characterised by freedom for all individuals and groups to influence the course of government actions and by organisational arrangements which provide for the making of formal policy decisions by municipal officials and councillors.

Chapter three clearly demonstrates that the anomaly of citizen participation is that democratic expectations have been imposed on governmental structures that were designed to function democratically. If citizens were to make policy directly, what then is the role of the elected representatives? It is also demonstrated in chapter three that the public must be a paragon of civic virtue in order for democracy to survive. However, while there is agreement that citizens should play an informed and active role in the governance system, there is wide disagreement as to the forms and the extent that citizen participation should take.

Ideally, active and widespread citizen participation is essential for the best functioning of the various units of government. It is also ideal that the participation by local residents as citizens of the country should be permanent and commence at the planning stage of a new programme or project undertaken by a local authority. The fact of the matter is that every local, provincial and national governments makes decisions that affect the lives of millions of people. They decide how to raise money and how to spend it, who will pay taxes and who will receive benefits. Therefore, with too much at stake, politicians, political parties, interest groups and ordinary citizens all attempt to influence these government decisions.

Ideally, an active involvement by citizens has democratic value by making it easier for them to hold elected and appointed officials and politicians accountable for their actions. Participation on the other hand reminds those who govern that they must attend to their duties and serve the electorate. Whenever civic apathy prevails, it becomes more difficult to organise and maintain a political opposition. Even if the opinions of the non-participants are presently ill informed, there is no better way to improve the quality of their judgement than by the experience of active participation.

It is argued in chapter three that in order for democracy to be effective, the maximum degree of public participation should be encouraged in all spheres of government to restrict unbridled power. Every citizen is indirectly responsible for the manner in which a country is run. Therefore, without strong public participation, good and clean government administration may not materialise and politicians may be tempted to pursue their own interests instead of public interests. It is shown that citizens develop a sense of participation and purpose when they are allowed to make a contribution to civic affairs. Thus citizen participation is crucial not only to promote but also to sustain democracy.

6.2.3 Citizen Governance

Chapter four of the dissertation demonstrates that citizen governance is an important ingredient in a democracy.

In addition, it is shown that citizens have a different view of the role of a local government. Thus, citizens generally want to have what they desire and some are not prepared to accept half or less of what they want. Among other things, this means that often citizens, rather than elected representatives, choose which public services they want, in what quantities and how they want them delivered. However, in an ideal public governance environment, citizens are involved in finding the answers to questions such as whether to have a fully serviced park and recreation system or just a few parks in crucial areas. Such little decisions matter to the public.

It is argued in chapter four that the governance of every community by any standards requires some sort of co-operation between the government, community representatives and the communities, for proper and effective governance. In addition, it is argued that to achieve government accountability to the public requires that citizens be involved in the policy-making process along with community representatives, beginning with discussion of action, then of options, then on making programmatic decisions followed by administering the programme and lastly to making changes based on observed government performance.

In a democracy the law of the country also compels the public officials to involve the public more in the affairs of government. This results in participatory democracy, which makes it easy to hold government officials and elected public representatives accountable. Democracy also compels contemporary public officials and politicians to know how to work with all kinds of publics, from individual citizens to small community groups and to large national public interest groups. They must also be able to work with these publics in a variety of forums, ranging from informal conversations to open public meetings, to civic organisations or committees.

Chapter four clearly communicates that the era of citizen governance and democracy doesn't call for public involvement in the affairs of government for the sake of it, but it does bestow power on the ordinary people to steer the course of government, especially in their respective communities. Furthermore, giving citizens more and better opportunities to take part in their own governance can transform them from subjects of particular governmental arrangements to citizens vested in and supportive of these arrangements.

Similarly, the broadening of participatory opportunities can strengthen society by assuring that the actions of government are embedded in society, rather than imposed on society. It is argued in chapter four that in politics the "will" of the people is a determining factor especially through the vote. However, the political practice in respect to people's "will" has implications, such as lack of resources. Lack of resources, for

example, can impede citizens from exercising their right or “will” and can deny them opportunities to participate in government affairs or local government activities. Some of these resources have to do with what liberal individuals identify as civic, political and legal right. Others have to do with economic and social resources.

In addition, when a democratic government is conceived to be a form of self-governance, in which the laws represent the “will” of the people, then the very meaning of a democratic government involves the idea of consent as the means by which each citizen embodies his/her “will” into the law. Consenting to obey the law is thus the means by which citizens become self-governing. The argument here is that all citizens have a right to govern themselves, and that for this reason people ought to obey these forms of government in which all citizens have an equal share. The fact that a decision or procedure is a fair compromise gives the dissenter a reason, not just for obeying the decision, but also for participating in the decision or procedure.

6.2.4 Civic apathy: research findings

Chapter five of the dissertation deals with the analysis of the research findings on civic apathy. In addition, what is clearly shown is the methodology used in gathering the data and the responses obtained in the research is clearly shown.

It is demonstrated in chapter five that the respondents gave various reasons as to the root causes of civic apathy. Some respondents said civic apathy is caused by when communities are not informed of what is happening around them, and of what the local authority is doing in terms of development. Others said people have become apathetic because of the false promises and selfishness of municipal councillors and officials. The indication is that lack of commitment of municipal councillors and officials to involve the communities that they serve has driven people to civic apathy. On the other hand the poor performances of municipal councillors have made local residents to lose interest in participating in community activities and the affairs of local authorities.

It is argued in chapter five that people are not given a chance to make inputs in the decision and policy-making processes. Thus people lose interest with the result that important decisions are taken without them being informed. The argument is also adduced that people feel isolated when they are not invited to participate in the governmental processes. Thus, they are not being empowered to take part in the decision-making process. In addition, what is clearly reflected in chapter five is that some local authorities are not doing enough to encourage public participation and that there is no working relationship between the local authorities and the community.

The main feeling of respondents demonstrated in chapter five is that people have a right to participate irrespective of whether they are represented or not in the government processes. The other significant feeling is that residents should be given a chance to participate because they are affected by decisions made by local authorities. Thus, participation is seen as an important element of governance. That is, active involvement and sharing of ideas ought to be a norm for every community and citizens should become involved so as to have control over decisions affecting them.

The argument is also expressed that authentic public participation, that is, participation that works for all parties and stimulates the interest and involvement of both municipal administrators and citizens, requires rethinking the underlying roles of, and relationships between municipal administrators and citizens. Finding better ways to engender public participation will make it more meaningful for all involved. In some ways public government officials recognise the need for participation, but they cannot find ways to put the public into policy and decision-making processes.

6.3 Conclusions

In answering the research questions posed in chapter one of this dissertation various specific conclusions can be reached and include *inter alia*:

- That although people agree that local government is necessary in South Africa, it does not fulfil its function, which is service delivery, to the satisfaction of the people on the ground.
- The provision of essential services, especially in black areas had declined instead of improving at a faster pace;
- Lack of information has prevented people from participating actively in the municipal activities in the new dispensation; only a few people do participate;
- South Africans do not realise that by fulfilling a civic duty, they are actually enhancing democracy in this country;
- Many South Africans are too indolent to take the initiative and participate in the local government activities. They give the excuse that it takes time and effort to learn what is going on in politics and it is demanding to spend time registering in order to be eligible to vote;
- Only a few people in South Africa do understand that by voting they can actually change the way the country is being run, and that they can influence decisions that directly affect them;
- The entrenchment of the right and access to information in the constitution has not persuaded most South-Africans to seek or demand information about how local authorities function and about the local issues that may have impact on their daily lives;
- The fact that local people are apathetic and ignorant of local government issues, even in the new South Africa, does not make one confident as to the sustainability of a democracy in South Africa;
- The complexity of politics can alienate people, and can exacerbate ignorance. Hence many South Africans do not know who their ward councillors are; and

- The propensity to greediness of political office bearers and bureaucrats can undermine the needs and desires of ordinary people, thus also keeping them away from participating in local government affairs.

The hypothesis advanced in the dissertation has been validated insofar as it has been argued and demonstrated that indeed people can feel powerless and frustrated if they are deliberately being excluded from, or denied the opportunity to actively participate in their local government activities or affairs. Many other issues may, however, also cause people's frustrations.

Other predisposing factors, such as failure of government to meet their needs, exist. However, the most important finding is that there is a causal relationship between powerlessness, frustration and apathy. In addition, it has been found that there are people who choose ignorance about, or are inherently ignorant of, politics and government issues. By virtue of being ignorant, they also become apathetic. The danger is that civic apathy becomes great because of the people who are ignorant and those people who wish to participate, but are driven into a state of apathy because they are denied the opportunity to actively participate in government processes. Unless the government does something by creating mechanisms to pull people out of the state of civic apathy to participate fully and actively in government activities and processes, democracy will not be sustainable. People have to be part of the decision-making process to ensure that appropriate decisions affecting their lives are taken.

An ancillary finding of considerable importance is that many local authorities take the role of ordinary citizens for granted. No value is attached to the views and inputs of these people. This kind of attitude impacts on the principles of democracy and contradicts the constitution of the country, whereby all citizens are guaranteed the right to participate in government affairs. Failure to adhere to the constitution may spell doom for the fledging democracy of South Africa.

6.4 Recommendations

The impact of civic apathy is that, when democracy is not enforced, democracy is reduced to paper. Thus, the process of consolidating democracy poses a challenge to many governments, and to achieve this, the role of civil society is seen as a necessary feature of democratic societies since it provides a vehicle for the citizen's participation in public life and a check on the exercise of state power. This statement suggests that one of the prime purposes of civil society is to 'civilise' the democratic state, such as South Africa. The concern is to hold the state accountable but not take it over. This assumes the necessary conditions of an inclusive formal/legal constitutional framework, inclusive legal citizenship, inclusive representative democracy, formal legal equality of all individuals and a legitimate government and state.

Local authorities in South Africa should concentrate on improving citizen participation, thus eliminating civic apathy in local government. The point is that in order to build capacity for community participation it is necessary for local authorities to enhance their understanding of what participation is and what it involves. It is also essential that local authorities develop a more detailed understanding of the means to livelihood of the poor, the characteristics of poverty and the needs perceived by the poor themselves.

This understanding will be informed by a greater knowledge of the dynamics and social relations within poor communities and households and the identification of factors that affect the capacity of men and women to participate. In other words, it is essential that local authorities develop a more informed understanding of the objectives of participation (when participation can take place, in what form, and what makes participation more sustainable). The initiatives made by the greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council in developing strategies to alleviate poverty, improving access to education, providing health services to poor local residents, improving the environment and developing or promoting social and economic development should be commended as a positive step towards ensuring that people are provided with basic needs and what they are able to participate actively, especially in the unicity that has been created. Therefore,

through this initiative the Johannesburg local authority's understanding of community needs and priorities will provide an early opportunity to promote participation.

In identifying participatory problems and assessing needs, partnerships can be formed with communities to collect information. This means that local authorities should embark on assessments of how the poor themselves perceive their poverty. Methods such as focus group discussion, social mapping, individual and households discussions, preference ranking and transit walks will provide, information to supplement conventional quantitative statistical surveys, which may already be available. The process of collecting information increases understanding and builds community confidence and capacity. Therefore, local authorities should create an iterative process, which will build on existing knowledge and then incorporate the benefits of improved skills and knowledge. This will improve the confidence of ordinary people and communities, thus enhancing or improving public participation. Local authorities also need to play a leading role in improving education and literacy levels, especially of poor people in order to improve public participation and alleviate ignorance.

6.5 Further Research Areas

Civic apathy as a phenomenon has proved to be a complex and extensive subject. Its complexity results from the fact that it is interrelated to other variables such as public participation, democracy, governance, politics and many others. This confirms the fact that civic apathy or apathy in general cannot be exhausted in terms of study because each part of it being studied opens other research gaps that could be exploited for further research, especially in the field of Public Administration and Political Studies.

The following are the proposed research areas that have been opened as a result of this study:

- The effects of civic apathy in service delivery in relation to the demands of the people in a democracy.

- The intensity of bureaucracy in local government in the 21st century.
- Is people' self-governance possible in a democracy? This emanates from the assertion that democracy could be effective if ordinary people are given the opportunity to take control of their own community issues. That is, people should govern themselves to strengthen democracy.
- The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) compels the local authorities and the government to involve the local residents and encourage them to participate at all times in local governance. Therefore, the challenge is to find a suitable mechanism to ensure that ordinary people fully participate in matters of local government without creating barriers for them to do so. The constitution in this instance does not spell out what role should be played by ordinary people and how they should be involved.
- The need to investigate the relationship between the municipal councillors, officials and the public. This is a triangle relationship that is not well defined, which often creates confusion in terms of roles that should be played by these stakeholders in governance.
- The establishment of Unicities or Megacities in metropolitan areas such as Johannesburg are suspected that they will have adverse effects in improving effective and efficient administration. This emanates from the fear of the unknown, because the Unicity or Megacity concept is new in South Africa. The challenge is to investigate how the introduction of the Unicities or Megacities will improve service delivery and administration in major cities in South Africa.

7. List of Sources

Agar, H. 1965. *The perils of democracy*. London: Bodley Head.

Alford, R.R. & Scoble, H.M. 1968. Sources of local political involvement. *American Political Science Review*, 62.

Almond, G.A. & Verba, S. 1993. *The civic culture*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

(Angola 1999: Online. Available at <http://www.mbendi.co.za/land>)

Apathy in America, 1996. Available at www.breakpoint.org.scrips.

Atkinson, D. 1992. *Let the people decide: public participation in urban planning*. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies.

Austin, D. 1993. *Reflection of African politics: Prospero, Ariel and Caliban*. *International Affairs*, 69(2).

Bachrach, K. & Zautra, A. 1985. Coping with a community stressor: The threat of a hazardous waste facility. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, 26: 127-141.

Banfield, E.L. (ed.). 1992. *Civility and citizenship in liberal democratic societies*. New York: Paragon house.

Barber, B. 1984. *Strong democracy: participation in politics for a new age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bekker, K. (ed.) 1996. *Citizen participation in local government*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

Bennet, S.E. 1986. *Causes and consequences of citizen political indifference*. New York: Transitional publishers Inc.

Berman, E.M. 1997. Dealing with cynical citizens. *Public Administration Review* March/April 1997. Vol 57 n° 2. University of central Florida.

Berry, G.M. 1977. *Lobbying for the people: The political behaviour of public interest groups*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Boaden, N., Goldsmith, M., Hampton, W. & Stringer, P. 1982. *Public participation in local services*. New York: Longman.

- Botha, P.K. 1991. *The relationship function of the urban town clerk*. Thirty first conference of the Institute of Town Clerks of Southern Africa, Port Elizabeth, 21-23 May.
- Botswana News Agency. 1999. Available at <http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/news/country.htm>
- Box, R.C. 1998. *Citizen governance: leading American communities into the 21st century*. London: Sage publication Inc.
- Brady, M. 1997. Who participates. *American Political Science Review*, 87 (2).
- Brown, C.J. 1995. Project scaping through public participation. *Project Pro*, 5 (4) July.
- Brynard, D.J. 1990. Responsiveness of the public servants: origins, obstacles and strategies. *Politeia*, 9(2).
- Brynard, D.J. 1996. Public participation in local government and administration: bridging the gap. *Politeia*; vol. 15. Issue 2: 39-50.
- Bryson, J.M. (ed.). 1993. *Strategic planning for public service and non- profit organisations*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Burns, D. 1997. Public participation in urban development: The European experience. *Urban Studies*, 3 March: 516-517.
- Burke, E.M. 1968. Citizen participation strategies. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 34.
- Campbell, H.E. 1995. Influencing bureaucracy: a research note on implications of measuring participation public utility rate cases. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol 5. July 1995: 319-329.
- Campbell, J. & Oliver, M. 1996. *Disability politics*. London: Routledge.
- Chavis, D.M. & Wandersman, A. 1990. Sense of community in the urban environment: A catalyst for participation in community development. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 18,1: 55-81.
- Checkoway, B. 1977. Citizen participation technology. *Exchange bibliography n° 1329*. Monticello, IL: Council of Planning Libraries.
- Clapper, V.A. 1993. *Role and influence of citizen participation in public administration with specific reference to the Eersterust local government*. South Africa: Unisa.

- Chipasula, C & Chilivumbu, E. 1993. *The challenges for democracy*. University Press: London.
- CIIR. 1997. *Democracy in South Africa*. Pretoria: CIIR
- Cloete, J.J.N. 1989. *South African local government and administration*. Pretoria: J. L van Schaik.
- Coetzee, J.K. & Groof, J. 1996. *Reconstruction, development and the people*. Johannesburg: International Thomson Publishers.
- Cole, R.L. 1973. *Citizen participation and the urban policy process*. Massachusetts: Lexington.
- Cooper, T.L. 1991. *An ethic of citizenship for public administration*. Englewood Cliffs New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Cope, G.H. 1997. Bureaucratic reform and issues of political responsiveness. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 7, July 1997: 461-471.
- Craythorne, D.L. 1997. *Municipal administration*. A handbook, 4th edition. Cape Town: Juta & Co. Ltd.
- Crewe, I. 1974. *Elites in Western Democracy*. Groom Helm: London.
- Criplip, D.D. & Larsen, C.E. 1994. *Collaborative leadership: How citizens and civic leaders can make a difference*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Cunningham, J.V. 1972. Citizen participation in public affairs. *Public Administration Review*, 32, October.
- Cupps, D.S. 1977. Emerging problems of citizen participation. *Public Administration Review*, September/October.
- Dahl, R. 1970. *After the Revolution: Authority in a good society*. New Haven. New York Press.
- Dalk, R. & Walker, R. (eds.) 1977. *Local government and the public*. Leonard Hill Publishers: London.
- Dalton, R.J. 1988. *Citizen politics in western democracies*. New Jersey: Chathan House Publishers Inc.
- De Leon, P. 1992. The democratization of the policy sciences. *Public Administration Review*, 52: 125-129.

De Tolly, P. 1991. People in planning: the need for public participation. *IMIESA*, Vol. 16, Issue 11: 27-29.

Development Bank of Southern Africa and Department of Constitutional Development, 1997. *Partnership: looking to the future of service delivery, August/September 1997*.

Diamond, L. 1997. Consolidating democracy in the Americas. *The annals of the American Academy, AAPSS*, 550: 12-41.

Dimock, M. 1990. The restorative qualities of citizenship. *Public Administration Review*, January/February.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, available at <http://www.britannica.com>

Farmer, D.J. 1995. *The language of Public Administration: Bureaucracy, modernity and post modernity*. University, AL: University of Alabama Press.

Farrar, C. 1988. *The origins of democratic thinking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fetterman, D.M.; Kaftarian, S.J. & Wandersman, A. (eds.) 1996. *Empowerment evaluation, knowledge and tools for self assessment and accountability*. Thousand Oakes CA: Sage.

Fisher, F. 1993. Citizen participation and the democratisation of policy expertise: from theoretical inquiry to practical cases. *Policy Sciences* 26(3): 165-187.

Fitzsimon, C. 1997. Public shows alarming civic apathy. *Triangle Business Journal*, August 25, 1997.

Flores, G.; Kelly, M.; Ritvo, R.A. & Sugiyama, N.B. 1997. Local government structure and function in Texas and United States of America. *Texas National conservation Commission*, September 1997.

Forester, J. 1989. *Planning in the face of power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fox, C.J. & Miller, H.T. 1995. *Postmodern Public Administration: Toward Discourse*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.]

Frederickson, H.G. 1982. The recovery of civism in Public Administration: *Public Administration Review*, 42: 501-508.

Freysen, C. 1998. Citizen participation and obligation in service delivery. *SAIPA*, 33 (4): 246-259.

- Friedman, S. & Reitzes, M. 1995. *Democratic selection, civic society and development in South Africa's new democracy*. Halfway House: Development Bank of Southern Africa.
- Frissen, P. 1992. *European Public Administration and informatization: a comparative research projects into policies, systems and infrastructure*. Amsterdam, IOS Press: New York.
- Game, C. & Wilson, D. 1994. *Local government in the United Kingdom*. London. Mcmillan Publishers.
- Gamson, W.A. 1968. *Power and Discontent*. Homewood, Ill: Dorsey Press.
- Gladden, E.N. 1972. *Local, corporational and international administration*. Vol. 2. London: Staples Press.
- Green, G. 1982. Municipal administration in receptivity to citizens and elected officials' contacts. *Public Administration Review*, July/August.
- Hanekom, S.X. 1987. *Public policy: Framework and instrument for action*. Johannesburg: Macmillan.
- Hansen, S.B. 1975. Participation, political structure and concurrence. *American Political Science Review*, 69.
- Harbermas, J. 1975. *Legitimation crisis*. Boston. Beacon Press.
- Harmon, M.M. 1995. *Responsibility as paradox: A critique of rational discourse on government*. Thousand Oakes: Sage.
- Heller, K. 1989. The return to community. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 17,1: 1-15.
- Heymans, C. & Totemeyer G. (eds.). 1988. *Government by the people-politics of local government in South Africa*. Cape Town: Juta & Co. Ltd.
- Hill, M. 1972. *The sociology of Public Administration*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson: London.
- Hill, D.M. 1974. *Democratic theory and local government*. London: Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Hill, J. & Lovenduski, J. (eds.). 1981. *The politics of the second electorate: women and public participation*. London: Kegan Paul Publishers.
- Hilliard, V.G. & Binza, S.M. 1997. South Africa openness is under fire. *Evening Post*, 24 July.

Hilliard, V.G. & Kemp, N.D 1999. Citizen participation crucial to good governance and administration in South Africa. *Politeia* vol. 18 Issue 3: Pretoria.

Holden, F. 1997. *Ignorance, indifference, apathy, complecency dangerous enemies of America's brighter future*. USA: Tattered Publishers.

Hyman, H. & Wright, C. 1971. Trends in voluntary association membership of American adults. *American Sociological Review* 36, 2: 191-206.

Jewell, L.N. & Reitz, H.J. 1981. *Group effectiveness in organisations*. Glenview: Scott Foresman.

Jones, M.A. 1981. *Local government and the people: Challenges for the eighties*. Victoria: Hargreen.

Kahn, K.M.; Trauth. E.M. & Warden. F. 1991. *Information literacy: An introduction to information systems*. USA: Macmillan Publishers.

Kathlene, L. & Martin, J.A. 1991. Enhancing citizen participation: Panel designs perspective and policy formation. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 10 (1): 46-63

Kelly, L.R. 1997. In praise of apathy. *Political Economy Journal, USA*.

Kendall, F. & Louw, L. 1989. *Let the people govern*. Johannesburg: Amagi.

Kettering Foundation, 1989. *The public's role in the policy process: A view from state and local policy makers*. Dayton OH: Kettering Foundation.

Kihato, C. 1997. *Who carries the can?* Report on the dynamics of urban water supply, commissioned by Rand Water's Community-based project division. Unpublished.

King, C.S.; Stivers, C. et al. 1998. *Government is us: Public Administration in the anti-government era*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

King, C.S.; Feltey, K.M.. & Susel, B.O. 1998. The question of participation: Toward authentic public participation in public administration. *Public Administration Review*, Vol 58. N° 4, July/August: 317-326.

Kweit, M.G. & Kweit, R.W. 1981. *Implementing citizen participation in a bureaucratic society*. New York: Praeger.

Lawrance, R. 1990. Charterists and democracy in South Africa. *Reality*, 22 (6).

Leach, S. 1990. Accountability in the post-abolition metropolitan government systems. *Local Government Studies*, May/June.

Leach, S. & Wingfield, M. 1998. *Public participation and the democratic renewal agenda: Prioritisation or marginalisation*. United Kingdom: De Mont-University Press.

(Malawi news, 1999: Online <http://www.mbendi.co.za/land>)

Lipset, S.M. 1994. The social requisites of democracy revisited. *American Sociological Review*, 59(1) February: 1-22.

Mathews, D. 1994. A different kind of politics. *National Civic Review*. Vol. 83: 234-239.

Moodie, C.G. & Kennedy, G.S. 1970. *Opinions, publics and pressure groups*. London: Allen & Unwin Ltd.

McAvoy, G.E. 1998. Partisan probing and democratic decision-making. *Policy Studies Journal*. Vol. 2: 274-292.

Moran, P. 1986. *Authority, community and conflict*. MO, Sheed & Ward: Kansas City.

Moyal, A.; Sarkissian, W. & Wolf, M. (eds.). 1999. *Technology and public participation*. Australia: University of Wollongong.

(Mozambique 1998: Online available at <http://www.mbendi.co.za/land>)

Mtewa, M. 1986. *Malawi democratic theory and public theory*. Schenkman Books: Cambridge.

Municipal Systems Bill; March 1999:Pretoria:Government Printers.

(Namibia 1998: Online available at <http://www.mbendi.co.za/land>)

New Straits Times, vol.6. February 2000: 15-18.

Njobe, B. 1994. The role of civics. *Development and Democracy*, 37, November.

Oldfield, A. 1990. *Citizenship and community-civic republicanism and the modern world*. Routledge, Chapman & Hall Inc: London.

O'Toole, D.E. & Mashall, J. 1988. Citizen participation through budgeting. *The bureaucrats*, Spring, 17 (2).

Patrige, P.H. 1971. *Consent and consensus*. Paul Mall Press: London.

Peattie, L.R. 1968. Reflections on advocacy planning. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners (March)*: 80-88.

Parsons, G.A. 1990. Defining the public interest: Citizen participation in metropolitan and state policy-making. *National Civic Review*, 79: 118-131.

Periodical Age Survey, November 1978. Maude Committee: Australia.

Persons, I. 1994. KwaNyuswa confirms the success of community involvement. *Technobrief*, 3(12). Pretoria: CSIR.

Plummer, J. 1999. *Municipalities and community participation: A Sourcebook for Capital Building*. Pretoria: DFID.

Pranger, R.J. 1968. *The eclipse of citizenship: Power and participation in contemporary politics*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston Inc: United States of America (USA)

Prestby, J.E. & Wandersman, A. 1985. An empirical exploration of a framework of organisational viability: maintaining block organisations. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* 21,3: 287-305.

Putman, R.D. 1995. Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 20 (1): 65-78.

Radin, B.A. & Cooper, T.L. 1989. From public action to public participation: where does it lead? *Public Administration Review*. Vol. 9. March/April: 167-169.

Redford, E. 1969. *Democracy in the administrative state*. Oxford University Press: New York.

Reitzes, M. 1998. *Democratic consolidation: Local government and civil society*. Center for policy Studies. Double Take: Johannesburg.

Riesman, D. & Glazer, N. 1956. *The lonely crowd: a study of a changing American character*. Garden city. Doubleday Anchor Books: New York.

Roberts, N. 1997. Public deliberation: An alternative approach to crafting policy and setting direction. *Public Administration Review*, 57 (2): 124-132.

Rosener, J.B. 1978. Citizen participation, can we measure its effectiveness? *Public Administration Review*, September/October.

Rosenbaum, W.A. 1976. The paradox of public participation. *Administration & Society*. Vol. 8, n°3, November: 355-383.

Rosenstone, S.R. & Hansen, J. 1993. *Mobilization, participation and democracy in America*. USA: Macmillan Publishers.

Ross, K. 1997. Apathy. *Political economy Journal*: United States of America (USA).

- Riedel, J.A. 1972. Citizen participation: Myths and realities. *Public Administration Review*, May/June.
- Salamon, L.M. & Evera, S.V. 1973. Fear, apathy and discrimination in political participation. *American Political Science Review*, 67.
- Sarason, S.B. 1974. *The psychological sense of community: prospects for a community psychology*. Jossey –Bass: San Francisco.
- Sealey, S. 1999. *Pre-election Focus*. Johannesburg: Human rights Committee.
- Selman, G. 1991. *Citizenship and the adult education movement in Canada*, Vancouver: Center for continuing Education and the International Council for Adult Aducation.
- Schachter, H.L. 1995. Reinventing government or ourselves: two models for improving government performance. *Public Administration Review*. Vol. 55, November/December: 530-537.
- Sherman, D. 1998. *Voter apathy*. Montclair State University Press: United Stares of America (USA).
- Shicela, S. 1997. Gauteng Provincial Government-the desire for growth, equality and public participation. *African Connexion*. Vol. 12, Issue 3: 90-91.
- Schulz, E.B. 1977. Democracy: 2nd edition. USA: *Barron's Educational Series*.
- Sills, D.L. (ed.) 1968. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences vol. 12&10*: MacMillan & Free Press.
- Simone, A. 1995. (ed.). *Revisiting South African conceptions of civic society: In civil society after apartheid*. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies.
- Singer, P. 1973. *Democracy and disobedience*. Oxford university-Claredon Press: London.
- South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary, new edition 1994*: Oxford University Press.
- Steinberg, J. 1978. *Locke, Rousseau and the idea of consent- an inquiry into liberal-democratic theory of political obligation*. Green Wood Press: London.
- Stivers, C. 1990. *Active citizenship and public administration*. Thousand Oakes: Sage.
- Stoker, G. 1991. *The politics of local government*. Basingstoke: MacMillan Edu.
- Stouffe, B., Orpheus, J. & Bland, W. (eds.) 1996. *State and local politics*. Happer Collins College Publishers.

Sugiyama, N.B. 1997. *Local government structure and functions*. September 1997: Texas.

Swilling, M. 1989. Critical choices for South African society. *Institute for the Study of Public Policy*. Cape Town: department of Political Studies-University of Cape Town.

The listening bureaucrat: responsiveness in public administration. *Public Administration review*, 54 (4). 1994: 364-369.

The South African Constitution. 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Thomas, J.C. 1995. *Public participation in public decisions*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

United Nations. 1990 (General Assembly). African charter for popular participation in development., 22 at http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/document/a-45-427.htm August.

Verba, S. & Nie, N.H. 1972. *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*. California: Sage.

Verba, S.; Nie, N.H. & Kim, J. 1971. *The modes of democratic participation: A cross national comparison*. California: Sage.

Verba, S.; Nie, N.H. & Kim, J. 1978. *Participation and political equality: A seven nation comparison*. London: Cambridge university Press.

Verba, S.; Schlozman, K.; Brady, M. & Nie, N.A. 1993. Citizen activity: Who participates? What do they say? *American Political Science Review*, 87 (2): 303-318.

Waggoner, S.C. 1998. *Discovering computers: A link to the future*. New York: Thomson Publishers.

Wandersman, A. 1985. *Beyond the individual: Environmental approaches and prevention*. Haworth Press: New York.

Weinfeld, M. 1994. Ethnic assimilation and the retention of ethnic cultures. The research landscape: Toronto.

White, O.F. & McSwain, C.J. 1993. *The symbiotic way of knowing and public administration*. *Administrative Theory*, 15 (1). Praxis.

Wilson, D. & Game, C. 1994. *Local government in the United Kingdom*. McMillan Publishers: London.

Worrall, D. (ed.). *South African Government and politics*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik Ltd.

Zambia News Agency. 2000. ZambiaToday. Available at <http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/news country.htm>

Zatz, D.A. 1994. *Fighting apathy*. USA: Anson Publishers.

Zimmerman, J.E. 1988. Civic strategies for community empowerment. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, May/June, 77 (3).

ZimToday 1998. Available at <http://nt1.ids.ac.uk.eldis/news country.htm>

PART 'B'

1. DO YOU THINK LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS NECESSARY?	YES	NO
2. DO YOU THINK PEOPLE SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?	YES	NO
3. DO YOU THINK YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL IS PROVIDING GOOD SERVICE?	YES	NO
4. ARE YOU A MEMBER TO ANY OF YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY STRUCTURES i.e. CIVIC ASS.RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATIONS, ETC.?	YES	NO
5. DO YOU ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNITY STRUCTURES?	YES	NO
6. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES IN THE LOCAL COUNCIL?	YES	NO
7. ARE YOU SATISFIED THAT YOUR VIEWS OR PROBLEMS PUT FORWARD BY YOUR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COUNCIL ARE BEING HEARD AND ATTENDED TO SATISFACTORILY BY YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL?	YES	NO
8. DO YOU GET ANY RESPONSES TO YOUR COMMUNITY PROBLEMS FROM THE LOCAL COUNCIL?	YES	NO
8. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS WITH YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY?	YES	NO
10. DO YOU KNOW OF THE FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL?	YES	NO
11. ARE YOU INTERESTED TO KNOW HOW YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL FUNCTIONS?	YES	NO
12. ARE YOU AWARE OF THE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE LOCAL COUNCIL IN YOUR AREA?	YES	NO
13. ARE YOU EVER INFORMED OF THE PROJECTS TAKING PLACE IN YOU AREA?	YES	NO
14. ARE YOU EVER INVITED TO YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY'S COUNCIL MEETINGS?	YES	NO
15. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE COUNCIL MEETINGS?	YES	NO
16. DO YOU KNOW YOUR WARD COUNCILLOR?	YES	NO
17. DOES YOUR WARD COUNCILLOR CALLS REGULAR WARD MEETINGS?	YES	NO
18. DO YOU ATTEND WARD MEETINGS?	YES	NO
19. DO YOU THINK THERE ARE VISIBLE CHANGES IN YOUR AREA SINCE THE DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS?	YES	NO