

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING
AND IMPLEMENTATION WITH SPECIFIC
REFERENCE TO THE PORT ELIZABETH
MUNICIPALITY**

by

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I declare that PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE PORT ELIZABETH MUNICIPALITY is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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SUMMARY

Public participation in policy-making and implementation is an integral part of public administration and an essential ingredient of community development and democracy.

This study describes, analyses and evaluates the role played by public participation in policy-making and implementation in South Africa, with specific reference to the Port Elizabeth Municipality.

It investigates how the process of public participation in policy-making and implementation can be strengthened and made more fluid. The levels of knowledge regarding legislation, institutions and processes of public interaction with the legislative and policy-making and implementation institutions, and the intention to participate in these processes, are regarded as important. Among others, the concept participation and the impact of the process of public participation as well as the extent of awareness of the South African public with regard to its democratic rights and freedom and newly acquired opportunities of interaction in policy-making and implementation are examined. The issues of concern in which the South African public would like to participate are also examined.

In order to make meaningful decisions about public needs and demands, policy makers and implementers should obtain current information about such needs and demands. Public participation is an appropriate mechanism for conveying such information and should therefore be encouraged and preserved. It appears that the constitutional and legislative framework is an appropriate instrument for this purpose. However, in order to facilitate the development of the culture of participation, other prerequisites of public participation should not be forgotten.

A lack of information about the process of public participation and a dearth of literature on the subject of public participation are among the challenges facing South Africa. The investigation indicates that there is lack of knowledge about institutions and legislation, as well as illiteracy and inadequate participation skills.

Although Constitutional and statutory provisions reflect good intentions about public participation, with low levels of knowledge about such provisions and inadequate interaction between public participation and policy-making and implementation, a fluid process of participation which could deepen, broaden and sustain democracy would remain a utopian ideal. However, various mechanisms, by which this scenario could be addressed, could be devised and implemented.

KEY TERMS

Participation; Public participation; Citizen participation; Community participation; Policy-making; Policy implementation; Public policy; Democracy; Participation in South Africa; Participation in Port Elizabeth

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study will focus on public participation in the making and implementation of policy in South Africa in general, with particular reference to the Port Elizabeth local government.¹

The introductory chapter will provide a background and rationale as well as a motivation for the study in order to put the problem in context. The problem statement that arises, the research problems, hypothesis and objectives and the approach to the study are also provided. Since the study will be subject to limitations, the research scope and demarcation of the period of study will be set out briefly. A concise description is given of terms frequently used in this thesis in order to avoid misinterpretation.

The research approach in this study is descriptive, qualitative and interpretive. To clarify this approach, it has also been necessary to explain the manner in which information was gathered, as well as the research method employed. This chapter concludes with an overview of the chapters contained in the thesis.

1.2 Background and Rationale

South Africa, like many other countries in the southern hemisphere, made its

¹ Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Despatch have jointly been known as the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality since December 2000 when the most recent municipal elections were held.

historic transition from authoritarian rule to democracy with the founding elections in 1994. In the past five years, many changes have occurred, aimed at the institutionalisation of formal structures for representation and participation.

Public participation in the making and implementation of policy is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. Before the introduction of a democratic constitutional dispensation in April 1994, however, it was limited and not supported by legislation. For instance, in terms of Section 52 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 110 of 1983), which was in effect from 1983 to April 1994, participation in general elections was limited to white, coloured and Indian citizens only. Furthermore, said Constitution made no specific provision for other forms of public participation. Black South African citizens were not given an opportunity to participate in general elections, or to make an input into the process of making and implementing policies that affected them. Their involvement in the process of policy implementation was limited to compliance with the policies of the government.

Even though very little provision was made in an official sense for public participation, black South African citizens attempted to influence the process of policy-making and implementation in various ways during the apartheid era. For instance, they embarked on mass demonstrations and boycotts, such as the historical one held on 21 March 1960 at Sharpeville, for the purpose of protesting against the legislation which required black people to always carry passes or reference books; and the rent and consumer boycotts which occurred in various parts of the country during the 1980s.

The introduction of a democratic constitutional dispensation in 1994 replaced the previous selective and undemocratic government. Consequently, it opened up new opportunities for public participation in policy-making and implementation.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 200 of 1993), commonly known as 'the interim Constitution', enlarged the scope of public participation in the affairs of the public sector. For instance, Sections 16 and 21 of this Constitution provided for the right of assembly, demonstration and petition, as well as political rights for all South African citizens.

The interim Constitution paved the way for the current Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) which further enlarged the scope of public participation through the provisions of Sections 152(1)(e) and 195(1)(e), which encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government and public participation in policy-making.

In addition to the constitutional provisions for public participation, which are stipulated in the 1996 Constitution, statutory provisions in legislation, which also encourage public participation, were promulgated anew.

The promulgation of these statutory provisions went hand in hand with the emergence and prominence of the role of community forums and interest groups in policy-making and implementation in South Africa. Furthermore, the adoption of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as a policy framework of the government and its subsequent implementation reinforced the idea of public participation in policy-making and implementation. This is also due to the fact that the RDP is supposed to be a people-driven process (African National Congress 1994:5). In a post-apartheid society, the emphasis is now on empowerment of the entire public, to enable all its members to change their lives and their environment to counter the decades-long erosion of their dignity and confidence as individuals and as communities.

Empowering participants is a vital tool of participation. Empowerment means that people gain an understanding of and control over social and political forces, in order to improve their position in society (Killian 1998:118). As a process, empowerment refers to the development of an effective support system for those who have been blocked from achieving individual or collective goals because of the severity or complexity of the discrimination they suffered (Solomon 1976:22).

Participation is regarded as one of the cornerstones of democratic government. Public calls by political office-bearers for greater public participation in matters of governance and politics currently reinforce these principles to a significant degree. Whatever form of democracy is chosen (representative or proportional systems of representation, multi-party, non-party or one-party systems), participation by the citizenry is one guarantee for strengthening democracy. In the case of South Africa, a choice was made for multi-party politics during the multi-party negotiation process that culminated in the formal acceptance of the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), as well as the Bill of Rights.

Formal structures have been created on national, provincial and local government levels that function well in the majority of cases. The following are some of the abundant examples of formal structures: the institutionalisation of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), the National Council of Provinces, parliamentary Constituency Offices, forums for community/police interaction and the Defence Review process.

Indeed the central drive behind the ruling government's policy was to enhance public participation. Experience elsewhere proved that the resurrection of parliaments and other institutions is an important step in achieving lasting and sustainable democracy. The strong link between public participation and a healthy, robust democracy is undeniable. Various observers have pointed out that public participation in African democracies – also in South Africa – is sub-optimum (Khululekani Institute for Democracy 1998.)

In order to reinforce democratic principles in public institutions, public participation in the field of public administration should therefore be encouraged. Furthermore, the public policy-making process is partially undertaken by public institutions and public participation in public policy-making should be part of this process. However, the making and implementation of policy are interrelated to such an extent that public participation in policy-making can barely be meaningful without taking policy implementation into consideration. It is against this background that this research has been focused on public participation in public policy-making and policy implementation in South Africa in general, with specific reference to the Port Elizabeth local government.

1.3 Motivation

After having been a Public Administration lecturer for five years, the author got to know the contribution made by public participation to the process of bringing governance closer to the people as a particularly interesting and useful field of study. Port Elizabeth was chosen as the focus of the survey, since the author lives there. The potential value of this study lies in the fact that it will arrive at a quantifiable indication of the status of public participation at the end of the first five-year cycle of democratic rule in South Africa. The notion of institutionalised, encompassing and regular opportunities for public participation in the governance process in the country is a key component of the new democratic order that was introduced subsequent to the 1994 elections.

This thesis also has further academic value in that, with the exception of the research of Clapper (1993), there has not been much documented research that focuses on public participation in public administration. Writers within this field of study mainly emphasise the phenomenon in the developmental, sociological and social work fields, and also paid relatively little attention to mechanisms that

could strengthen public participation in political and administrative policy-making mechanisms. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that public participation was regarded as a phenomenon in programmes for participation in community development, as well as the fact that the previous authoritarian dispensation did not see it as a priority.

As Clapper (1993: 3) rightly remarks in his research, the need for study in this area has come to the fore in a report of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) with regards to citizen participation in the policy formulation and execution processes. He states further on that the report indicates a lack of scientific research in said field, that most dissertations/theses have covered the field of citizen participation, and that the consideration has been primarily in the field of social work. He concludes that South African writings and research on the topic are sparse and, in the main, merely form subdivisions of other major studies.

Clapper's study, which was based on citizen participation before the 1994 elections, served as a further motivation of the necessity and relevance of determining to what extent the public is aware of newly acquired opportunities and democratic freedom of interaction with the legislatures and organs of government.

1.4 Problem Statement

The interaction between the public and political and administrative institutions in the South African democracy takes a multiplicity of forms and aspects and is, in principle, complicated. After all, the heterogeneous public, government, parliament, provincial and municipal authorities and administrations, business sector, unions, political parties and community organisations – each of these has

its own function, and its own professional tendencies, which are often a source of controversy. They also often derive their power and authority from various different statutory and other sources. Public participation offers a channel through which the public can give inputs into decision-making in terms of the making and implementation of policy.

This is all the more essential in South Africa's case, as the country emerges from apartheid rule during which the majority of South Africans were actively turned away from and denied the right to participate in the process of governing. The legacy of apartheid rule continues to haunt the implementation of public participation programmes in the communities. Often, the democratic institutions of Government, as well as their concomitant processes and rules, which the aim is to bring closer to communities, appear to them as something distant, alien, and perplexing. No reminder is needed of the inherent danger this poses for a healthy system of democracy. Citizens will not support democratic institutions that appear foreign or incomprehensible to them.

However, popular support for democracy and its institutions and policies is not, as is commonly assumed, expressed solely via the ballot box during elections, but is also dependent upon ongoing and regular interaction between the public and these institutions and their policies.

In view of the background provided above, the main problem to be addressed by this study will, therefore, be:

What is the nature of the interaction of public participation and public policy-making and implementation, and how can this interaction be strengthened and made more fluid?

1.5 Research Problems

The need for such reflection as stated in the problem statement is important, because the determination of levels of public interaction with democratic institutions can serve as a useful benchmark whereby the progress of democratisation in South Africa and the consolidation of our democratic gains can be assessed.

Through the application of primary and secondary source research methods, the following research questions, which could lead to the possible solution to the problem statement, were pursued:

- To what extent is the South African public aware of its democratic rights and freedom and newly acquired opportunities of interaction in the process of policy-making and implementation?
- To what extent are the processes that manage this interaction between the public and the institution conducive to involvement by the public in having a say in policy-making and implementation?
- If the South African public were prepared to take advantage of opportunities for participation, what are the issues of concern in which they would like to have a say in terms of how they would like to be governed?
- How can public participation be effectively and efficiently integrated and encouraged in the process of policy-making and implementation in the South African government?

While the author acknowledges the fact that the results of a survey which is restricted to a small proportion of the public are never entirely or finally

conclusive, the author hopes that the results from this research on public participation will provide valuable and useful indicators of the levels of general knowledge among South African citizens about the processes of interaction between legislative and governance institutions, their intentions to interact with such institutions and the kind of issues they would raise.

1.6 Hypothesis

The author is of the opinion that - though it may be an over-simplification of the role of public participation in policy-making and implementation - the following hypothesis could well be formulated:

The levels of knowledge regarding legislation, institutions and processes of public interaction with the legislative and policy-making and implementation institutions, and the intention to participate in these processes, are important, as they can serve as useful indicators and yardsticks whereby the progress of democratisation and empowerment in South Africa can be both reflected and acted upon.

1.7 Objectives and Approach to the Study

From the hypothesis for the study, follows the objective of this thesis (which in turn is closely linked with the approach to the study), namely to analyse the special role that public participation plays in the policy aspects of the South African political and administrative system.

It is also an objective of the research to examine public participation in order to arrive at a definition and description of the concept appropriate for the thesis. Following the clarification of the concept, the thesis aims to establish a

framework of prerequisites for public participation in policy-making and implementation.

Once the questions and uncertainties regarding public participation, policy-making and implementation and the role of public participation in a democracy had been integrated, the research problem for the purposes of this thesis was the selection of a framework by way of which the nature, role and functioning thereof could be explained and appraised according to its value.

The most useful theoretic approach in explaining public participation in policy-making and implementation was to isolate and consider the variables that influence the phenomenon – i.e. to determine the nature and scope of participation in community development programmes, the nature and scope of public participation in a democracy, and the nature and scope of policy-making and implementation, as well as the interaction between these variables. These variables, which form the basis for the major part of the thesis, helped to define the parameters and limitations within which and under which public participation functions, and from this originated the basic framework and objectives that give the study the necessary theoretic grounding. Obviously it remains a mere framework and the influence of the various variables on public participation and policy-making and implementation vary all the time, as they react to each other or are modified by the course of events.

The objective of the thesis was not to become entangled in the fine detail of the historical record; nor was the intention to assess the value of public participation in policy-making and implementation. The aim was rather to perform an investigation into generalisations on public participation in a democratic society, and to make generalisations in terms of the knowledge of the public regarding public participation opportunities and their freedom to interact with their respective governmental institutions (with the emphasis on local authorities).

1.8 Scope of the Research and Demarcation of the Period of Study

The research focuses on public participation in policy-making and implementation at local government level in South Africa in general, and in particular on the municipality of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape.

This study covers a period of approximately five years – from 1995, with the implementation of the new Constitution, until September 1999, shortly after the second general elections.

The latter date was used as a cut-off point in order to contain the thesis within a reasonable scope for both the researcher and for examination purposes. (Like most researchers, the author, too, found it difficult to make an end to his studies ... Little wonder that academics are gently mocked with sayings such as *There is always one more person to interview, one more loose end to tie up, or one more area to pursue!*)

1.9 Terminology

Comprehensive conceptual clarification of terms pertinent to the research occurs particularly in chapters two and three. The terms utilised throughout the thesis are concisely defined below.

- 1.9.1 **Policy** means a body of rules and regulations which is usually found in acts, ordinances, by-laws, circulars and memoranda.
- 1.9.2 **Policy-making** means the process of making acts, ordinances, by-laws, circulars and memoranda.
- 1.9.3 **Policy implementation** means putting into effect the contents of the act, ordinance, by-law, circular or memorandum.

- 1.9.4 **Participation** means taking part with others in an exercise.
- 1.9.5 **Public participation** means people who are or may be affected by an exercise taking part in such exercise.
- 1.9.6 **Governance** refers to the function, action, process or qualities of government. It does not refer to government structures such as a cabinet or a local council, but to the policies made and the efficacy with which these are implemented.
- 1.9.7 **Public hearings** for the purposes of this study means a public hearing on all three levels of government e.g. where it includes a local authority/institution hearing (see section 4.8.1.1).

1.10 Information Gathering and Research Method

This study rests on a variety of sources. Besides primary research done by way of a qualitative participative observation study, various leading persons were also consulted, interviews were conducted, a survey questionnaire was sent out, and use was made of other primary and secondary sources.

1.10.1 Information Gathering

In an effort to obtain information and knowledge on the field of study and research methods, primary as well as secondary literature was consulted.

The review of relevant literature has indicated that the studies of public participation have previously been approached mainly from an international perspective. Therefore, the review of literature would be insufficient for fulfilling all the objectives of this study. It would, for instance, not be sufficient for the purpose of applying the study to the South African situation. Although many British and American writers have written on various aspects of participation, little literature is available on the role and functioning of public participation in the

field of study of Public Administration. As with the history of administration, the day-to-day activities of local authorities, too, have, in many respects, been poorly documented.

In order to overcome this deficiency, use had to be made of sources of information that focus on public participation from a South African perspective.

The use of the aforementioned sources of information has indeed made the study applicable to the South African situation. The use of the Constitution and statute of the Republic of South Africa has, for instance, shown the framework through which the process of public participation occurs in South Africa. It has also shown the political and administrative context within which public participation occurs.

1.10.2 Research Method

A comprehensive literature study, questions posed during the interviews and direct, participative observation during sessions and meetings, and a survey questionnaire were the most important research methods used in the thesis. When the final choice had to be made, the author was concerned mainly about offering representative examples, rather than merely including a variety of similar examples in historic-chronological order. This led to the regular inclusion of older sources, as well as sources in other fields of study, which gave greater insight than the most recent literature would have into the actions taken within specific situations and the reasons specific customs originated. Furthermore, regular new publications on this topic do not exist, since it is a field where often over the longer term there are no changes worth mentioning.

1.10.2.1 Literature Study

Literature on development, community development, community participation, democracy, and public participation that represents important literature sources of case studies where public participation is addressed with regard to specific matters is used in this thesis.

The most important literature on the evaluation of participation as an aid to gaining a better understanding of evaluation as an appropriate research methodology includes:

- Relevant literature on policy-making and implementation
- Unpublished dissertations and theses
- South African Constitution and other relevant legislation and statutes of the Republic of South Africa
- Official and unofficial documents of the City of Port Elizabeth
- Documents of the Ratepayers' Association of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum
- Research reports
- Political speeches
- Articles from journals and newspaper reports

1.10.2.2 Survey Questionnaires

Survey questionnaires were administered to respondents in selected townships and suburbs of Port Elizabeth. The townships are Zwide, KwaZakhele, New Brighton, Motherwell, KwaMagxaki and KwaDwesi. All these townships were previously disadvantaged. Almost all their residents are black people. The South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) and the African National Congress (ANC) are the predominant organisations in these townships. The selected suburbs are Newton Park, Walmer, Algoa Park and Malabar. Newton Park is a predominantly white residential area that is gradually changing into a business area. Walmer is a big residential area with a white and black community. Algoa Park is a predominantly coloured suburb and Malabar a predominantly Asian suburb. Specific target groups constituted members of the Port Elizabeth Residents' and Ratepayers' Association and officials of the City of Port Elizabeth.

The determination of the universe proved to be problematic, because the researcher did not have an accessible working universe from which to sample. As a result, the researcher used a sampling technique which best represented a working universe within the resources available to him. The sampling technique used was that of the purposive sampling model. With this technique, the researcher used his expertise to select subjects who represented the population being studied (Bailey 1982:99). According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991:66), respondents chosen in a purposive sample are chosen because they possess the necessary characteristics or information, and because they are accessible to the researcher. The sample size *per se* is considered less important than the criteria used to select the sample. A variant of the purposive sampling model that was utilised was a mix of strategic informant sampling. This is defined by Smith (1975:117) as sampling that rests on the assumption that knowledge is

unequally distributed and that different respondents will provide a range of specific, general and marginal observations. It was difficult to determine whether the sample in fact represented the population. Furthermore, "the basic assumption behind purposive sampling is that with good judgement and an appropriate strategy, we can handpick the cases to be included and thus develop samples that are satisfactory in relation to our need" (Judd, Smith & Kidder 1991:136).

The survey questionnaire based on structured interviews was an important source of information. Respondents were asked if they would study a questionnaire prior to the interview to familiarise themselves with the nature of the study. Public Administration Honours students and community workers also participated by distributing the questionnaires and conducting some interviews when the survey was conducted. (The questionnaires were also administered at the City of Port Elizabeth, and were completed by various senior officials.)

The questionnaires used in the implementation of this survey can be found in Appendices 5, 6 and 7. In all three groups, the respondents were 18 years and older. These groups were chosen in order to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to the study of public participation.

Two measuring instruments were used in the study: personal interviews and self-administered mailed questionnaires. Interviews were chosen as the measuring instrument for the sample, because some of the respondents were easily accessible to the researcher. The respondents could therefore be encouraged to participate in discussions on the research topic and the particular problems experienced in their communities.

The data analysis was restricted to the generation of frequency tables, cross tabulations of variables, correlation analyses and multivariate analyses of

variance. Because percentages were rounded off, the totals reflected in some cases do not always add up to 100%.

1.10.2.3 Interviews

The literature study and survey questionnaire were supplemented by interviews and a large part of the information used in chapter five was obtained from a series of interviews conducted from 1997 to 1999 with officials and councillors of the City of Port Elizabeth, the Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum, the Port Elizabeth Residents' and Ratepayers' Association, and the South African Civic Organisation, as well as community workers and members of the public, all of whom have provided a basic view of public participation from a practical perspective, with reference to the City of Port Elizabeth. Altogether 53 interviews were conducted in this way. The selection of a representative group was adjusted in line with the way in which the survey questionnaire was distributed.

There were mainly two problems with conducting interviews on a topic of this nature. The situations in which observation would take place and the persons with whom the interviews were to be conducted were chosen, and the kind of questions to be asked were designed to forestall these problems.

Firstly, there was the question of finding the most ideal touchstone with which to assess the validity and reliability of the information provided. The truth can be distorted in various ways during an interview. Sometimes this is done deliberately, by a person wanting to blow his own bugle, or justify his actions, or defend his own point of view (or that of the municipal authority). Sometimes a

false picture is given, often unconsciously, or sometimes certain facts have simply been forgotten. Sometimes certain actions are rationalised in order to please the interviewer.

As more and more interviews were conducted, it became easier to analyse information and evaluate its validity. In a sense, the distortions were even important in themselves, since they showed how a person's biases could influence his actions in specific situations. The thesis was an attempt to understand the conduct of certain individuals as seen from their own perspective.

- ***Nature of the interviews***

The interviews either took the form of questions during the observation of meetings and discussions when instructions were discussed and executed, or were structured as specific individual conversations.

Generally, the interviews lasted one to one and a half hours, although some took two to three hours (not that they were necessarily always more useful!) Since the interviews were aimed at a fair evaluation of the reality behind the activities of public participation, it was decided not to make use of a structured questionnaire. On the other hand, interviews based on an "open-ended questions approach" tend to lead to endless narrations, confused babbling and gossip. The questions posed as a result of participative observation during meetings¹, led to useful insights on the way in which decisions are taken, but did

¹Personal observation in the meetings of the Port Elizabeth Residents' and Ratepayers' Association, the Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum and the Port Elizabeth City Council was another source of information regarding the process of public participation.

not give much information on the interaction between policy-making and policy implementation. The three techniques were tested in six preliminary interviews. The ultimate structure of the interviews lay between these three approaches. A conversational questionnaire served as the starting point for most of the interviews. Some questions were posed to all the persons interviewed, whereas others varied, in accordance with the status of the person. It became clear in time that some persons preferred an interview based on a questionnaire, while others resented being asked specific questions. Interviews were adjusted accordingly.

1.11 Overview of Chapters

After completion of the research, the collected material was integrated and coordinated so that the facts and observations could speak for themselves. The results were divided into the following chapters:

Chapter one of the thesis provides a general introduction to the entire study. It includes the background and rationale of the study (in order to provide context); the motivation; the problem statement; the hypothesis; the research problems encountered; and an explanation of the approach to, and therefore by implication the aims of, the study. The demarcation of the period of study and scope of the research are also briefly mentioned. The gathering of information and the research methods are explained, and specific key concepts used in the text are briefly listed.

In order to gain a better understanding of evaluation as a research method, **chapter two** gives a literature study of evaluation studies in the fields of study of development and community participation, as an orientation. In order to provide

background to the following chapters, a conceptual clarification and general overview are also presented in terms of development (with specific reference to community, community development and community organisation), democracy, participation and policy-making and policy implementation.

In **chapter three**, the meaning of the concept public participation is investigated in more detail. Attention is paid to the historical milieu of participation. The context of participation in governance is examined. In order to further clarify the meaning of public participation, dimensions of participation are identified and described. Different forms of participation are considered. To highlight some initiatives in public participation a summative overview is given of current public participation initiatives in South Africa. Finally, the reasons for improving public participation in governance are indicated as a precursor to the following chapters.

Then follows an explanation, in **chapter four**, of the prerequisites for public participation in policy-making and implementation. The South African constitutional and statutory provisions run like a golden thread through the investigation of the different elements related to the purpose of public participation. Prerequisites which can be utilised in order to pursue and realise effective public participation are identified and analysed in order to establish a framework which can serve as a useful basis for investigating the problems inherent to public participation in general and Port Elizabeth municipality in particular, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter five investigates the necessity for and problems of public participation in policy-making and implementation. In order to portray the potential benefits of public participation, prospects of public participation in the making and implementation of policy are also investigated. In addition, the research findings

derived from the survey questionnaires and interviews are also discussed and interpreted in the light of information obtained in the preceding chapters, leading to the conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter.

In **chapter six** a summary is given, and conclusions are drawn, based on the findings of the study. Possible recommendations are also made, which may encourage the support and practice of public participation through consultative mechanisms during the policy-making and implementation process. Possible research projects that could emanate from this research are also suggested.

Finally, the **sources consulted** are listed, as well as **appendices to the survey questionnaires**.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

To provide a background for later chapters, this chapter reviews the variables that influence the milieu of public participation in policy-making.

Selecting a method for researching the role of public participation in policymaking and implementation is also beset with problems of a technical and interpretative nature, and to facilitate understanding of these difficulties, some background is required on the nature of evaluative studies. This is achieved by surveying local and international literature for examples of evaluative research in the study of community development.

The chapter also explores the ideological grounding of participation, while tracing its historical roots. Other areas of enquiry that will be helpful in understanding the milieu of the subject field lie in the broad area of community development, democracy and policy-making within which public participation exists.

In this chapter a general overview is given of evaluation, development with specific reference to community, community development and community organisation, democracy, participation, and policy-making and implementation, as a precursor to the following chapters, which focus on public participation. Consequently, each phenomenon is treated as a concept that is defined and of which the relevance within public participation is indicated. The purpose is to identify the thread running through the fields mentioned below, where the important concept of public participation is situated.

2.2 Evaluation

The purpose of reviewing this area was for methodological considerations, that is, to obtain insights in terms of the research method of this study. However, studies vary in the amount of detail offered with regard to the application of research procedures.

There are two fundamentally distinct types of evaluation: summative and formative (Patton 1987:65).

- Summative evaluations determine the essential effectiveness of programmes and are important in making decisions about whether to continue or terminate a programme.
- Formative evaluations focus on the ways of improving and enhancing programmes.

Empirical programme evaluation occurred as a result of the demand for accountability over massive expenditure by federal agencies in America during the seventies, as an alternative to the charity and political approaches to assessing programme effectiveness (Patton 1987:65).

According to Rossi and Freeman (1989:22) evaluation research prospered to a large extent because of developments in research methods that are applicable to the study of social problems. Programme evaluation uses research methods to gather information, but while basic research is undertaken to discover new knowledge, programme evaluation is undertaken to provide information about programmes.

Different definitions of evaluation reveal differences in what evaluators emphasise in their work:

- It is a process of determining the extent to which objectives have been attained and to identify the reasons for programme success or failure (Lauffer 1978:11).
- It involves the application of credible technical approaches that are utilised for answering questions (Herman, Morris & Fitzgibbon 1987:19).

A review of the literature for examples of evaluation research of participation in the community development field is a major undertaking. Taylor (1994:76) cited figures that showed that in the USA alone, and as early as the mid-seventies, there were some five hundred private firms in existence, primarily to contract for evaluation research. This research looked at studies completed in America and the Netherlands; and those completed in South Africa.

2.2.1 Examples of Studies in America and the Netherlands

One study that provides some detail of its evaluative methods was completed in America by the National Association of Social Workers, under the title "The Project on Neighbourhood Organisations for Community Action" (Turner 1968:3). The study investigated the relevance of selected neighbourhood organisations and the programmes offered to combat the physical, social and economic problems that beset the neighbourhood. The study was done in two phases:

- a) Phase One surveyed the experiences of the above programmes and focused on the identification of goals, organisation, strategies, methods of action, and evidence of conditions associated with their success or failure. It also identified and explored factors in the political and socio-economic arenas that support or set limits on action, and the provision of staff to neighbourhood organisations.

- b) Phase Two called for the analysis of the findings from Phase One and the submission of these findings to a group of community organisation practitioners, theoreticians and social scientists.

Sixty-five laypersons from forty-eight organisations participated in the workshops. Three sources of data collection were utilised: workshop discussion, case material and a questionnaire.

A large-scale impact study by the Joint Consultancy Forum of Netherlands Co-financing Organisations in 1990 (NORRAG News 1992) was aimed at determining the effectiveness and relevance of the programmes it financed from the perspective of the programme recipients. This study found that it was very difficult to assess the effectiveness of the sponsored programmes because of a lack of clarity in the formulation of programme objectives; a lack of clear indicators concerning project outputs; the impact of surrounding environment variables on the effectiveness of the interventions; and the prevalence of programmes supported by the sponsors.

2.2.2 South African Studies

A study by Mary Fitzgerald (1980:19) recorded the process of community development that she had been engaged in as a student as it had evolved in the Eldorado and Kliptown communities in Johannesburg. She had hypothesised that the community development process would lead to citizen participation, resulting in self-help projects aimed at improving the life-style of the community. The evaluation of the field study consisted mainly of her own observations with regard to the sustainability of the groups and projects she had helped to establish.

Dr. Pick (1988), in a study of the welfare work of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, evaluated the desirability of the community development process as

a method of work for the church and assessed to what extent its social workers have the skills and knowledge to fulfil the needs of clients. The information was obtained by means of a mailed questionnaire with the social workers as respondents and established that with the availability of training and supervision, community work could become part of the services offered by the church.

The Development Bank of South Africa commissioned an evaluation of the special programmes for creating employment, which had been introduced by the government. The team responsible for the report described their work as a monitoring exercise more than a cost benefit evaluation (Viljoen 1987) and detailed the programmes offered and the number of persons reached by the various programmes.

Thobeka Magwana studied the mental health needs of black people in Cape Town and evaluated the service provided by the Cape Mental Health Society in respect of this segment of the population (Magwana 1989). She found that black people are mere recipients of a service and are not represented at the planning and decision-making levels. Magwana used the following evaluative criteria in examining problems in service delivery: availability, adequacy, accessibility, responsiveness, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness. She observed that the evaluation procedure practised by the Society was retrospective, emphasising measurement of effort or input.

There are a number of recent contributions to evaluation research. One such a study was commissioned by a funding company that wanted to assess the impact of the training module it was funding. The study assessed to what extent objectives were being reached in the process of programme development. Triegaard (1993:67) conducted this evaluation of a training module provided by the Leadership Institute, a non-profit, community-based organisation which provides services and training to community development

practitioners. The evaluation design was geared to interviews with participants and participant observation. Data collection included reports and video recordings of each of the training modules. A random sample of respondents was selected for the interviews. The researcher described the study as using an open systems model that directed the evaluation toward examining input and output goals, taking into account appropriate community elements.

Van der Mescht (1994) evaluated regional welfare boards which had been appointed in terms of the National Welfare Act of 1978 to structure community participation in the identification of social welfare needs, as well as the planning, initiation and co-ordination of services to meet such needs. She drew up a sample of representatives of regional welfare boards, welfare committees and welfare organisations using both random and non-random sampling procedures. Data collection was by means of a structured questionnaire. The study confirmed the need for institutionalised community participation in the planning and co-ordination. It concluded that regional welfare boards did not function properly and identified shortcomings in work procedures; role performance of members and personnel; composition; legitimacy; and financing.

Van Wyk (1993) developed an instrument to measure community participation. For the development of the measuring instrument, a panel of experts was co-opted for the purpose of allocating values to the relative importance of eight identified areas within the spectrum of community participation. The panel allocated values to the frequency of participation in each of these areas.

The usability of the instrument was tested through data obtained by means of a survey questionnaire covering two hundred households in the Worcester area. With the use of the measuring instrument, the data was manipulated to

calculate attendance indexes for males, females and children, which led to numerous findings, some of which will be discussed in later chapters.

Taylor (1994) directed his study towards the construction of a sociological framework of the nature and scope of community participation in development projects. To this end, a literature study was undertaken of approaches to development, theories of organisation and community participation.

In South Africa, the most frequent use of evaluation is found in programme evaluation as understood in welfare programme proposals submitted by welfare organisations in support of their funding applications. An analysis by McKendrick (1985:167) of the evaluation section of the programme proposal format drew attention to the fact that the compilers of the guidelines for proposal writing have drawn on some major categories of evaluation:

- a) Assessment of effort: This refers to the description of the type and quantity of programme activities. Effort questions are concerned with the inputs into a programme and the programme activities used to achieve programme results. Effort refers to staff time and activity. It does not tell one how well the activities are being carried out, but simply what has happened (Austin 1982:22). Programme effort is necessary for the achievement of programme goals, but the evidence of programme activity in itself is not enough to determine whether the goals have been reached. Therefore, programme effectiveness becomes a further criterion.
- b) Assessment of effect: Programme effectiveness is concerned with whether intended outcomes have been attained as a result of programme efforts (Tripodi, Fellin & Epstein 1985:9). Effectiveness questions yield information about the impact of a programme on its participants, its staff and the agency.

- c) **Assessment of process:** Process evaluations investigate the dynamics of programme operations. They require a detailed description of programme operations (Patton 1987:23). They focus on why certain things are happening, how the parts of the programme fit together, and how people perceive the programme.

The last two studies might be described as answering programme effort questions. This present study aimed to complement this knowledge by yielding information on the effectiveness of public participation in what is essentially a summative evaluation.

It is no simple task to evaluate the developmental impact of public participation in policy matters. To assist in understanding the nature of the problem, it may be instructive to have a brief overview of the question of development. Because the literature on development, community development and community work is so voluminous, this approach involves moving from the general to the specific in what may seem to be a cursory manner, but that is unavoidable within the constraints of the length of the study.

2.3 Development

Development is seen as a process aimed at realising human potential (Bryant & White 1982:3). Through this process, people and communities change to improve their lives in material and other ways, such as in economic, social, political and technological development (Heller 1986:3).

Development is a multi-dimensional concept that is usually linked to notions of a better life (Kenny 1994:9). David Korten has defined development as "...a process by which the members of society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to reproduce

sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations" (Meyer, Theron & Van Rooyen 1995:11).

Economic development has formed the principal criteria for development, where development was synonymous with growth and industrialisation. Bryant and White (1982:4) held the view that this had its roots in the fact that economists exerted a strong influence within the development field, particularly in the 1960s – with the result that 'political economy', 'structural changes', and 're-distribution with growth' were catch-phrases of that era.

To the western countries, the concept of development meant economic growth. This resulted in supplying poorer countries with the financial means to improve living conditions. However, such contribution to the expected economic revival of the less developed countries was minimal and the gap between rich and poor countries became larger. Economic development received the attention of economists who developed the theory of dependency. They argued that third-world countries are made dependent – often under the guise of development – upon developed countries.

This perception of the functioning of international trade led to the charge of 'the development of underdevelopment' which meant that international forces in fact worked to create poverty (Heller 1986:11) – a thesis that was not readily accepted. It was argued that the development of modern imperialism could be explained in terms of economic interest only; and the "immerseration" of the population, as understood in the phrase 'development of underdevelopment', has its basic conceptual apparatus in Marxist-Leninist theories of imperialism (Berger 1989:3).

Much debate over the nature of development eventually led to a change of emphasis to rather seeing human resources as both the target and

instrument of development. Lombard (1991:109) defined development as a process by which the potential of people is developed for the enhancement of their quality of life. It is from this viewpoint - that is, that people are an integral part of development - that community development takes its point of departure.

The expression 'community development' was first adopted in 1948 at the Cambridge Conference (Ferrinho 1980:39). The Conference defined community development as "... a programme of approaches and techniques which rely upon local communities as units of action, and which attempts to combine outside assistance with organised local self-determination and effort, and which correspondingly seeks to stimulate local initiative and leadership as the primary instruments of change" (Ferrinho 1980:39).

The self-help theme was emphasised in the working definition that the United Nations adopted in 1956, which referred to community development as "the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities; to integrate these communities into the life of nations, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress" (Perlman & Gurin 1972:104). The field of activity of community development includes all the developmental dimensions of a community, namely:

a) Physical Development

This involves the provision of infrastructure such as the improvement of roads, housing, water supply and regional planning.

b) Economic Development

This is aimed at agriculture, mining, industry and trade. Potential projects are the initiation of self-help groups, co-operatives, and small business undertakings.

c) Social Development

This is aimed at the welfare of the total community and refers to health and social welfare services, education, recreation and culture. It is aimed primarily at the process of human development and secondarily at the development of services.

d) Political Development

This refers to the network of organisations and structures which are necessary in any community for economic, social and political progress to be maintained (Lombard 1991:212).

Lisk (1988:15) stated that popular participation in development should be broadly understood as the active involvement of people in the making and implementation of decisions at all levels and in all forms of political and socio-economic activity. This is confirmed by Olujimi and Egunjobi (1991:165) using Burke (1983), who define community participation as the ultimate voice in community decision-making; an activity which enables people to have an input in the decision-making process and to play a role in improving their quality of life; and the active process in which persons take part in the initiation and implementation of decisions, and assert their autonomy in taking such initiatives.

There are three underlying concepts of development, which will also be briefly explored, namely community, community development and community organisation.

2.3.1 Community

Those in search of the meaning of community had, at one time, found 94 different definitions (Bennington 1974:260). It is this variation that may have prompted Robert Thornton (1988:13) of the University of Cape Town to

observe that "community, like sex, is a state of desire, not a state of affairs, that is, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, communities, in any ethnographically meaningful sense, do not exist". On the other hand, however, there is "an agreement that, among the many different definitions of community that have been offered, three characteristics are agreed upon as a minimum" (Bernard 1983:167). These are locale, common ties and social interaction.

With respect to the characteristic of locale, one may look at the communities in question and observe that residents are all dependent on the same community services, such as refuse removal, street sweeping and rent collection. Such residents would also be using the same shops and playing fields.

The other characteristics - common ties and social interaction - are marked by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time. The term "gemeinschaft" has been invoked to refer to community in this sense (Bernard 1983:4).

The above was of interest to the author of this study to the extent that one may argue that the failure or the success of public participation strategies are dependent on these three characteristics being present in the communities (publics) concerned. Indeed, the community may be regarded as the basic unit of action in community development. This term requires explanation.

2.3.2 Community Development

According to Kramer and Specht (1983:18), community development develops - through various methods - a sense of community through participation. It must be said that the term 'community development' as it is understood in this study, is one of several practice theories of development.

In defining the concept of community development, Lombard (1991:111) collected the views of several writers, which led to his understanding of community development as –

- a process which moves from one situation to another in terms of progress towards desired changes in terms of specific criteria;
- a method, regarded as a procedure aimed at achieving specific goals;
- a programme consisting of methods and contents;
- a movement, with a purpose to improve the quality of life for everybody and is regarded as a cause to which people are dedicated.

Hence, community development has been described as a process "... aimed at enabling and encouraging communities to become involved, with the necessary support from the private and government sectors, in improving and managing their own living conditions in all areas of development" (Lombard 1991:118).

Community development is a process that demands community involvement and participation (Lombard 1991:115). This can be attributed to the fact that participation strengthens the capacity of individuals and communities to mobilise and help themselves (Midgley 1986:8). For instance, participation can also help ordinary people overcome the feeling of powerlessness and develop a sense of community, as strong community bonds may develop through interaction (Midgley 1986:9). Therefore, through participation, people can become aware of the real state of their own living conditions. Consequently, they could be able to discover and identify common needs, a situation which may lead to the formulation of common goals.

The actual practice of community development was regarded as having been limited to the local level. The early United Nations surveys, published in 1959, indicated that some changes had taken place, but that they were much

less extensive than the promoters had hoped (Perlman & Gurin 1972:105). The surveys cast doubt on one of the basic assumptions of community development - that there would be a correlation between an increase in community self-help activity and the achievement of better standards of productivity (Perlman & Gurin 1972:105).

Another difficulty came to light in the relationship between community projects and the political situation in the different countries. A prominent element in the ideology of early community development projects was the commitment to a non-political approach, avoiding political conflict, relying instead on a process that would unite various groups in common effort. Negative effects resulted from this lack of integration between community projects and the political system. Community development became politicised and came to be either opposed or dominated by political forces (Perlman & Gurin 1972:105). In some countries, community development with decentralisation of government functions ran counter to the tenets of local self-determination that are basic to the development approach.

As a result of these factors, community development programmes were seen in a different light than they had been at the time of their early origins, when they had been considered to be an instrument for major social change. Today such programmes fall under larger programmes of national and regional development (Perlman & Gurin 1972:105).

Some writers (Sheng 1989:57) note that community development and community participation are basically the same thing if one looks at some definitions of community development. For example, Levi and Litwin (1986:4) define community development as a transition from a situation of low to one of higher levels of local participation in decision-making, involvement in activities and utilisation of natural resources. This opens the door to definitions of community participation that make use of key concepts such as 'decision-making' and 'involvement'.

2.3.3 Community Organisation

One practice theory of development of interest to this study is that of community organisation.

Community organisation is defined as a practice of purposeful change directed by a professional person (Kramer & Specht 1983:8).

Community organisation was first introduced in the USA during World War I and has been taught as a professional practice since 1940, with the aim of bringing order to such diverse fields as philanthropy, voluntary associations and community chests. The 1939 Lane Reports to the National Conference of Social Workers brought community organisation into the field of social work (Kraushaar & De Torres 1982:1 5) and it has since been recognised as a field of specialisation for social workers.

The Lane Reports viewed the practitioner as an expert in carrying out a process that helps bring people together to clarify their problem, identify their needs and help them to develop their capacity to deal with their own problems more effectively (Cohen 1974:222). World War II pressures to deal with problems such as slum housing, high unemployment rates, discrimination and segregation gave the new roles for community workers impetus.

The writings of Saul Alinsky (Cohen 1974:222) advocated a more aggressive approach than the passive resistance that characterised early civil rights campaigners and served to further elaborate the choices the community worker could make in order to effect community change. The commencement of the War on Poverty (Cohen 1974:222) gave further impetus to the

development of problem solvers and community change agents through its requirements of citizen participation and action.

Thus, community workers engaged in organising, planning and programming activities began to see themselves as professionals and social planners, using expert knowledge and explicit strategies to influence decision-making and social policy.

Cohen (1974:227) identified three types of settings where community organisation is practised:

1. Voluntary associations: These are membership organisations designed to accomplish particular objectives such as self-help or social action projects.
2. Service agencies: This category includes private as well as public welfare organisations that render a direct service.
3. Planning, co-ordinating and allocating agencies: Examples of these are regional welfare boards, regional planning organisations and central fundraising organisations.

It is clear from the above that there is more than one method of community organisation practice. Rothman (1979:5) suggested a typology of three strategies or models that served to classify the major approaches used in practice. These models are: locality development, social action and social planning.

Locality development is understood as community change that involves widespread citizen participation at local community level, determines goals and implements action. A major focus point is the process of community building (Brager & Specht 1973:27). This utilises local leadership and resources, and emphasises democratic procedures, voluntary co-operation,

self-help, leadership development and educational objectives (Cohen 1974:228).

Social action seeks to achieve basic changes in community practices and major institutions by taking action and applying pressure through a variety of confrontation techniques. Participation is the value most clearly articulated for those who use this approach.

Social planning focuses on the technical process of problem solving and deals with planned change in relation to the delivery of needed services. It emphasises the provision of resources, facilities and services on a co-ordinated basis to meet the social welfare needs of communities.

Community organisation is sometimes viewed as synonymous with the term community work. The latter term is generally accepted in South Africa as the social work method used in community context (Lombard 1991: 69). The goals of community work may be divided into two categories – task goals and process goals:

Task Goals

Task goals are concerned with concrete tasks that are completed to solve a defined problem (Rothman 1974:27). Examples of task goals relevant to this study are:

- a) those dealing with specific problems in the community, e.g. the setting up of soup kitchens;
- b) providing for community needs, e.g. the setting up of a crèche; and
- c) promoting the general welfare of the community, e.g. the provision of training programmes.

Process Goals

Process goals are concerned with the development of abilities in the pursuit of task goals. Process goals invite participation by means of activities that develop the individual, as well as the collective abilities of the community (Rothman 1974:27). Examples of process goals relevant to this study are:

- a) the establishment of co-operation between groups in the community;
- b) the stimulation of participation in community affairs;
- c) the promotion of local leadership; and
- d) task skills such as holding a meeting, taking minutes and book-keeping.

2.4 Democracy

Sometimes people claim that local government is the most democratic tier of government. The reason for this view is that local government is the closest to the people (Geldenhuys [S.a.]:11).

The basic characteristics of democracy should be actualised in local government institutions (Clapper [S.a.](b):52). The essentiality of citizen participation in terms of the continued existence of democracy can clearly be seen when the ancient concept of democracy is considered. This makes it clear that citizen participation, while it may seem to be non-existent in many societies, is not a new phenomenon (Clapper [S.a.](b):52).

2.4.1 The Nature of Government and Democracy in Public Participation

The notion of public participation is deeply ideological in that it reflects beliefs derived from socio-political theories about how societies should be organised (Midgley 1986:4).

It is argued that there are three main theoretical traditions concerning the nature of government and democracy (Kay 1970:200), namely:

a) Participatory Democracy

This emphasises the importance of participation in all aspects of public life for the development of man's individual capacities, which implies that the individual benefits in many ways by associating with others in pursuit of a goal. Furthermore, it is not only the person who gains, but also the community, through a sense of shared purpose. Participatory democracy provides a mechanism and expression for populist ideals of organising people and making them aware of their situation (Kay 1970:200).

b) Democracy by Proxy

It is postulated that since the complexity and size of modern society makes the attainment of participatory democracy impossible, people allow leaders to make decisions on their behalf. According to Smith (1985:88), "it is possible that a man may have a vision of the common good and yet not take part in government."

He continues thus: "This often occurs when men believe that government is in good hands and that the common good will not be better served by their participation. Nor is participation necessary for the development of one's

sense of self-esteem, for many persons who do not participate are not racked by doubts about their worth and doubtless many who do participate are prey to such doubts."

c) Representative Democracy

Modifications of democratic theory have resulted in forms of representative democracy that emphasised the accountability of governing officials to their electorate. There was a perception that a gap had grown between the two as a result of the growth in scale of the institutions through which services were delivered and which separated policy makers from those for whom the service was being provided. It was thought that getting people involved in decision-making leads to the better management of an issue (Smith 1985:88).

2.4.1.1 The Concept of *Democracy*¹

The concept *democracy* emanates from a combination of the Greek words *demos*, meaning 'the people' and *kratein*, meaning 'to rule' or *kratos*, which could mean either 'power' or 'rule' (Holden 1993:7; Arblaster 1991:13). The word 'democracy' was formulated and first used by Aristotle in the context of local government (Gildenhuis, Fox & Wissink 1991:122). Its basic premise was that all citizens should participate in the affairs of their local authority through meetings at which matters of common interest were discussed and solutions to common problems proposed (Gildenhuis *et al.* 1991:122). The problem with this direct approach to democracy, which may require face-to-face interaction among the participants, is that it cannot accommodate

¹ The author is indebted to Clapper for his research, which provided the most useful sources and framework. Clapper, V.A., 1993. *Role and Influence of Citizen Participation in Public Administration with Specific Reference to the Eersterust Local Government*. Unpublished Master's Dissertation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

today's complex local governments, particularly modern cities, since it would – among other reasons – be difficult, if not impossible, to successfully organise meetings which all residents and workers could attend.

Democracy is a concept without a universally accepted meaning. Different people have different perceptions of the term 'democracy'. It was defined by Abraham Lincoln as "government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Holden 1993:7). Lincoln's is a famous definition, which contains phrases such as 'government by the people' and 'rule by the people'. These phrases also tend to appear in the literature as definitions of democracy. For instance, a common conception of democracy is that it means 'government by the people', or at least 'by the people's elected representatives' (Arblaster 1991:2; Janda, Berry & Goldman 1989:36; Brich 1993:47).

Due to a lack of consensus about its meaning, the concept 'democracy' remains controversial and contestable. This state of affairs is attributed to various factors. Brich (1993:47), for instance, attributes it to the vagueness of the terms commonly used to define democracy, the difficulty of clarifying such terms in a value-free manner, and the partially incompatible justifications for democracy. In this regard, terms such as 'the people' are a source of controversy. This is due to the fact that; in spite of the justifiable exclusion of some categories of people – for example the non-adults and the mentally handicapped – from participating in a democratic process such as voting in a general election, excluding some people from 'the people' is a debatable practice. It may therefore be difficult to clarify terms such as 'the people' in a value-free manner within the context of some definitions of democracy.

Holden (1993:4) has attributed the controversy surrounding democracy to the confusion caused by the failure to recognise the difference between the 'defining characteristics' and the 'necessary conditions' of an object. Defining characteristics of objects are the ones by virtue of which words are correctly applied to those objects while the necessary conditions or perquisites of objects are things that must be present for the existence or continued existence of such objects (Holden 1993:4).

In spite of the debate and controversy surrounding the meaning of the concept 'democracy', there is some agreement on the general area of the meaning covered by democracy (Holden 1993:7; Cloete 1993:5). In view of this, Holden (1993:8) has proposed that democracy be defined as "... a political system in which the whole people, positively or negatively, make, and are entitled to make, the basic determining decisions on important matters of public policy".

In order to make a further contribution towards clarifying the meaning of democracy, the principles of democracy are discussed below.

2.4.1.2 Principles of Democracy

The idea of democracy is based on certain principles. Ranney (1975:307) identifies the principles of democracy to be popular sovereignty, political equality, popular consultation, and majority rule.

The idea of the principles of democracy is also adhered to by Janda *et al.* (1989:40) when they identify universal participation, political equality, majority rule, and government responsiveness to public opinion as principles of democracy. These principles indicate that public participation is an indispensable component of democracy. For instance, they address the following questions in the context of a democratic society (Janda *et al.* 1989:37- 40):

Who should participate in decision-making?

How much should each participant's vote count?

How to create a climate conducive to continuous public participation?

How many votes are needed to reach a decision?

In order to clarify the role of the democratic principles in addressing these questions, the principles of popular sovereignty, political equality, popular consultation, and majority rule are discussed below.

2.4.1.2.1 Popular Sovereignty

Democracy is underpinned by the idea of popular power (Arblaster 1991:8), which refers to a scenario where power and authority rest with the *people*. Popular power is the basis upon which popular sovereignty - people as the ultimate authority - rests: "... the principle of popular sovereignty requires that basic governmental decision-making power be vested in *all* members of the community and not in any particular person or ruling class" (Ranney 1975:307).

In order to exercise this basic governmental decision-making power, the members of the community should participate when basic government decisions are made, even though some proponents of democracy may argue that everyone should participate in a democracy, since the theory of democracy does not exclude anyone from participation (Janda *et al.* 1989:37). For practical reasons, however, it remains reasonable and commonly acceptable to exclude some people (Holden 1993:9-12). The exclusion of under age children and the mentally disabled constitutes an example in this regard.

However, the principle of popular sovereignty does not require direct involvement of all the people in the making of all governmental decisions (Ranney 1975:307). In a democracy, people may delegate their decision-making power to legislators, executives and judges. For practical reasons, direct involvement of all the members of the public in the making of all governmental decisions remains a utopian idea, especially in a complex society. It would, for instance, be impossible to successfully organize all the people in any one country in such a way that they can participate whenever governmental decisions are made, let alone to ensure that they actually do participate.

Popular sovereignty exists wherever and whenever the people have the vested power to make final decisions on what decision-making powers are to be delegated, to whom, for how long and under what conditions of accountability (Ranney 1975:307).

Popular sovereignty is, therefore, derived from public participation. In the South African local government sphere, this becomes evident during the local government elections, in which the electorate elects councillors to represent it in the municipal council, which, in terms of section 151(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), has the right to govern the local affairs of the community.

2.4.1.2.2 Political Equality

The principle of political equality requires that all people should be treated equally (that is, in the same way) with respect to matters in which they are the same (Holden 1993:20). This includes the fact that all members of the community should be given equal opportunities for participating in the political process (Ranney 1975:308). For instance, during an election, the votes of different people should carry equal weight, irrespective of who they are.

However, political equality neither implies nor requires equal participation of the people. Its main focus is on the equality of opportunities or treatment given to the people in the political process (Ranney 1975:309). Therefore, variations in the levels of participation have no bearing on the principle of equality.

Chapter two of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), which is the supreme law of the Republic, consists of the Bill of Rights, in which equality is included. According to section 9(1) of said Constitution, “[e]veryone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law”. Section 9(2) further states that full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms is included in equality.

2.4.1.2.3 Popular Consultation

The elected representatives (legislators) and public officials to whom the people’s decision-making power is delegated may take other decisions than those people would have taken, had they participated in the decision-making

process themselves. This would circumvent the principle of popular sovereignty since it would mean that the will of the legislators and/or public officials, rather than that of the people, would prevail.

The principle of popular consultation requires that the decisions on which public policies best promote the people's interests must ultimately be taken by the people themselves and not by legislators or public officials (Ranney 1975:309). Therefore, in a democratic country there should be a mechanism through which legislators and public officials could consult the people in order to find out which policies the people want adopted and enforced. Hence, through a certain method of participation, people will have to indicate which policies they want adopted and enforced, otherwise popular sovereignty would not exist, and subsequently the democratic process would collapse. Popular consultation should therefore create a climate conducive to continuous public participation. Such a climate would also contribute towards ensuring that the public policies preferred by the people, and not by public officials, are implemented (Ranney 1975:309). This in turn would contribute to ensuring that government is responsive to public opinion (Janda *et al.* 1989:40).

In terms of section B(3.3) of the White Paper on Local Government (Notice 423 of 1998), local government should co-operate with local citizens and partners. Therefore, local government should consult the members of the public with regard to local government affairs.

2.4.1.2.4 Majority Rule

Ideally, the will of the people in a democratic state would include the will of everyone in such a state. Therefore, for democracy to prevail, the will of all the people, and not only that of the majority of them, would have to prevail. Arblaster (1991:73) rightly states that the people cannot be equated with only a majority of them.

However, the decision-making process in a democratic government mostly entails choosing from among alternative views – the views supported by

different groups, parties, or individuals among the people (Ranney 1975:310). In such situations a unanimous agreement becomes an impossibility, and the majority decision the next best thing (Arblaster 1991:70). Therefore, while other groups, parties, or individuals may be only partially satisfied with, or even disadvantaged by, the final decision, the answer to the question - Which group's will will prevail? - lies in the principle of majority rule.

According to the principle of majority rule, fifty percent of the people taking part in the process plus one constitute a majority (Janda *et al.* 1989:37).

In the absence of a unanimous agreement in a democracy, the principle of majority rule requires that matters should be settled according to the will or wishes of the majority (Arblaster 1991:69). Therefore, the principle requires that no government decision should be taken against the ultimate desires of popular majorities (Ranney 1975:310).

The principle of majority rule cannot be applied without public participation. Unless the people participate, it would be impossible to identify their views and, subsequently, to determine which view is supported by the majority.

2.4.1.3 Essential Conditions for Democracy

In order to develop and sustain democracy in a country, certain conditions are necessary. These conditions, which are discussed below, include: the regular election of government by the people, the constitution, and human rights (Barber 1995:3).

2.4.1.3.1 Regular Election of Government by the People

The regular election of government by the people reinforces the principle of popular sovereignty in a democratic state. For instance, free and fair elections enable people to decide who should represent them in government. Knowledge of the ideas and beliefs of the candidates, individuals or political

parties with regard to pertinent issues should be accessible to the voters, to enable them to foresee how different candidates are likely to operate, should they win the elections. Democracy ultimately depends on voters freely and knowledgeably choosing political representatives who recognize that their power is derived from popular election, and that they may be removed in the next popular election (Barber 1995:3).

2.4.1.3.2 The Constitution

The Constitution is the fundamental law of the country on which all other laws are based. It cannot be easily changed or amended. The procedure for doing so is usually slow and difficult, requiring far more than ordinary votes (Barber 1995:3). For democracy to survive, it is necessary to have its principles entrenched in the constitution of the country, so that it will be difficult for any government to circumvent the democratic process in order to promote its own will rather than that of the people.

2.4.1.3.3 Human Rights

The fundamental rights of people should be spelt out and given to the people through the bill of rights. These rights include freedom of religion, speech, and the press; the right of assembly; and the equality of all citizens under the law (Barber 1995:3). In a democratic country, these rights should be entrenched in the constitution so that they cannot be easily changed or taken away.

2.4.1.4 Features of Democratic Local Government

Democratic local government is defined by Heymans and Totemeyer as “a decentralised representative institution with general and specific powers devolved to it in respect of an identified restricted geographical area within a state” (Geldenhuys [S.a.]:16). In this definition, democratic local government

is defined in terms of representative democracy, which is discussed in 2.4.1.4.1 below.

The introduction of a democratic constitutional dispensation in April 1994 made South African local government comply with the above description of democratic local government.

This is shown through the discussion given in the following paragraphs.

2.4.1.4.1 A Decentralised Representative Institution

In terms of section 151(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), local government consists of municipalities that must eventually be established for the whole territory of South Africa. Local government is, therefore, geographically located in towns, cities, and metropolitan areas, as well as in rural areas. However, local government in the rural areas is still at an early stage of evolution. Towns, cities, and metropolitan and rural areas are all decentralised; subsequently, local government is a decentralised institution.

The representation of people in government is a fundamental aspect of representative democracy (Reddy 1996:10). In terms of section 151(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) “[t]he executive and legislative authority of a municipality is vested in its Municipal Council.”

The councillors in a municipal council act in a representative capacity in various ways, including the following (Craythorne 1997:74):

- (a) “to ensure that the group and individual interests of their constituents are represented at meetings of the council;
- (b) to ensure that issues that cannot be solved locally are represented to higher tiers of government; and

- (c) to act where public interests are threatened, e g by a nuisance or a condition or situation that could lead to public danger or inconvenience.”

This shows that local government is indeed a representative institution.

2.4.1.4.2 Devolved General and Specific Powers

In terms of section 151(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), “[a] municipality has the right to govern, on its own initiative, the local government affairs of its community, subject to national and provincial legislation, as provided in the Constitution.” Therefore there are legislative and executive powers of municipalities that national and provincial government devolve to them.

In terms of section 156 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the powers and functions of the municipalities are:

- (1) "A municipality has executive authority in respect of, and has the right to administer –
 - a. ... [specific] local government matters ... ; and
 - b. any other matter assigned to it by national or provincial legislation.
- (2) A municipality may make and administer by-laws for the effective administration of those matters that it has the right to administer.
- (3) Subject to section 151(4), a by-law that conflicts with national or provincial legislation is invalid. If there is a conflict between a by-law and national or provincial legislation that is inoperative because of a conflict referred to in section 149, the by-law must be regarded as valid for as long as that legislation is inoperative.

- (4) The national government and provincial governments must assign to a municipality, by agreement and subject to any conditions, the administration of a [specified] matter ... which necessarily relates to local government, if –
 - a. that matter would most effectively be administered locally; and
 - b. the municipality has the capacity to administer it.

- (5) A municipality has the right to exercise any power concerning a matter reasonably necessary for, or incidental to, the effective performance of its functions.”

2.4.1.4.3 Identified Restricted Geographical Area

South African municipalities have identified geographical boundaries. These boundaries have recently been determined by the Municipal Demarcation Board in terms of the Municipal Demarcation Act (Act 27 of 1998). In terms of section 24 of said Act, the objective of determining such boundaries is “... to establish an area that would –

- (a) enable the municipality for that area to fulfil its constitutional obligations, including –
 - (i) the provision of democratic and accountable government for the local communities;
 - (ii) the provision of services to the communities in an equitable and sustainable manner;
 - (iii) the promotion of social and economic development; and
 - (iv) the promotion of a safe and healthy environment;

- (b) enable effective local governance;

- (c) enable integrated development; and
- (d) have a tax base as inclusive as possible of users of municipal services in the municipality.”

2.4.1.5 The Relationship between Public Participation and Democracy in Local Government

In order to develop and sustain public participation, which is a catalyst of democracy, certain conditions should exist or be pursued in local government. According to Van der Vyver, these conditions include the following (Geldenhuys [S.a.]:21):

- “There must be a certain level of education and intellectual sophistication among most members of society within the specific municipality.
- Information must flow freely and the public must also be informed about local government and administration.
- A liberal ethos as a matter of public morality, and thus cherished in the hearts and minds of a cross-section of the inhabitants, must be in place.
- There must be a measure of material prosperity and economic development that more or less makes for comfortable living in the municipality.
- A sense of national as well as local pride and loyalty to collective aspirations that transcends the impetus of self-interest, so as to facilitate promotion of the general weal, must exist.
- A situation of political stability and overall peace must prevail, which will permit the effective functioning of regular local government structures”.

Pursuance of these conditions could help the local government to maintain democratic principles and strive for good governance. The democratic values that may serve as guidelines for local government and management in this regard can be identified. According to Gildenhuys *et al.* (1991:124-125) these values include the following:

- Local government exists for the sake of the individual and not the other way round.
- Direct or indirect public participation in decision-making is imperative for democratic local government.
- Councillors must be sensitive to public problems and needs, feel responsible for satisfying such needs and solving such problems, and realise their accountability to the public.
- Programme effectiveness in an open democratic system means that programme execution must satisfy public needs, not only efficiently, but also effectively.
- There must be social equity.

The above values could serve as a basis upon which the relationship between public participation and democracy in local government could be examined – for instance, the first two conditions could be utilised to highlight this relationship. This is shown in the discussions on direct and indirect public participation in local government and the obligation to participate, which follow below.

2.4.1.5.1 Direct Participation in Local Government

Direct public participation in public policy-making and implementation is commonly known as direct democracy (see section 3.8.1.3). Direct democracy is a political system in which people make direct public policy decisions by themselves (Holden 1993:54). In this system, all the citizens have an opportunity – even an obligation – to take part in the decision-making (Geldenhuys [S.a.]:12). They actually make the decisions by themselves and therefore do not rely on other people to make decisions on their behalf. Most decisions, which may include even the routine ones, are made directly by the people (Holden 1993:54-55). Direct public participation usually manifests through referenda and government elections. The most common manifestation of direct public participation at local level is the election of councillors to represent the people in local government.

One of the aspirations behind the idea of democracy is to bridge or even abolish the gap between the government and the governed (Arblaster 1991:61). Direct democracy appears to be an ideal process through which this aspiration can be pursued and realised. However, because of the wide scope and complexity of modern local, regional and national governments, direct public participation appears to be impossible in most decisions pertaining to the making and implementation of policies (see section 3.8.1.3).

In order to maintain a democratic approach to local governance and counteract this shortcoming, an indirect approach to public participation in policy-making and implementation – as discussed below – is usually adopted, since it appears to be the next best thing.

2.4.1.5.2 Indirect Participation in Local Government

Indirect participation in policy-making and implementation is commonly known as indirect (or representative) democracy (see section 3.8.1.4). Indirect democracy occurs in a political system where people elect representatives to act and decide for them in the processes of policy-making and implementation (Holden 1993:58). The elected representatives should also be accountable to the electorate (Geldenhuys [S.a.]:13). However, even in this political system, most – but not all – decisions are taken by the people's representatives. For instance, the determining policy decisions are still taken by the people themselves through, among other ways, elections and referenda (Holden 1993:55).

2.4.1.5.3 The Obligation to Participate

Local government exists for the sake of the individual and not *vice versa* (Gildenhuys *et al.* 1991:124). Hence Geldenhuys ([S.a.]:18) maintains that local government could be perceived as an essential instrument through which an individual should voice his or her needs. Furthermore, it could be

deduced from the explanation given in the previous paragraphs that without public participation local government cannot be democratic. Therefore, in order to promote and preserve democracy, the public, as individuals and as groups, has an obligation to participate in local government. Studies have shown that a greater extent of public participation in government could lead to the realisation of the democratic ideal of self-government by communities (Arblaster 1991:62) and could subsequently bridge the gap between government and governed.

The challenges of the future of local government constitute a mammoth task that could be addressed through various strategies. One such strategy could be to democratise development, empowerment and redistribution. In terms of section B(1.3) of the White Paper on Local Government (Notice 423 of 1998), this could be done through –

- Promoting the involvement of citizens in the design and delivery of municipal programmes;
- Eliminating obstacles to, and actively encouraging, the participation of people from the previously disadvantaged local communities;
- Adopting participatory strategies that enhance rather than impede the service delivery process;
- Striving for socio-economic development and community empowerment that aims to eradicate poverty. (Empowerment strategies that are mainly focused on women may be more appropriate, since poverty hits women the hardest.)

2.5 Participation

This section deals with the theoretical traditions underpinning participation. A number of definitions are given. A survey of the history of participation in several countries follows. The forms of participation, and the indicators and contra-indicators for participation introduce the discussion of the critical element of this study, which is the process of participation. The relevant, available literature on the manifestation of the phenomenon "public

participation" is not studied and analysed in the literature study, and will be reflected in the chapters to follow.

2.5.1 The Concept

Some theorists and practitioners tend to use the concept 'participation' without defining it. This suggests that it is a commonly known concept, which any target audience should understand – probably because the concept 'participation' forms part of the general vocabulary of most people and its meaning is seldom questioned. Such a train of thought could create a perception that effective communication is taking place, whether or not the concept is actually collectively understood. However, the concept 'participation' is subject to ambiguous and diverse interpretations (Vroom & Jago 1988:30).

It would appear that a particular and precise definition of the concept 'participation' would avoid misunderstandings. However, although attempts have been made to formulate such a definition, clarity is not that easily attained – which can be deduced from the following somewhat vague explanations:

- Participation refers to the act of taking part in a particular activity (Webster 1995:732).
- Participation means taking part, and one participates when one contributes to something (Vroom & Jago 1988:15).
- Participation is “a process through which workers share in decision-making that extends from and beyond the decisions that are implicit in the specific content of the jobs they do” (Clarke, Fatchett & Roberts 1972:6).
- Participation refers to the act of taking part with others in a particular activity (Boaden, Goldsmith, Hampton & Stringer 1982:12).

- Participation can be defined as “an activity undertaken by one or more individuals previously excluded from the decision-making process in conjunction with one or more other individuals who were previously the sole protagonists in that process” (Bekker [S.a.]:41).
- “...Participation simply means taking part, a full part, in the micro decisions of the day-to-day management of the production process” (Lammers & Szell 1989:136).
- “Participation is the term used to designate the process by which people contribute ideas toward the solution of problems affecting the organisation and their jobs” (Beach 1985:357).
- The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles defines participation as taking part in some matter. This raises questions about who takes part, with whom, and in what matter (Onions 1987:649).
- A definition of participation that provides a response to the above questions is that of the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), which defines participation as follows: “Participation occurs when programmes which are desired and utilized by the community are sustained by them after external support has been phased out” (Richardson 1983:108).
- The emphasis in UNICEF's definition in the previous paragraph is on programme desirability and sustainability, relating to the research questions regarding the extent to which people become involved with policy-making and implementation and for how long this involvement can be sustained over time.

Finally, Bailey (1994:2) speaks of the disparities between definitions, and the fact that participation is seen as covering a wide spectrum, from consultation to citizen power.

Certain characteristics of the concept 'participation' can be deduced from the above definitions:

- Participation is a relative concept, since its particular and precise meaning cannot be formulated without referring to a particular activity. This indicates that participation can only be defined in relation to an action or specific activity.
- Participation implies that there is another party besides the participant(s) involved at a particular moment in the issue at stake. In this regard, the parties concerned with the matter can undertake the exercise jointly – for instance, a decision can be taken at a meeting with all the relevant role players taking part. It can also take place in consecutive stages, for instance, with certain participants giving input to others who will in turn take a final decision on the matter.
- Participation is undertaken by people, either individually or in groups. For instance, interest groups or interest group representatives can participate in the decision-making process of their local authority through committees. Individual citizens can participate in the same process by presenting their opinions on specific policy matters through written submissions to public officials and/or political office-bearers (Cloete 1998:147).
- Participation is a means to an end. It is an activity undertaken to realise a particular objective (Lammers & Szell 1989:117). In this regard, participation could make possible an inclusive approach to the pursuit of institutional and social objectives.
- Participation is a deliberate and goal-oriented activity. This is due to the fact that the activities in which people participate within various institutions are in themselves goal-oriented and, therefore, participation is a deliberate contribution towards the pursuit of such goals.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, participation is defined as a deliberate act in which people, either as individuals or as members of a group, take part in a goal-oriented activity.

2.6 Policy-making

Public policy is the product of the policy-making process. Hence Hanekom and Thornhill (1993:63) contend that policy-making is the activity that precedes the publication of a goal, while policy is the result of this activity.

Policy-making is a comprehensive process involving several participants. Legislatures, public officials, political parties, interest groups and individual citizens are, for instance, participants in the policy-making process (Anderson 1997:60-77).

In order to explain the manifestation of public participation in policy-making, policy-making as an administrative function; a definition of public policy; the process of public policy-making; the models of the policy-making process, the phases of the policy-making process, the types of policy-making; and participants in policy-making are all discussed below.

2.6.1 Policy-making as an Administrative Function

Public administration comprises functions that, in any institution, can be classified into administrative, functional and auxiliary functions (Cloete 1997:1). Administrative functions are policy-making, financing, organising, staffing, determination of work procedures, and control, and are applicable to any institution. The functional activities are concerned with the provision of services that are unique to particular institutions and/or sections of institutions. In South Africa, for instance, the provision of education, security,

and personnel services in the public sector are functional activities that are the responsibilities of the Departments of Education, Safety and Security, and Public Service and Administration respectively. Auxiliary functions, such as decision-making, data processing, programming and research are also applicable to any institution (Cloete 1997:4).

According to Hanekom and Thornhill (1993:32-35), the separation of politics and administration, scientific management, despair, an identity crisis, and synthesis have been identified as consecutive phases in the development of Public Administration as an academic discipline. These phases correspond to the periods 1900-1926, 1927-1937, 1938-1970, and 1970 onwards respectively. The perception that policy-making is not an administrative function was prominent during the phase of the separation of politics and administration. This was based on the view that policies are in the domain of politics, while the execution of policies lies in the domain of administration (Henry 1992:21).

However, it was realised during the synthesis phase that public administration is a process which cannot be divorced from politics and therefore "... policy-making is an activity that falls within the sphere of the practice of public administration as well as within the context of the practice of government" (Hanekom & Thornhill 1988:47). Therefore, policy-making is an administrative function. The fact that public officials play a role in policy-making bears testimony to this (Fox, Schwella & Wissink 1991:36-41 and Hanekom 1987:27). However, the role of public officials in policy-making is discussed in 2.6.3.4.2).

2.6.2 Definition of Public Policy

The literature survey indicates that there are various definitions of public policy. For instance, public policy has been defined as –

- “A relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or a set of actors in dealing with a problem or a matter of concern” (Anderson 1997:9);
- “... whatever governments choose to do or not to do ...” (Dye 1978:3);
- “... the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society ...” (Easton in Dye 1978:3); and
- “... a desired course of action and interaction which is to serve as a guideline in the allocation of resources necessary to realise societal goals and objectives, decided upon and made publicly known by the legislator” (Hanekom 1991:8).

There is no universally accepted definition of public policy. Furthermore, according to Hogwood and Gunn (1984:23), policy is always subjectively defined. A clear identification of the characteristics of a policy can therefore contribute towards clarifying the meaning of the concept 'public policy'.

The following characteristics of a policy are identified:

- Policy involves a series of decisions (Hogwood & Gunn 1984:19). There is therefore a difference between a 'policy' and a 'decision'. The relationship between these two concepts stems from the fact that policy-making is an activity that includes a series of decisions – that is, policy-making is a more comprehensive and continuous activity than decision-making, which specifically relates to a choice being exercised between competing alternatives at a particular moment (Hanekom 1991:13).
- Policy involves behaviour, as well as intentions (Hogwood & Gunn 1984:21). A policy differs from a goal, since the latter only indicates willingness to realise a particular state of affairs in future, which is an intention, without actually involving the necessary behaviour for its realisation. For instance, if the implementation of affirmative action is the

goal of a particular government, it is necessary for such a government to make a policy on affirmative action that will identify and legitimise actions related to the implementation of affirmative action, in order to realise that goal.

- Policy involves that which is actually done by the government (Anderson 1997:11), and relates to particular issues. For instance, there can be taxation policies, housing policies and an affirmative action policy. Therefore, a policy relating to a particular issue involves what the government is doing about such an issue. If the government decides to do nothing about an issue that has been raised as a matter of concern, then the policy about such an issue is to do nothing (Anderson 1997:12).
- Policy may have predictable as well as unpredictable outcomes (Hogwood & Gunn 1984:21). The dynamic nature of society and future uncertainty might yield policy outcomes unpredictable. For instance, government's responsiveness to pressure emanating from interest groups and/or political parties that are opposed to a particular policy might result in unpredicted policy outcomes.
- Policy is a relatively stable purposive course of action (Anderson 1997:9). Policies are made in order to pursue and realise certain objectives. A policy is therefore a goal-orientated action rather than random behaviour (Fox *et al* 1991:27).
- Policy arises from a process taking place over time (Hogwood & Gunn 1984:22). As has been set out above, policy-making with policy as the product is an ongoing process, occurring over time.
- Public policy involves government playing a major role. For a policy to qualify as public policy it must have been processed by public institutions, even if the private sector and non-governmental organisations have been instrumental in its making (Hogwood & Gunn 1984:23).

- Public policy is authoritative and has a legally coercive quality (Anderson 1997:12). Members of the general public are bound to comply with the stipulations of public policy, otherwise they might face relevant penalties. There is no way in which a citizen can exclude him/herself from the jurisdiction of public policy.

2.6.3 The Process of Policy-making

Policy-making is a complicated process with no apparent beginning or end (Fox *et al.* 1991:31). Finalising the policy-making process for a particular policy may lead to the initiation of another policy-making process. Hence, Fox *et al.* (1991: 31) state that an “existing policy may create a demand for another policy”.

Various models of policy-making have been devised by a variety of scholars. Some of these models are applicable to the issue of public participation and are discussed below.

2.6.3.1 Models of the Policy-making Process

A model is a simplified representation of reality, which can be used to interpret and explain complicated objects and phenomena (Hanekom 1991:46). Models can therefore also be used to explain the process of policy-making.

According to Woll (1974:21) the classical, group, elite, and systems models have been devised in order to explain how policy-making occurs.

2.6.3.1.1 The Classic Model

The classical or institutional model (Hanekom 1991:45) is based on the viewpoint that the interests of the legislature, executive and judiciary should be taken into account before public policy is developed and implemented (Woll 1974:21). Although the dominant role of the legislature in policy-making is recognised, the fact that policy-making is the responsibility of all three organs of government is emphasised.

According to Henry (1992:290), the institutional model with its focus on the organisational chart of government has ignored the links between the different organs of government. It therefore isolates the legislature, judiciary and executive from each other. However, due to the influence of the 'behavioural revolution', institutional studies of the policy process have been set aside in favour of studies of group, elite and systems models (Henry 1992:291). This model does not include any form of public participation as such in the policy-making process.

2.6.3.1.2 The Group Model

According to Dye (1978:24), policy makers are perceived as constantly responding to pressure from different groups in group theory. Public policy, which each of the contending groups want to be put in its favour, is perceived as the equilibrium reached in the group struggle at any given moment.

Different pressure groups tend to have different interests concerning particular issues, therefore pressures tend to act and react to each other in an attempt to influence policy-making (Henry 1992:289). Consequently, public policy outcomes tend to favour the interests of the group applying the

stronger pressure (Hanekom 1991:79). This phenomenon can be illustrated by means of Figures 2.1 and 2.2 (Henry 1992:289-290).

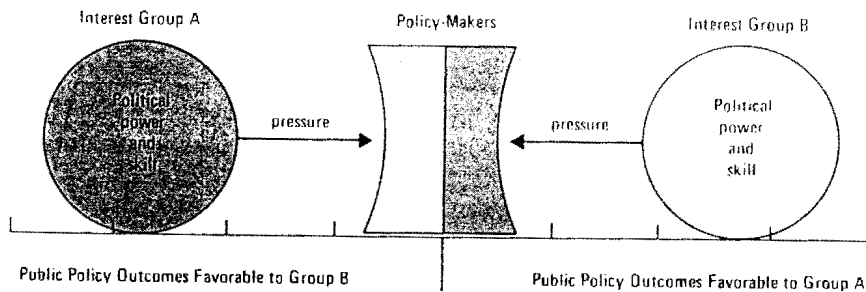


Figure 2.1: Equal pressure by Interest Groups on Policy Makers

Figure 2.1 indicates a hypothetical situation in which interest groups A and B have the same power and skill in influencing policy makers, although each group's interest is directly opposed to that of the other. Due to the intensity of the pressure that they exert, policy outcomes will be equally distributed in favour of both interest groups. In reality, some interest groups tend to have more power and skill than others and consequently exert stronger pressure on policy makers. When this is the case, the ultimate result becomes the distribution of policy outcomes in favour of the interest group with the stronger influence, a situation that is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

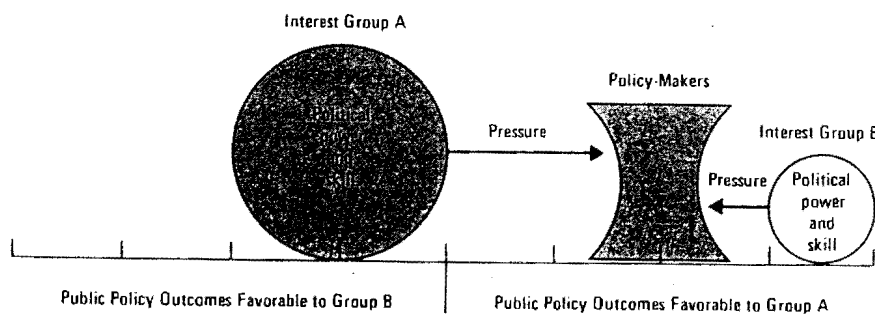


Figure 2.2: Unequal Pressure by Interest Groups on Policy Makers

Although the group model is mainly associated with the legislature, scholars

have recognised that pressure groups also affect the executive organ of government (Henry 1992:289). This indicates that pressure groups participate in the policy-making process undertaken by public institutions. The group model shows that methods of public participation such as negotiation and collective bargaining could be utilised by interest groups in order to influence the outcomes of the policy-making process.

A discussion of interest groups as participants in policy-making is given in 4.2.

2.6.3.1.3 The Élite/Mass model

According to the elite/mass model, individuals in a society can be divided into two classes for the purpose of policy-making. The small elite groups are the leaders and the large groups of the masses are the followers (Woll 1974:46). The elite, who are presumed to be well-informed, make policies for the masses who are presumed to be ill-informed. Consequently, public policy reflects the preferences of the elite (Dye 1978:25). The elite also have common values that differ from those of the masses (Henry 1992:288). Public officials are responsible for implementing public policy that flows from the elite to the masses. Figure 2.3 can be used to illustrate the above model (Dye 1978:25-26).

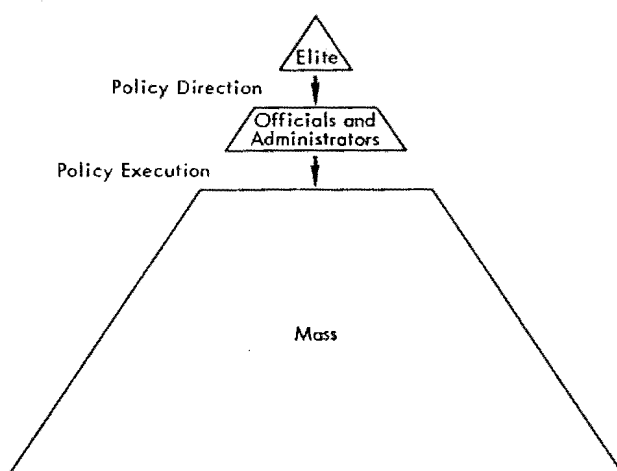


Figure 2.3: The Élite Model

According to the elite/mass model, public policy does not reflect the demands of society but the preferences of the elite. The masses are, to a great extent, passive and have only an indirect influence on policy-making by participating in elections (Dye 1978:27). The elite/mass model includes only one form of public participation, namely voting. Therefore, it gives the public the opportunity to participate in determining who should govern only. Consequently, it is not suitable for promoting democratic governance since such governance requires that people should not only participate in determining who should govern them, but should also contribute to shaping public policies (Reddy 1996:3).

2.6.3.1.4 The Systems Model

In the systems model, policy-making is perceived as a system comprising major subsystems, which in turn include inputs, conversion, outputs and feedback (Fox *et al.* 1991:31-32). The nature of the policy-making process is cyclical as depicted in Figure 2.4 (Hanekom 1991:81).

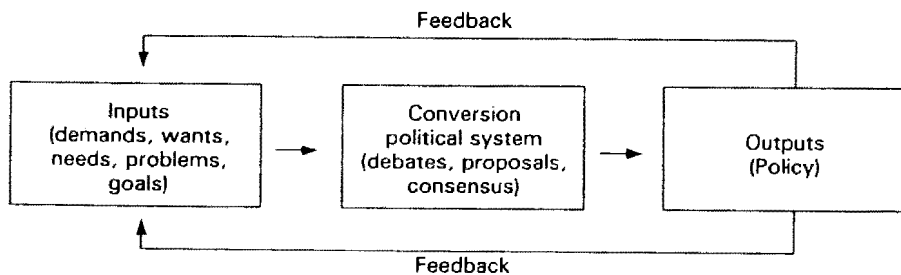


Figure 2.4: Policy-making as a Cyclical Process

The environment produces policy inputs consisting of demands, wants, needs, problems and goals. Such policy inputs are channelled into the larger political system. Through debates, proposals and consensus, the political system converts policy inputs into policy outputs. The systems model

portrays public policy as an output of the political system (Dye 1978:37-38). Ultimately, the implementation of public policy impacts upon the environment. On the basis of such an impact, and the evaluation and adaptation of a policy, such a policy may generate new inputs which may lead to a new policy-making cycle.

The value of the systems model lies among others things in the questions it raises. According to Dye (1978:39), the following questions flow from an analysis of this model:

1. "What are the significant dimensions of the environment that generate demands upon the political system?"
2. What are the significant characteristics of the political system that enable it to transform demands into public policy and to preserve itself over time?
3. How do environmental inputs affect the character of the political system?
4. How do characteristics of the political system affect the content of public policy?
5. How do environmental inputs affect the content of public policy?
6. How does public policy affect, through feedback, the environment and the character of the political system?"

The above questions suggest that components in the environment play a role in the policy-making process. Since the public ultimately forms part of the environment of the policy process, an investigation into the problems within and prerequisites for public participation may help answer some of these questions. This issue will be addressed in chapters four and five.

2.6.3.2 Phases of the Policy-making Process

The above models indicate that the process of policy-making can be perceived in different ways. An understanding of the policy-making process is

further enhanced by identifying and analysing its phases. In this regard, Dunn (1994:15) identifies agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy assessment as phases in the policy-making process.

An analysis of the abovementioned phases indicates that they are necessary for successful policy-making, irrespective of the model adopted. When considering policy-making as a deliberate attempt to solve a particular problem or address a particular matter of concern, the identification of a problem and the subsequent inclusion of such a problem in the agenda of policy makers should be the first steps of the policy-making process. This will enable policy makers to direct their efforts towards formulating a policy that will actually address the problem. Such efforts should include attempts to generate proposals of a variety of policy options that may help address the problem.

Public policies are made in order to solve social problems, therefore, public opinion should be taken into account when policy proposals are made. For this to happen, members of the public should be given an opportunity to participate in the deliberations on policy proposals and/or options. When such proposals and/options have been generated, the most appropriate alternative is subsequently adopted.

Thereafter, the policy in question should be implemented. During the implementation process, the impact of the adopted policy should be assessed in order to establish whether or not the policy realises the initially intended objectives. Furthermore, policy assessment could also indicate whether or not other problems arise, which may necessitate the formulation of other policies or the restructuring of the current policy (Dunn 1994:16). Public participation is also necessary in the policy implementation and assessment phases, since the public plays a role in these phases.

Public participation in policy implementation is discussed in section 4.3.

2.6.3.3 Types of Policy-making

According to Hanekom (1991:47), legislative and bureaucratic policy-making occurs in the public sector. Legislative policy-making is undertaken by legislative institutions, such as the municipal council and provincial and national parliament.

In legislative policy-making, deliberations on policies are accessible to the general public. For instance, members of the public and journalists are allowed to witness local government proceedings, as well as those of provincial and national parliament. This enables members of the public to voice their opinions about a proposed policy before it is adopted.

On the other hand, bureaucratic policy-making is undertaken by public institutions. This takes place through meetings, conferences, negotiations and agreements, but deliberations on such policies are not accessible to the general public. However, this does not imply that public participation does not occur in this type of policy-making, since members of the public can be participants in said meetings, conferences, negotiations and agreements.

2.6.3.4 Participants in Policy-making

Policy-making in the public sector is a comprehensive process, which involves various participants, such as legislatures, public officials, individual citizens and interest groups (Cloete 1998:146-157). However, the participation of individual citizens and interest groups in policy-making forms part of public participation in policy-making, which is discussed in chapter four. The respective roles of legislatures and public officials in policy-making will be dealt with below.

2.6.3.4.1 Legislators as Policy Makers

In terms of sections 44(1)(a)(ii) and 104(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the national and provincial legislatures are respectively empowered to pass legislation.

The municipal council acts as the legislative institution at local government level and, consequently, councillors are legislators at local level. Councillors are political representatives who are charged with the duty to make policies with respect to certain matters in the jurisdiction of their local authority, as well as with public accountability for such policy-making (Schwella & Ballard 1996:46). For instance, in terms of section 160(6) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), "A Municipal Council may make by-laws which prescribe rules and orders for –

- a) its internal arrangements;
- b) its business and proceedings; and
- c) the establishment, composition, procedures, powers and functions of its committees."

The purpose of public policy-making is, among others, to improve the general welfare of the public (Schwella & Ballard 1996:39). At local government level, this objective can be realised through the pursuance of the objectives of local government as stipulated in section 152(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996).

These objectives are:

- (a) "to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- (b) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;

- (c) to promote social and economic development;
- (d) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- (e) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government.”

The above requirements indicate that, in order to make a meaningful contribution to the process of policy-making, councillors should have current information on the status quo in their constituencies. They should therefore continuously interact with interest groups, prominent individuals and members of their communities (Botes, Brynard, Fourie & Roux 1992:135).

2.6.3.4.2 Public Officials as Policy Makers

Public officials are responsible for delivering services to the public on behalf of the government. They should implement public policies in a manner that displays sensitivity to the aspirations of the government.

Due to their policy implementation function, as well as the knowledge and experience at their disposal, public officials are able to identify the weaknesses and strengths of policies (Hanekom 1991:26). Consequently, public officials are in a position to make concrete proposals about policy-making and implementation. In some instances, public officials in their role of policy implementers can realise sooner than politicians that the implementation of certain policies is unlikely to meet the objectives initially intended and/or that certain difficulties have arisen (Cloete 1998:157).

Public officials serve the public directly and their duties enable them to interact directly with members of the public on a daily basis. Consequently, they are in a suitable position to receive complaints and/or compliments on the impact of public policies on the public.

The duties of public officials in the middle ranks include the drafting of bills and proposed amendments to current legislation as well as the formulation of White Papers (Hanekom 1991:24). Responsibilities of this nature therefore enlarge the role of public officials in policy-making.

2.7 The Nature of Policy Implementation

Policy implementation refers to the process of actually putting policy into practice. According to Hanekom (1991:55), policy implementation refers to the actual enforcement of legislation. Public officials are charged with the responsibility of implementing public policy. Therefore, their daily activities form part of the actual process of policy implementation. For instance, all the official activities intended to put affirmative action into practice, when affirmative action is the stated policy of the government, are part of policy implementation.

Although policy implementation and policy-making are different aspects of the policy process, they are interrelated (Hanekom 1991:55). For example, the implementation of a particular policy may create the demand for another policy and, consequently, may initiate the policy-making process anew (Fox *et al.* 1991:31). This can lead to a situation where policy-making and policy implementation occur concurrently.

2.8 Participants in Policy Implementation

Various participants are involved in the process of policy implementation. Legislators, public officials, interest groups and community organisations are all participants in policy implementation (Hanekom 1991:56-58). However, the participation of interest groups and community organisations in policy

implementation forms part of public participation in policy implementation, which is dealt with in chapter four. The participation of legislatures and public officials in policy implementation is discussed below.

2.8.1 Legislators as Policy Implementers

Although legislators are mainly responsible for policy-making, they also play a role in policy implementation. For instance, they can play a role in policy implementation by passing legislation that is more detailed, in order to limit the discretion of public officials in its implementation (Anderson 1997:218).

In terms of section 91 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the President and most members of the Cabinet have dual membership of both the executive and the legislature. In terms of section 85 of the Constitution, the President and most members of the Cabinet are responsible for:

- (a) “implementing national legislation except where the Constitution or an Act of Parliament provides otherwise;
- (b) developing and implementing national policy”.

2.8.2 Public Officials as Policy Implementers

Public institutions are established for the purpose of providing services to the community (Botes *et al.* 1992:156). Public officials are employed in these institutions to deliver services to the community through the process of implementing public policy. Public officials interact with members of the public in their daily activities and are thus strategically in a position to understand the needs and expectations of the public. Hence, collaboration

between public officials and the public may enhance the process of policy implementation.

When public officials are exercising their duties as policy implementers, they should always endeavour to uphold the spirit and intentions of the policy maker with respect to public policy (Hanekom 1991:56). This is necessitated by, *inter alia*, the fact that people have a tendency of putting the greater part of the blame on the government when they are not satisfied with the service delivery process.

2.9 Summary

In order to provide background for the following chapters, this chapter has reviewed the range of core practice fields in which participation was originally situated. Special attention was given to conceptual clarification of evaluation, development (including community and community development and community organisation).

To provide background for the chapters on public participation in public policy-making and implementation an overview of the nature and processes of democracy, participation, policy-making and policy implementation was also provided.

Finally, this chapter contains contributions that look at participation, development, democracy, policy-making and implementation from a conceptual angle. It also deals with the variables influencing public participation as well as with its meaning and scope, and ways to put participation into practice. Rather, attention is paid in this theoretical overview to defining and describing the core concepts and indicating their relevance in public participation.

CHAPTER 3

PARTICIPATION: HISTORY, CONTEXTS, DIMENSIONS AND FORMS

3.1 Introduction

It is argued in chapter one that 'public participation' has become an integral part of South African legislation in the process of governing in South Africa. The concept is highlighted in the speeches of political office bearers. However, public participation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which can occur in a variety of different forms and contexts. This contributes to the existence of different interpretations of the concept. This raises an important question: Is there a particular and precise definition of public participation that can facilitate meaningful communication between the government and the public on issues involving public participation? Such a definition will clearly ensure that the participative process can make a contribution to the realisation of the objectives of the current government.

In the introductory chapter, the question "What is the nature of public participation?" was posed as part of the problem that has to be addressed. This chapter sets out to clarify the concept 'participation', in order to establish a clear and meaningful basis for its interpretation and utilisation in the role of public participation in the context of this thesis. The purpose is to eliminate the confusion that could flow from the variety of forms and dimensions of participation. In this regard, attention is paid to the historical milieu of participation in development programmes as a background to public

participation, levels of participation, indicators and contra-indicators for participation. Finally, participation as a process is also presented. The context of participation in governance, dimensions and forms of participation is explained. The recent public participation initiatives in South Africa and the reasons for improving public participation in governance are also indicated.

3.2 Historical Milieu of Participation as Background to Public Participation

The purpose of this thesis is to examine specific aspects of the role of public participation in the making and implementation of policy, with the focus on the Port Elizabeth Municipality. To develop an understanding of public participation, this section reviews the historical roots of participation. A review of participation in the development of urban and rural settings follows, as a precursor to the role of public participation. The section concludes with various forms of participation as a process.

3.2.1 Participation in America and England

Miller and Rein (1975:5) take the view that in America and England the demand for participation sprang from two sources – the failure of democracy, and the failure of bureaucracy.

a) Failure of Democracy

The traditional patterns of citizen participation, such as town meetings and political meetings, were losing their effectiveness. Urbanisation, professionalism,

and the mobility of modern life were isolating residents and pushing them further away from the centres of decision-making (Levi & Litwin, 1986:25).

b) Failure of Bureaucracy

The second process that fed the development of community participation was the malperformance of municipal and social services. Sanitation, police and school services deteriorated. Administrative decisions were less accountable and less able to redress grievances, and the big city financial crises aggravated the problem, particularly in America. Social services agencies had disengaged from the poor and the employment problems of the ghettos were not being addressed.

The American War on Poverty in 1964 and Britain's Urban Aid Programme of the late nineteen-sixties were community action programmes aimed at the integration of the poor into society (Haim 1982:36). Community forums were advanced as a link between neighbourhoods and the city. People formed themselves into tenants' associations, parent groups and community groups, with participation as the main goal.

3.2.1.1 Participation in Urban Settings

The distinction between urban and rural settings in respect of participation is done by way of explanation. A rural area is an area that usually has a backlog (in comparison to cities) in terms of population, education and variety of experience. Initially, community development was mainly practiced in underdeveloped areas. When large-scale migration took place from rural areas to urban areas, there was an increase in squatter settlements and an over-

utilisation of services. This caused community work efforts to be practiced increasingly in more urban communities. References to urban community development make use of the concept "neighbourhood development or organisation" (Lombard 1991:222).

The participation process was originally based on neighbourhood action approaches in the USA and some of these experiences are presented. From studies of neighbourhood service organisations (Checkoway 1991:15), participation can strengthen feelings of efficacy, increase social interaction, contribute to leadership development, and produce positive personal changes.

In America, neighbourhood organisations were regarded as an effective device for overcoming apathy and defeatism. Grosser (1968:73), on the other hand, refers to studies that show that the poor are pessimistic about the possibility of changing their lives.

Many writers doubt whether the poor can be effectively mobilised, or whether their participation makes a significant contribution to community change. Such doubts are supported by a study comparing the attitudes and perceptions of residents and social agency staff in New York's Lower East Side. The residents, who were mostly of low income status, not only expressed more satisfaction with community conditions than the professionals, but were more pessimistic about the possibility of changing these conditions than were the agency staff (Brager 1975:223).

Austin (1956:83) cited studies by Bell-Force which showed that membership and active participation in formal voluntary associations occur at different rates among populations with different characteristics. This finding is of importance to this study in that it emphasises that the socio-economic status of a community has a bearing on its participation.

The notion of area teams was introduced in England. An area team was the creation of local authorities in reaction to the 1968 Seebohm Report, which campaigned for social services to be more responsive to young people. This they did by establishing themselves at Street level (Leissner & Joslin 1974:102).

Examining tenant participation in Britain, Goodlad (1988:243) states that the tenants' history of participation reflects a concern for the cost and condition of housing rather than participation *per se*. The most successful periods of tenant organisation and mobilisation coincide with periods of steep rent rises. There was a tendency to engage in short bursts of activity with a sudden fall away in support later.

3.2.2 Participation Elsewhere

Community participation is said to be the direct consequence of the UN popular participation programme and was formalised with the publication of the following documents (Midgley 1986:21):

- a) Popular Participation in Development (1971) – which reviewed the emergence of the idea with reference to community development in the Third World during the preceding 25 years; and
- b) Popular Participation in Decision-making for Development (1975) – which offered a formal definition of the concept, with reference to its implementation.

The importance of community participation in the health field was signalled by the World Health Organisation's Declaration on Primary Health Care at the Alma Ata Conference in 1977 (Midgley 1986:22), which called for the mobilisation of local communities to take responsibility for their own health.

During the nineteen-seventies, the idea of popular participation attracted the attention of those engaged in housing and urban development research. The initiative was taken by the World Bank, which modified its housing sector, lending policies to promote self-help housing in the Third World.

3.2.2.1 Participation in Urban Settings

Other than America or England, there are case studies of neighbourhood revitalisation in Delhi, India, which had been funded by the Ford Foundation during the early 1960s. These showed that community participation was the most important factor in distinguishing between successful and unsuccessful projects (Alliband 1982:142).

3.2.2.2 Participation in Rural Settings

The need to improve the management of forest resources in Thailand led to a participatory approach to create sustainable village wood lots in northeast Thailand. The project emphasised local participation beyond the activities of tree planting and harvesting. Several conditions were established in the design, implementation and management of forestry projects, which ensured that –

- a basis for collective action was created; and
- local institutions were developed to manage and sustain participation.

Previous efforts to organise participation had failed, due to an inability to sustain community interest especially once long-term goals had been reached and when no immediate gratification was available (Hafner 1995:73).

Further insights into the nature of participation came from a team of researchers from the Overseas Development Institute involved in an evaluation of the impact of NGOs in rural poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe and Bangladesh. The writers sought the reasons for the success and failure of specific types of interventions, and attempted to identify those factors that contributed to project success. They found that the successful projects encouraged consultation and participation in their design and implementation. Such projects were typically characterised by strong leadership and were run by skilled and committed staff (Robinson & Riddel 1990:71).

The question of leadership and other factors affecting participation will receive attention later in this chapter. Earlier, mention was made of findings of the urban poor in relation to participation (Austin 1982:83). Case studies of projects using participatory educational models in four villages in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand showed that the poorest sections of the community benefited less from project-initiated programmes than the better-situated members. The poorest sections lacked motivation and resources to participate in learning programmes, whereas the local elite succeeded in appropriating most of the benefits. The poor were found incapable of articulating their needs in formal meetings and were swayed by local leaders (Boeren 1992:268). Under conditions of extreme poverty, according to Niented, Mhenni and DeWit (1989:43), the poor appear more inclined to solve problems individually by dependent relationships, rather than by taking collective action.

3.3 Participation in South Africa

Case studies of participation in South Africa are clearly linked to the history of community work in South Africa. This matter has been dealt with earlier in this chapter. This section deals with the most recent events of interest to the study.

The year of 1976 was a turning point for the anti-apartheid movement, and the following decade saw the establishment of grassroots organisations based on the day-to-day concerns of people. The eighties experienced school boycotts that saw students involving their communities for support. In the Eastern Cape the resulting efforts saw the growth of civic organisations, which campaigned against high rents and housing shortages. During the mid-eighties, efforts by the state forced grassroots organisations to organise localised structures that would function as alternative institutions within communities. These developmental initiatives were varied in the nature and scope of the social development programmes.

Most recently, in its White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, the Government of National Unity promised a structured consultation process at all levels of government to ensure participation in policy-making and planning as well as project implementation (RSA, 1994).

3.3.1 Participation in Urban Settings

A poll conducted by Patel (1992:57), covering 457 progressive organisations, showed the following composition: Social service groups 26%; trade unions 14%; women's organisations 5%; youth and students 4%; religious groups 6% and professional bodies 1%. All the organisations in the study stressed participation as a fundamental principle of social development. They tried to achieve this in the following ways:

- education programmes
- conscientisation programmes
- promoting the self esteem and confidence of participants
- creating a range of opportunities for participation such as house and mass meetings, workshops, conferences and surveys.

The following factors had a bearing on participation:

- the size of the organisation
- complexity of the functions of the organisation
- number of staff employed
- availability of volunteers
- access to services
- nature and extent of the affiliations of the organisation
- procedures for accountability

Van Wyk (1993:2), in his survey of two hundred households in the Worcester area, directed a questionnaire at the eldest females as the respondents in the household. These women had to supply information about their attendance of, and involvement in, community activities in the following fields:

- a) visits to families and friends;
- b) visits in pursuit of leisure-time activities;
- c) sport; and
- d) organisational activities.

They also had to supply the same information with respect to the attendance and involvement of their husbands and the eldest child in each household.

The most important findings were:

- It is possible to distinguish between the relative importance of each of the respective fields over the total spectrum of community participation.
- Community participation varies depending on the specific field.

- Different values are allocated to the participation of males, females and children in each of the fields.
- There is a positive correlation between involvement in the management of organisations and the quality of involvement.
- Socio-economic status, owner- and housing status, gender and the perception of danger influence community participation.

3.3.2 Participation in Rural Settings

In comparison with the numerous case studies in respect of participation in other parts of the world, very few studies have been recorded in South Africa. Two of the most recent studies are presented below.

In 1993, a water supply project was initiated at Ramogodi, North Western Cape Province, by a community development trust called Betterment, which had been established in Johannesburg in 1983. A needs survey completed by the organisation had concluded that a water supply system was a priority in that rural community. The task of the agency was to achieve community participation in the area of managing and maintaining the water scheme. A group of unemployed men, selected by the community, were trained in administration, bookkeeping, financial planning, construction and maintenance. Two additional persons were to be trained as community development workers (Fitzgerald 1993:10). The agency encountered the following elements, which affected the participation goals mentioned above:

- the functioning of the development workers deteriorated in relation to the increasing competence of the village committee;

- mistrust and suspicion occurred when the committee had to provide financial repayments to the suppliers;
- there was a lack of democratic succession – no general meetings were held – the committee was a closed group;
- nepotism occurred – family members were chosen for training even when they were unsuitable due to absenteeism or alcoholism;
- a culture of entitlement and dependency prevailed – villagers expected the sponsors to provide for the capital costs of the scheme and the R220 pledged per family was not forthcoming.

The other example is a sewing group project, which was initiated in the 50 dwelling-strong Ekuthuleni squatter settlement outside Durban in Kwazulu-Natal during 1994 (Bailey 1994:5). A community profile had identified sewing as a training opportunity for informal employment and nine persons were encouraged to join. The first three sessions were well attended but the group suddenly came to a halt. The cause for the sudden fall-off was investigated and the following reasons were given:

a) Political

The settlements in Kwazulu-Natal are a battlefield of opposing political groups with tribal affiliations affecting membership of political groups. Although the political affiliations of the group members were not established, there was the acceptance that political divisions were just below the surface.

b) Language

The group was Zulu-speaking, while the group leader, an Indian student, could not speak fluent Zulu. Issues that could have been resolved earlier were not recognised and addressed, due to communication breakdowns.

c) Cultural

The Zulu-speaking members were reluctant to take directions from a Sesotho-speaking member, since the Basotho are regarded as a sub-ordinate group, which has little to teach individuals from a dominant group.

d) Proceeding at the Pace of the Community

There was a discrepancy between the expectations of participants and those of the group leader and it was evident that although the latter was accepted in the group, a trusting relationship had not been established.

3.4 The Levels of Participation

Mention was made earlier of theories of liberal democracy which emphasised the social stability of minimal citizen participation, compared to those that favoured participative democracy. The definitions offered referred to involvement, but did not examine the extent to which people participate. The case studies presented various levels of participation. This aspect, the extent to which people participate, will receive further attention below.

In his model for understanding the idea of community, Greenberg (1974:27) provides a scale of increasing member involvement in the dynamics of its daily life. Such a scale encompasses apathy; protest; seeking local help in times of trouble; passive membership in local organisations; use of local resources to satisfy everyday needs; identification with community wide interests; co-operation with others in trying to solve community problems; active participation in volunteer activities; involvement in leadership roles; and participating in advocacy on behalf of others.

Van der Mescht (1994:114) distinguishes between five levels of community participation: commentary, consultation, advice, shared decision-making and controlled decision-making. The latter neither acknowledges the contributions of participants nor describes the relationship between government and community participants.

Arnstein (1969:216) classifies the phenomenon of participation into hierarchies, depicted in the form of a ladder with eight rungs: manipulation; therapy; information; consultation; placation; partnership; delegated power; and citizen control. The rungs range from non-participation to tokenism to citizen power. The usefulness of this classification is that it enables participants to rate the relationship between the two parties.

Taylor (1994:176) cites Midgley (1986), who identified four ideal typical modes of State responses to community participation: the anti-participatory mode; the manipulative mode; the incremental mode; and the participatory mode.

The four typologies are set out schematically as follows:

GREENBERG	ARNSTEIN	BURKE	MIDGLEY
Apathy	Manipulation	Commentary	Anti-participatory
Protest	Therapy		
Seeking local help in times of trouble	Information		
Passive membership in local organisations	Consultation	Consultation	Manipulation mode
Use of local resources to satisfy needs	Placation	Advice	
Identification with others	Partnership	Shared decisions	
Co-operation with other in problem solving	Delegated power		Incremental mode
Active participation in activities	Citizen control	Controlled decisions	
Involvement in leadership roles			
Participating in advocacy for others			Participatory mode

The four typologies clearly represent ideal types. It is quite evident, though, that participation is incremental in character in that there is movement from one position to another. It is therefore possible to see the typologies as a means of measurement along a continuum from weak to strong participation.

3.5. Indicators and Contra-Indicators for Participation

Midgley (1986:4) comments that there are so many preconditions for participation that it seems unlikely that they will ever be met. Other writers tend to take the view that there are no universally applicable guidelines for community participation.

The way a community participates depends on a number of factors:

a) Socio-cultural

Socio-cultural changes are necessary if community participation is to be effective, and changes depend on the political situation of the country as well as the political balance in the community (Sheng 1989:60).

The creation of public involvement in the planning process draws attention to the possibility of conflict between groups that are involved in complex decision-making processes (Thoms 1976:15). Some communities have a history of dependence while others are known for their self-reliance.

The effects of prior projects on the community will also affect participation. Participation strategies in the past may have led to the delivery of services being characterised as ineffective, or there may have been a perception that poor performance had been the result of nepotism or certain political decisions.

b) Bureaucracy

Participation in projects can be affected by inflexible and centralised planning that does not allow for unexpected developments and where the outcome could turn out different from what was expected. Technocrats may believe that only they can make decisions on technical issues such as infrastructure or housing, and that poorly educated citizens do not have the competence to participate in planning.

c) Lack of Leadership

Local leaders may shun the responsibility for decision-making if delicate issues are at stake, which could lead to conflict between them and their followers. In addition, untrained staff may fail to provide the required leadership.

d) Accountability

Politicians believe that, since they have been elected by popular vote, they should represent communities. They therefore see grassroots leaders as rivals. Participation challenges traditional views on the roles of councillors, officials and citizens, but it may lead to power being fragmented, so that no one can be held accountable (Miller & Rein 1975:16).

e) Democracy

The issue of democracy is related to the question of accountability. Most governments are reluctant to give power to the people, preferring to restrict their participation to simple decisions. The other way may be to have to give in to increasing demands.

f) Project Design

The way in which participation in planning, implementation and maintenance within the project are developed affects the outcome of the project. For instance, maintenance of slum improvements was made the principal objective of planning and design in Hyderabad, India, when a decision was taken to install basic stone slab flooring for paving instead of bitumen surfaces. The latter would have been more difficult for the villagers to maintain (Skinner 1989:38).

In the previous chapter it was established, in the section dealing with the definitions of a community, that a community provides a number of benefits to its participants:

- a sense of belonging
- a commitment to common norms and institutions
- a willingness to take responsibility for oneself and for others.
- a readiness to share and to interchange (Levi & Litwin 1986:25).

Having considered the difficulties encountered in establishing community participation, arguments will now be advanced to explain the need for community participation:

(i) Democracy

Community participation is a right. It is a form of grassroots democracy.

(ii) Development

Community participation is a developmental process where the poor become aware of their situation, build up self-confidence and become aware of the power they have if they act in concert.

(iii) Efficiency

Since people themselves know best what they need, only close co-operation between them and the change agents can result in projects that satisfy both parties. The object of community participation is project efficiency (Sheng 1989:59). A successful community participation strategy should incorporate the following elements (Johnson 1982:204):

- There should be mutual trust between the community, the leaders and outsiders. The greater the trust, the greater the participation.
- People should be given the opportunity to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities.
- The community sees a programme as offering tangible achievements.
- The community should have a strong sense of ownership. The goal should be that the outside organisation is participating in the community's programme.

To sustain and promote participation, the following conditions should be present (Lisk 1988:10): the right political and institutional climate; capable leadership; adequate representation; two-way communication; awareness of the prevailing values; self-reliance and self-confidence; availability of decision-making powers and resources and expectation of benefits

3.6 Participation as a Process

Thus far, participation has been understood as a movement from low activity to high activity – a step-by-step approach similar to the community development process. However, based on two studies in Chawana, Zambia and Hyderabad,

India, Dhanpaul Narine observes that community participation depends on a process – the application of certain techniques and procedures such as institution building, conscientising, training, popular projects, mobilisation, motivation, leadership, and civics (Midgley 1986:24).

In a sociological study of community participation in development projects, Taylor (1994:117) observes that community participation is a process and cannot be viewed as occurring at a single point of time. He cites Paul (1987:3), who maintained that community participation might be viewed as a process that serves several objectives. One such objective is the empowerment of people, so that they are able to initiate actions on their own and thereby influence the process and outcomes of development. Another objective entails the beneficiaries of a project taking on some of the operational responsibility and thereby contributing to the sustainability of a project by enhancing the level of beneficiary interest and competency in the management of the project. In addition, community participation contributes to increased effectiveness whereby a given objective is achieved. Put another way, the objectives of community participation potentially form the basis for implementing community participation.

To emphasise that community participation is a dynamic process, Levi and Litwin (1986:27) suggested that to move from, for example, mere attendance to involvement, requires the interaction of three components – purpose, techniques and participants.

Examining the last component, namely participants, the following characteristics should be present (Levi & Litwin 1986:39) if a process of change is to succeed:

- homogeneity, similarity among participants;
- smallness of the groups of participating individuals;

- commitment to the idea of co-operative participation;
- willingness to put communal goals ahead of individual goals;
- competence in the working of participatory mechanisms;
- a real or perceived sense of isolation or threat to well-being.

As far as the second component, techniques, is concerned, the effectiveness of collective actions also depends on participants being members of organised groups with developed leadership, norms, procedures for self-management and the resolution of conflicts, and incentives to reinforce local involvement (Hafner 1995: 75).

Observations on the patterns of participation in three organisations studied by Checkoway (1991:14) underline the importance of the application of techniques:

- a) The organisations did not rely only on organising, planning and other strategies but combined various approaches;
- b) Community leadership was present – a core of people who recognise common problems and work together for solutions;
- c) There was an active board, or committee members, to –
 - assess community problems, formulate policies and make decisions for organisational solutions; and
 - mobilise support for programme implementation;
- d) There were broadly talented executive directors;
- e) Staff specialised, and tended to start as volunteers before taking paid jobs;

- f) The organisations demonstrated commitment to the neighbourhood or expressed a vision and platform from which to campaign in the community.

As can be seen from the above, leadership is an important technique within the community participation process. To be effective, community leaders need training in technical and social skills such as organising, conducting meetings, decision-making, conflict resolution, communication and financial management. Leaders allow communities access to information on issues at stake and pass on opinions of the community to policy makers (Sheng 1989:60).

Apart from leadership, another aspect of the processes used in participation is the concept of empowerment. Yet another process or procedure is the development of institutions. Boeren (1992: 258) commented that no change in the lives of people covered by development programmes will take place without the development of appropriate values, attitudes and knowledge in the minds of people. Participatory development requires considerable levels of democracy in the community.

3.7 The Context of Participation in Governance

People can participate in various activities, which occur in a number of contexts. In the public sector, examples of such activities include voting in general elections, and discussions and decision-making in conferences and meetings. The nature of participation varies according to the context within which the activity takes place (Vroom & Jago 1988:15). Therefore, in order to provide a meaningful interpretation of the concept participation, the context and activity with which it is associated should be taken into consideration.

For meaningful participation to occur, prospective participants should understand certain contextual aspects. These include:

- the nature and process of the activity;
- the event or occasion during which the activity will occur; and
- the manner in which the individual should take part in the activity.

This understanding will enable prospective participants to make a meaningful contribution to the particular activity, whether it consists of voting or putting forward their own views or those of a particular interest group that they represent.

In order to understand the concept 'participation', contextual factors have to be taken into account. Hence, writers tend to define participation within specific contexts. For instance, Vroom and Jago (1988:15) define participation as an "influence resulting from a person's assuming an active role in a decision-making process", while Seligson and Booth (1979:4) define it in a political context as "behaviour influencing or attempting to influence the distribution of public goods".

In the public sector, participation occurs mainly in political and management contexts, which are discussed below:

3.7.1 Political Contexts

Examples of activities occurring in contexts where political objectives are pursued, include voting or encouraging people to vote in a general election, attending and/or participating in a political meeting or rally, signing a petition,

and assisting a political party or candidate (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993:42-3). Participation in such activities can be called political participation, since it is intended to realise political objectives. However, since there are many types of activities with political undertones in which the individual can participate, the extent to which the political aspects of an activity are exposed determines the political nature of such participation. Context clearly plays an important role in this regard. Therefore, in order to expose the political aspects of participation, the political context with which such participation is associated should be specified or implied. For instance, Hanekom (1987:33) defines political participation as "the participation of the public in the process of policy-making through the elected representative in the policy-making institution of which he is a member". The incorporation of the phrase 'the elected representative in policy-making' highlights the political aspect of this definition, since such an elected representative is in most cases a politician.

A detailed analysis of political participation is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that, in the context of public policy-making and implementation, political participation can be defined as an act of deliberately taking part, with a political motive, in an activity which influences or attempts to influence policy-making and implementation outcomes.

3.7.2 Management Contexts

The concept 'management' is two-dimensional. For instance, it can be used to refer to a group of individuals in authority in a particular institution, and also to the process of exercising the responsibility with which those individuals are charged (Rowland 1992:207). The process of management has been defined by Thornhill and Hanekom (1995:15) as a directing activity that is intended to achieve predesigned goals or objectives in an institution, through the optimal

utilisation of the workforce, money, materials and information. It is the management process that creates a context in which participation can occur in the workplace. The nature of such a context is usually determined by the management style of the manager and/or legislation.

Management styles can be arranged on a democratic-autocratic continuum in which at the democratic end, the manager adopts a style which provides for the highest possible level of the subordinates' participation in the management process; while at the autocratic end, the manager adopts a style which provides for the lowest possible level of subordinates' participation (Robbins 1979:247). When the management style is the sole determining factor of subordinates' participation, the level of participation is determined by the manager, since he or she voluntarily consults subordinates and shares some decision-making with them, or not (Beach 1985:358).

The management process can also be bound by legislation to provide a context within which participation can occur in the workplace. For instance, in terms of sections 85 and 86 of the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995), an employer is bound to consult the workplace forum and decide jointly with it, with respect to certain matters. However, it should be noted that when the management is not the employer, such management usually acts on behalf of the employer with respect to the aforementioned provisions of the Labour Relations Act.

3.7.3 The Context of Public Participation in South Africa

A climate conducive to public participation in governance is an imperative for South Africa's newly found democracy. Public participation in governance is a foundation upon which the support, legitimacy and strength of democratic institutions can be based. However, the socio-economic, political and historical

conditions of the country have a significant influence on the context of public participation and governance. In this regard, certain factors have been identified that could have a negative influence on the context of public participation in governance in South Africa (Khululekani Institute for Democracy 1998:8-9). These include the following:

- The South African society continues to be filled with inequalities.
- South Africa does not have a history of constitutional democracy and the people of South Africa have to learn how to work within the structures that support this (the legislature, the executive and the judiciary). In addition, the different spheres of government (national, provincial and local) have to learn to work within a co-operative framework.
- South Africa has a rich history of African forms of governance, onto which a Western system has to be grafted. One of the biggest challenges facing Parliament and other legislatures is integrating the two systems while retaining the best elements of each.
- South Africa has an electoral system that tends to create a gap between Members of Parliament and the electorate. Public representatives are often not known by the people who elected them.
- Policy originates from government departments. Experts draw up legislation to deal with problems the department encounters, and Green and White Papers are produced before bills come out. While in theory it is possible for the public to participate in the early stages of legislation, in practice there are various factors that mitigate against this (e.g. low levels of literacy, the complexity and speed of the legislative process, a lack of feedback on submissions, etc.)

- Public hearings are currently the most important and visible mechanism of public participation in government.
- There is a critical need for delivery of socio-economic goods in South Africa, so as to address the imbalances of the past. This in turn creates the need for a speedy and effective lawmaking process in order to make such delivery possible.
- South Africa has a high rate of illiteracy, combined with eleven official languages. This makes access to information and effective communication very difficult to achieve.
- Transformation in South Africa is taking place in a context where limited resources have to be shared among many. The biggest impediment to facilitating public participation in governance is finding sufficient funds.

3.8 Dimensions of Participation

It has been shown above that 'participation' is a relative concept, which is influenced and determined by the context in which it takes place. This raises some questions. For instance, if participation cannot be defined in absolute terms, then –

- How do people participate?
- How does participation actually take place?
- Who participates?

An attempt to find answers to these questions brings to light that participation is multi-dimensional and consists of different kinds of participatory methods and approaches. These are discussed below.

3.8.1 Approaches to Participation

The process of participation can be approached in various ways. For instance, participation can be voluntary or obligatory, direct or indirect, organised or informal.

3.8.1.1 Voluntary Participation

In contexts where voluntary participation occurs, people have a choice whether to participate or not (Hague, Harrop & Breslin 1992:156). For instance, such participation can take place during an exercise in which community members voluntarily co-operate to solve common problems (Zimmerman 1986:12). In democratic countries, the most common manifestation of voluntary participation is citizen participation in general elections. The only way to elicit voluntary participation where it is lacking is to encourage it.

3.8.1.2 Obligatory Participation

In obligatory participation, participants have no choice and have to comply to a requirement to participate. For instance, participation arising from the legal obligations of citizens, such as paying their taxes, can be called obligatory participation (Langton 1978:21). Legislated participation is therefore a manifestation of obligatory participation. However, obligatory participation in this case is not necessarily equivalent to forced participation, since the relevant legislation might be based on the interests of participants (Vroom & Jago

1988:16). In South Africa, Section 1(d) of Chapter I of the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) indicates that, among other reasons, the Act was promulgated for the purpose of facilitating employee participation in decision-making in the workplace. Specific provisions of legislated participation in this Act also include the contents of Chapters III and V, which make provision for collective bargaining and workplace forums.

3.8.1.3 Direct Participation

Direct participation occurs when participants actually take part in the performance of a particular activity. The people who are officially responsible for undertaking a particular activity participate directly. For instance, the official members of a decision-making body, such as a council, participate directly in its activities (Vroom & Jago 1988:17).

3.8.1.4 Indirect Participation

Indirect participation can manifest itself in various ways. For instance, people may indicate that they support the opinion of those who actually participate. They may have an indirect influence in the decision-making processes by carefully choosing those who will represent them in a committee (Vroom & Jago 1988:17). Furthermore, people may indirectly participate in a campaign by indicating that they support those who are actually involved in the campaign. The support pledged by indirect participants in this regard can contribute towards the intensification of the campaign.

3.8.1.5 Organised Participation

When participation is organised, particular arrangements are made in advance, for participation to take place. For instance, mechanisms can be established

through constitutional and legislative provisions with the purpose of enabling participation. Organised participation, for instance, can manifest itself through public hearings and meetings. This approach to participation tends to divide participants into leaders and followers (Langton 1978:31).

However, non-participation can also be organised, and can therefore become a form of organised participation. For instance, a boycott, which is in essence a form of organised non-participation, may be perceived as participation (Cloete, Schlemmer & Van Vuuren 1991:99).

3.8.1.6 Informal Participation

Participation can also be approached informally. In the workplace, informal participation occurs when the participation flows from relationships between individuals rather than from rules and procedures (Vroom & Jago 1988:17). It is largely based on the norms that are established between individuals and groups in the workplace, for the purpose of ensuring that production takes place in a humane working environment (Lammers & Szell 1989:137). For instance, it can occur when a manager voluntarily consults his or her subordinate(s) with respect to a particular issue. As informal participation is not based on legislation, rules or procedures, it is also a voluntary form of participation. Consequently, Vroom and Jago (1988:17) indicate that informal participation is, to a large extent, also direct.

3.8.2 Methods of Participation

As a result of the variety of methods employed, participation can mean different things to different people (Boaden *et al* 1982:11). For instance, participation can take place through consultation, committee meetings, collective bargaining, or voting.

3.8.2.1 Consultation

Public consultation refers to a process of communication between the government and the governed in dealing with a particular issue (Craythorne 1997:98). Furthermore, consultation can also be defined as a means of seeking advice or information (Webster 1995:210). Consultation is therefore a form of participation in which information is provided and the views of participants are elicited. Such participation can occur through, among other means, the use of questionnaires, public meetings and surveys (Benwell 1980:74).

3.8.2.2 Committee Meetings

A committee is a formally constituted body that comprises people who have been appointed or elected in order to examine or deal with a particular matter (Webster 1995:197). When committee meetings are used as a method of participation, representatives of relevant groups are required to serve on committees that deal with matters that concern such groups (Thomas 1995:12). Committee meetings are interactive forms of participation among members who are capable of undertaking in-depth discussions about the matter(s) under consideration (Benwell 1980:75).

3.8.2.3 Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is a form of participation in the workplace in which union participation tends to be more prominent (Clarke *et al* 1972:190). Bargaining is a process through which the parties try to reach an agreement with respect to a particular issue or issues based on compromise (Webster 1995:78). In collective bargaining in the workplace the focus is, to a large extent, on conditions of service. In this respect, collective bargaining is not perceived to be

a perfect instrument of participation, since its main purpose may be to persuade management to accept the requests or demands of unions (Clarke *et al* 1972:190).

3.8.2.4 Voting

Voting could be described as a process through which the electorate choose among candidates who are all eligible for a certain vacancy. This is the way public representatives in a democratic country are normally elected as political office bearers and members of Parliament.

The right to vote is probably the only political right that the majority of people in the world exercise. An election is the main formal mechanism of political participation in the modern world. In an election, the individual can vote for a new political party to be the lawful policy-making body of the country. Researchers could even use the opinions, perceptions, and reactions of society as a tool to analyse policy, and to evaluate how effective and efficient specific policies are.

3.9 Forms of Participation

Various concepts are used to identify forms of participation based on the particular role players involved. These include, for instance, citizens, communities, workers and the public. The identity of the participants has an influence on the kind of participation that is undertaken.

3.9.1 Citizen Participation

“Citizen participation refers to purposeful activities in which citizens take part in relation to government” (Langton 1978:17). The main feature distinguishing

citizen participation from other forms of participation is that all participants must be citizens of the country in which they are participating. Furthermore, those citizens may participate in government activities as individuals or as members of groups (Langton 1978:16). However, the latter is not unique to citizen participation, as will be shown below.

3.9.2 Community Participation

Community participation can be defined as “the actual act of taking part or the involvement of community members in specific community activities” (Bayat & Meyer 1994:156). Members of the community can participate as individuals or as members of groups. According to Bayat and Meyer (1994:156), community members can participate in activities such as decision-making during project planning, or the implementation and sharing of the benefits of public services. The main feature distinguishing community participation from other types of participation is the fact that participants must be members of said community.

3.9.3 Workers' Participation

The term 'worker' as used in conjunction with participation is ambiguous to a certain extent, since it can be argued that all employees in an institution, including those in management, are workers. Therefore it is necessary to specify the category or categories of workers who participate as 'workers' in the managerial decision-making process as opposed to those who have an official managerial responsibility. Hence, Clarke *et al* (1972:3) describe a 'worker', for the purpose of participation, as “an employee, male or female, adult or juvenile, whatever his or her occupational category, who does not have executive authority in the specific organisational context”. Clarke *et al* (1972:3) go on to add, albeit within parentheses, that “... managers themselves, in relation to their superiors, are potential participants.”

For the purpose of employee participation in the workplace, section 78(a) of the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) defines an employee as “any person who is employed in the workplace, except a senior managerial employee whose contract of employment or status confers the authority to do in the workplace any of the following –

- (i) employ or dismiss employees on behalf of the employer;
- (ii) represent the employer in dealings with the workplace forum; or
- (iii) determine policy and take decisions on behalf of the employer that may be in conflict with the representation of employees in the workplace”.

Workers may participate in managerial decision-making processes in various ways. For instance, they can participate as individuals, as well as collectively in the form of formally constituted groups such as trade unions (Clarke *et al* 1972:3).

3.9.4 Public Participation

Communities, citizens and workers can be identified on the basis of specific and fixed characteristics. Consequently, in community, citizen and workers' participation, participants can be easily identified, since their identity does not vary according to the activity at stake.

In public participation, however, the public cannot be identified on the basis of specific and fixed characteristics, since it varies according to the issue requiring participation. This is due to the fact that the public as an entity continually reconstitutes itself, based on specific circumstances. The public can include individual citizens, community groups and interest groups (Thomas 1995:1).

Public participation should therefore involve the participation of members of the public who are involved and interested in the issue at stake. As Craythorne (1997:99) aptly puts it, “ ... the secret of public participation is to ensure that the relevant ‘publics’ are approached on any particular issue.”

On the other hand, Thomas (1995:55-6) defines the public involved in a particular issue as including “all organised and unorganised groups of citizens or citizen representatives who could (a) provide information about consumer preferences that might, for example, be useful in resolving the issue, or (b) affect the ability to implement a decision by accepting or facilitating implementation”. This indicates that the public does not only include people who are currently active in a particular issue, but also those who could be active in a particular issue.

From the above it could be deduced that for public participation to have a specific meaning, the relevant public and the issue at stake should be specified. With respect to policy-making at the local government level, the public may include the business community whose members need not be citizens of the country. Therefore, public participation is a wider concept, which includes other forms of social participation such as citizen participation (Langton 1978:20). For the purpose of this study, public participation includes citizen, workers’ and community participation, since citizens and the community constitute a pool from which an external public can be extracted, while workers constitute a pool from which an internal public can be extracted.

Public participation can therefore be defined as a process in which the public – as individuals, members of groups, or group representatives – deliberately takes part in a goal-oriented activity. Therefore, public participation in policy-making and implementation refers to an exercise in which the public – as individual citizens, interest groups, or interest group representatives – deliberately takes

part in the relevant public policy-making and implementation processes. Furthermore, public participation can be direct or indirect, organised, voluntary or obligatory.

3.10 Current Public Participation Initiatives in South Africa

In the introductory chapter the question is raised whether the public is aware of the fact that there are opportunities for participation. Besides statutory matters, there are also many institutions that work for and promote public participation. This section provides a summative overview of current public participation initiatives in South Africa that are identified in the public sector (Khululekani Institute for Democracy 1999:13-17).

In the City of Tygerberg, which is one of the largest cities in South Africa, about 7 500 people are employed. One thousand four hundred organisations are active. Involving people in consultative processes has been problematic, mainly because the one City is made up of 16 old administrations. The city council has embarked on a systematic education programme regarding the role of local government in the life of the community and hosts regular forums where community concerns can be addressed.

The Department of Agriculture is working on more readable, understandable, and accessible legislation. Each bill is summarised, with a memorandum on the objectives of the legislation at the end of the bill, in which the purpose of the bill, the reasons behind the legislative item, what the bill contains, and the implications of the legislation are summarised.

The Eastern Cape Legislature has regular open days where the public can question political leaders and call them to account for their actions. In addition,

numerous public hearings are held throughout the Eastern Cape Province, where committee members ask the public to comment on and discuss proposed legislation. This interaction forms a large part of the regular work of committees in the Eastern Cape.

The European Union Parliamentary Support Programme, in partnership with the Speaker's Forum and the European Union, endeavours to 'empower the legislatures ... to fulfil their democratic functions, namely, legislation, policy formulation, control of the executive, constituency work and public education.'

The Programme is currently funding a research study on public participation by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA). The purpose of the study is to enhance opportunities for public participation in the legislative process, thus further consolidating democracy in South Africa through –

- a) an assessment of activities currently being implemented;
- b) researching and developing mechanisms to facilitate public participation; and
- c) development of a model for effective public participation.

Public education is viewed as critical to effective public participation.

The Free State Legislature invites petitions from the public on legislative matters. This petition process is conducted through the constituency offices, which act as a public participation facilitator in the Free State Legislature.

The Gauteng Public Participation Unit (PPU) attempts to anticipate bills at national level, in order to see whether the Unit could involve the public in the legislative process at national level. The Gauteng PPU currently engages constituency offices in implementing public participation. The PPU believes that

using constituency offices as a vehicle for public participation makes legislatures portable. The programme is based on a cycle of workshops: a one-day information workshop for the general public, and two-day workshops for community-based organisations, NGOs, civics, unions, business organisations, et cetera. The aim of the workshops is to train, for example, 30 social workers, who can then take the training to their own constituencies.

The Public Participation Unit in Gauteng, in conjunction with constituency offices, facilitates contact between members of the public and members of provincial legislatures. One hundred and twenty-nine petitions have already arisen from this initiative. The aim is to give members of the public the opportunity to make an input into the legislation process and to interact with service providers through petitions, submissions and attending legislature sittings.

Also included in this programme is a form of drama 'edutainment', where each school has to present an item depicting the learners' understanding of what democracy is.

The Khululekani Institute for Democracy started a public participation project two years ago to encourage and enhance community input in the public hearings of parliamentary portfolio committees. The programme is run through various constituency offices of Members of Parliament. The programme aims to facilitate substantive interaction from the public in the constituencies, in all three spheres of government. Khululekani does not advocate on behalf of the constituencies but facilitates public involvement in such a manner that constituencies make their own submissions on issues affecting them. This is done in conjunction with the elected representatives and the public participation unit in national Parliament. This programme is being implemented in the Gauteng and Western Cape provinces.

The Kwazulu-Natal Public Participation Unit (KZN PPU) is non-partisan and strives for transparency, effectiveness and accountability in the legislative process. Communities are informed on legislative developments through action alert documents that notify them of public hearings. The KZN PPU has two main programmes: (a) monitoring and lobbying, and (b) community capacity-building. It offers regional workshop forums enabling organisations plan their joint responses to certain legislative items. The programme works with existing networks and forums in rural areas.

To support these forums, the KZN PPU trains community-based trainers on the structure of the provincial legislature, and on how to interact by lobbying and drafting submissions. In addition, there is also a volunteer monitoring programme whereby information on legislative matters is disseminated through NGOs to communities. The Unit is developing information packs for distribution aimed at alerting stakeholders to imminent legislation and providing information (in both English and IsiZulu) on how stakeholders can participate.

The National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL) – through its Human Rights Project – encourages public participation. Training workshops are conducted to help community organisations and individuals to interact with proposed legislation from a human rights perspective. Workshops are conducted in rural areas. NADEL has a lobbying alliance within Parliament where legislation is monitored and resources are shared. Imminent legislation issues are then discussed in debates with rural communities.

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) is made up of ten delegates from each province. Each provincial delegation consists of six permanent and four rotating members. The NCOP acts as an intermediary between the national

legislature and the public in the provinces. In this capacity, the NCOP has significant potential to facilitate input from the public in the provinces on national legislation issues.

The Public Participation and Information Section of the National Parliament aims to further public understanding of and participation in parliamentary processes in accordance with Chapter 4, sections 59(1) and 72(1) of the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). Current public participation programmes are intended to provide a platform for sectors of the South African citizenry to engage productively in the law-making processes of Parliament. Current programmes include:

- the development and implementation of communication and information strategies of Members' support programmes (e.g. constituency office development, Human Rights Day, Freedom Day, Workers' day, Youth Day, National Women's Day, the Year of Science and Technology);
- networking, interfacing and joint participation with private/public sector development organisations such as Khululekani and Street Law;
- the co-ordination of public consultation programmes for parliamentary committees, e.g. Rural Women's Project and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS);
- the National Youth Parliament, which is a countrywide 'edutainment' pilot project with each province represented at provincial youth parliament level by about fifteen schools;
- community meetings and workshops, an initiative which has been undertaken by Khululekani in conjunction with the Public Participation and Information Section of Parliament through the parliamentary constituency offices, and which involves Members of Parliament;

- Members' briefing sessions, held internally, during which the Members address visitors and any relevant legislative topic. Plans are currently underway to facilitate these meetings outside Parliament.

The South African Police Services facilitate public participation through police community forums, which are aimed at forming a partnership with communities in order to establish joint initiatives to tackle problems relating to crime within a specific area. Forums encourage community input on matters of crime as much as possible.

The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), established in 1995 as a partnership between the Black Sash, the Human Rights Committee and IDASA, monitors parliamentary portfolio committee meetings by taking minutes of the meetings and collecting committee documentation. This information, including notifications of public hearings held by parliamentary portfolio committees, is made available on the PMG website for NGOs (non-government organisations) and CBOs (community-based organisations), whose interaction with relevant parliamentary portfolio committees depends on the availability and accessibility of pertinent information.

3.11 Reasons for Improving Public Participation in Governance

Previous sections of this chapter have shown that public participation has an important role to play in governance. It is therefore necessary to nurture and improve public participation in governance, since it –

- reinforces democracy;
- legitimises democratic institutions;
- gives the public a sense of ownership of the lawmaking process and provides an opportunity for a two-way education process (the public educates the decision-makers and *vice versa*)
- empowers the public;
- entrenches the rights of individuals in a rights-based society; and
- contributes to the creation and maintenance of a democratic culture among citizens.

3.12 Summary

The reaction to the failure of democracy and bureaucracy has been advanced as a historical cause for participation in America and England. The literature survey indicates that although participation was initially practiced in underdeveloped areas, over the years it has increasingly been used in developed areas as well. Case studies in South Africa have shown that participation is also linked to the history of community work.

The strengths or weaknesses of participation can be determined by establishing to what extent and/or in what manner participation is practiced. However, the way people participate depends on several factors, such as socio-cultural, bureaucratic, leadership and democratic factors.

The context in which participation takes place provides further meaning to the concept – for example, political participation and participative management. The context of participation is also influenced by the unique circumstances prevailing in the specific country, in relation to how it is governed.

Participation is a multi-dimensional concept in which various forms of participation occur. The different dimensions of participation include –

- approaches to participation, which include obligatory, voluntary, direct, indirect, organised, and informal participation;
- methods of participation, including consultations, committee meetings and collective bargaining; and
- forms of participation such as citizen, community, workers' and public participation.

The recent national and provincial public participation initiatives indicate that public participation in the public sector is regarded as an important phenomenon in terms of democracy in South Africa, since public participation lies at the heart of democratic governance. The necessity for enhancing public participation in South Africa will be addressed in chapters five and six.

The concepts 'public' and 'participation' cannot be defined in absolute terms. The same would therefore apply to the concept 'public participation'. For this reason, public participation has been defined as **an exercise in which the public, as individuals, members of groups or group representatives, deliberately take part in a goal-oriented activity.**

CHAPTER 4

PREREQUISITES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, the point was made that public participation has a role to play in the process of policy-making and implementation. Such a role is regarded as a crucial aspect for a healthy democracy in South Africa. Also in chapter one, the author identified the question **'To what extent is the South African public aware of its democratic rights and freedom and newly acquired opportunities of interaction in the process of policy-making and policy implementation?'** as one of the research questions that will have to be addressed. In this chapter, the constitutional and other legislative provisions that will naturally influence public participation have been indicated. These were elucidated by providing information on certain provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and other legislation. The aforesaid provisions show that:

- Public participation is entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996); and
- Legislation promulgated during the first term (1994-1999) of the democratic government in South Africa encourages public participation.

However, public participation does not occur spontaneously, since it is usually an impetus-driven process. The impetus tends to flow from the prerequisites of public participation.

In this chapter, the prerequisites for public participation in policy-making and implementation are analysed in order to establish a framework upon which public participation can be based. Consequently, the role of public participation in policy-making and policy implementation will be briefly considered. Particular attention is paid to constitutional and statutory provisions for public participation, dissemination of information, willingness to participate, interest groups, and responsiveness of policy makers to public needs.

4.2 Public Participation in Policy-making

Local authorities provide services to their communities through relevant service departments, which may include the finance, traffic, safety, the environment, health, engineering, culture and housing departments (Craythorne 1997:284). Municipal departments of the City of Port Elizabeth include the following: City Administration, City Treasurer, City Engineer, City Electrical Engineer, Health Services, Traffic and Licensing, Fire and Emergency Services, Parks and Recreation, and Marketing (Kapp 1999).

These are depicted in Figure 4.1, Organigram – Port Elizabeth Municipality.

During the process of service provision, local authorities come into direct contact with the communities they serve. Such contact constitutes a basis of interaction, which includes public participation between communities and local authorities, since democratic government requires that local authorities should provide services that aim to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities.

Figure 4.2 can be used to illustrate the interaction between the community and the various departments in a local authority (Craythorne 1997:290).

Figure 4.1, Organigram – Port Elizabeth Municipality

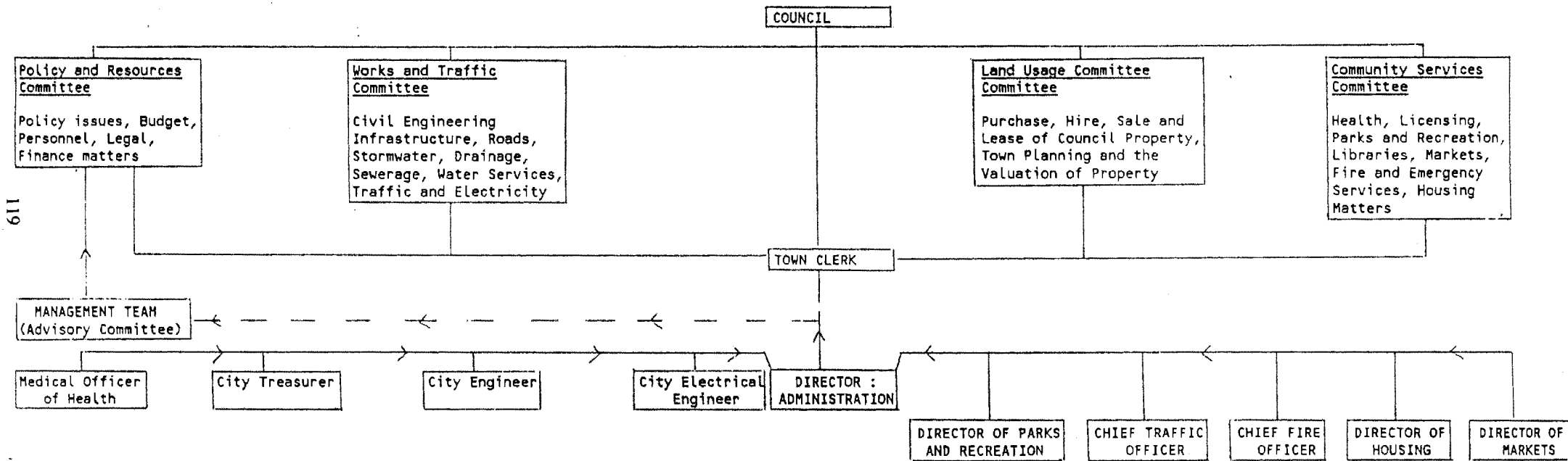
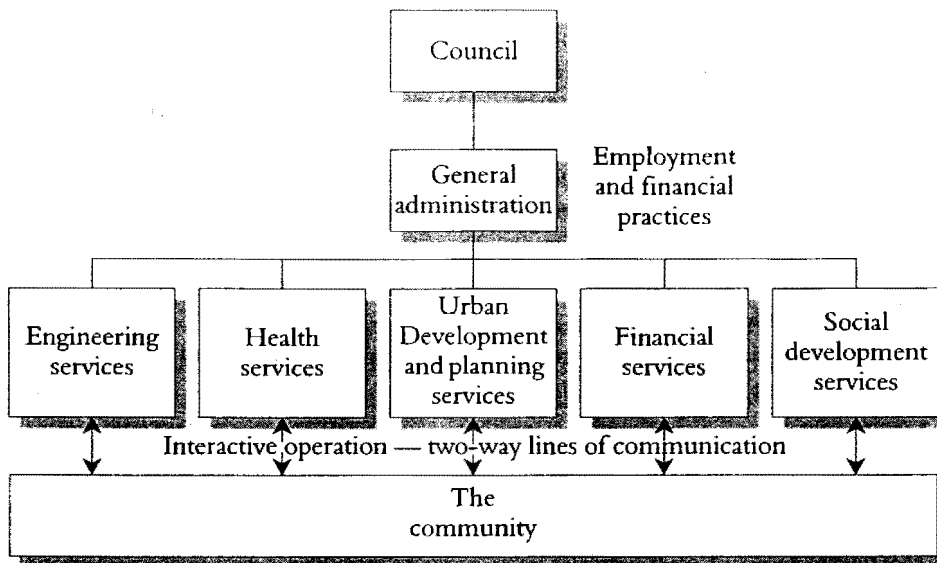


Figure 4.2: Organigram of a Typical Local Authority



In order to bring their problems, needs and wishes to the attention of their local authority, members of the community, either individually or as part of a group, interact with public officials in the various departments, as well as with councillors. Public participation manifests itself through the activities of individual citizens and/or interest groups (see sections 4.3.1 & 4.7). Particular attention is paid below to individual citizens and interest groups as participants in policy-making.

(a) Individual Citizens as Participants in Policy-making

In democratic states, the most common method of individual citizen participation in public policy-making is voting for candidates of the legislature in general elections. In terms of section 24 of Local Government: Municipal Structures Act (Act 117 of 1998), "The term of municipal councils is no more than five years as determined by the Minister by notice in the *Government*

Gazette...” Therefore, in South Africa, unless circumstances necessitate a by-election or the postponement of a general election, local government elections take place at five-year intervals.

Citizen participation in general elections highlights the value of taking citizens’ interests into account in the process of policy-making (Anderson 1997:78). For instance, by voting for a particular candidate, the voter is rejecting the policies advocated by other candidates while supporting those advocated by the candidate of his/her choice (Cloete 1998:146). Furthermore, a municipal council that ignores the interests of its electorate in policy-making and implementation runs the risk of being rejected by them, as they may decide not to vote for it again in the next general election.

Personal contacts between individuals, councillors and/or public officials can contribute towards citizen participation in policy-making. Such individuals may utilise these contacts to inform the councillor or public official about their views with respect to current or proposed public policies. A councillor or public official who is responsive to citizens’ interests is likely to take such views into consideration during the policy-making process.

Individual citizens can also participate in policy-making by making written submissions in which they indicate their wishes, interests and/or complaints with regard to certain issues to individual political office bearers and/or public officials (Cloete 1998:147).

Individuals can also influence policy-making by presenting their views about policy matters in the press and other media. However, the impact of individual citizens on policy-making is minimal, since most people tend to form interest groups for the purpose of having their interests accommodated and reflected in public policy (Cloete 1998:147).

(b) Interest Groups as Participants in Policy-making

Interest groups are groups which are generally separated from the government and which attempt to influence policy makers to accommodate their interests in public policy (Wilson 1990:1). In South Africa, interest groups may form around particular issues, or they may be labour unions, non-governmental organisations, and other kinds of pressure groups. Examples include the National Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC); the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA); the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU); the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU); the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM); the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO); and Gun-Free South Africa (GFSA).

Globally, interest groups seem to play a crucial role in policy-making. For instance, they present information relating to their interests to policy makers in the form of demands and policy alternatives (Anderson 1997:70). Consequently, they serve as a link between the government and major sectors of society (Wilson 1990:1).

However, interest groups may not be representative of the general public, and the general public in its turn may not cherish the opinions interest groups advance (Hanekom 1991:38). It is also possible that interest groups could participate in policy-making only for their own benefit and not really on behalf of the general public.

The strength and influence of an interest group depend, *inter alia*, on its financial and other resources, as well as its leadership skills (Anderson 1997:72). However, some sectors of society are poor and lack the resources and leadership skills that will enable them to form influential interest groups,

while in fact their conditions strongly deserve the attention of policy makers (Wilson 1990:5). Communities in the South African rural areas can serve as particular examples in this regard. As a result of financial resources – or sadly, more often financial constraints – only well established and/or economically viable interest groups are dominant in the process of participation in policy-making (Wilson 1990:5).

4.3 Public Participation in Policy Implementation

Public participation plays a particular role in policy implementation, although this role has been mostly perceived as confined to policy-making (Thomas 1995:3). The role of interest groups and community organisations in policy implementation should not be taken lightly, as it has a specific bearing on the success or failure of the policy implementation process. Details of this participative role follow below.

4.3.1 Interest Group Participation in Policy Implementation

In order to facilitate the process of policy implementation, public officials have to use their own discretion, since the policy maker cannot anticipate and accommodate all the requirements of the implementation process (Thomas 1995:6). Due to the discretionary power at their disposal, public officials may manipulate the process of policy implementation in accordance with their wishes. This may result in a policy being implemented in a manner that is not in keeping with the spirit and intentions of the policy maker (Anderson 1997:221). According to Hanekom (1991:57) public officials can do this by, *inter alia*, avoiding the making of decisions that will facilitate policy implementation, delaying policy implementation or only partially implementing the policy.

These actions may account for the shift of interest group focus from legislative to administrative institutions once a policy has been adopted (Anderson 1997:221). The focus of the interest group in policy implementation could be motivated by, *inter alia*, the desire to ensure that the discretion of public officials in policy implementation is applied in such a way that it continuously takes the interests of the group into consideration – hence the recognition of scholars that the executive organ of government is also a target of pressure groups (Henry 1992:289).

4.3.2 Community Organisations

In order to facilitate the process of policy implementation, citizens should do more than merely complying with implementation efforts (Thomas 1995:7); they should be involved in the implementation of public policies where possible. For instance, at local government level, community organisations can be used in the administration of government programmes (Hanekom 1991:58).

Furthermore, some public service programmes can only realise their objectives if the recipients of the service are willing to participate in the process of implementing such programmes (Thomas 1995:7). For instance, efforts to combat crime in a community can be enhanced through the participation of community members, partly also because community members are likely to have information that can contribute effectively towards combating crime in their area.

4.4 Constitutional and Statutory Provisions for Public Participation

A constitution can be defined as “the whole body of rules, written and unwritten, legal and extralegal, according to which a particular government operates” (Ranney 1975:263). On the other hand, a statute refers to “law

passed by a legislative body and formally placed on record in a written or printed form” (Webster 1995:970). Constitutional and statutory provisions provide a yardstick for determining whether or not certain actions are legal. Constitutional and statutory provisions for public participation, therefore, create a framework in which public participation in policy-making and implementation can legally take place. These provisions encourage public participation since they contribute to the elimination of reluctance to participate due to fear of contravening legislation and they provide a legal right for people to participate in policy-making and implementation. Constitutional and statutory provisions for public participation are therefore a prerequisite to public participation.

In the founding provisions of the Constitution it is stated that South Africa is a democratic state. The South African system, a young, new dispensation, has gradually introduced public participation in policy-making and implementation. Both the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 200 of 1993) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) make it imperative for legislatures to provide mechanisms for public involvement in their legislative and other processes. The Constitutional provisions also enjoin institutions to conduct their business in an open manner, so that the public has access thereto.

Particular attention is paid below to the provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation, in order to –

- (a) show the current state of affairs with regard to the constitutional and statutory provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation in South Africa; and
- (b) show that the purpose of such provisions is to involve people in policy-making and implementation.

4.4.1 Constitutional Provisions for Public Participation in the Making and Implementation of Policy

Chapters 2, 7 and 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) contain provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation. These Chapters focus on the Bill of Rights, local government and public administration respectively. Consequently, they deal with public participation in their respective contexts. Details of provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation in the aforesaid Chapters of the Constitution follow below.

4.4.1.1 Provisions for Public Participation in the Bill of Rights

Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) consists of the Bill of Rights. Sections 16, 17, 19 and 23 of this Chapter contain provisions regarding public participation, which relate to freedom of expression, and assembly, demonstration, picketing and petition as well as political rights and labour relations respectively.

Section 16(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) stipulates that:

Every one has the right to freedom of expression, which includes –

- (a) freedom of the press and other media;
- (b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;
- (c) freedom of artistic creativity; and
- (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

Therefore, people have the freedom to express their views, whether or not such views agree with government's policies, as long as they do not contravene the provisions of section 16(2) of the Constitution. The provisions

of subsection 16(2) limit the provisions of subsection 16(1) by stipulating that:

- (2) The right in subsection (1) does not extend to –
 - (a) propaganda for war;
 - (b) incitement of imminent violence; or
 - (c) advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

Freedom of expression plays a role in policy-making, since the media, prominent individuals, interest groups, and political parties utilise it to influence public opinion about certain issues, whereas parties and interest groups that are in opposition to the government of the day may tend to use their freedom of expression to criticise public policies.

Section 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) stipulates that: “Everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions.”

This section provides for public participation, since demonstrations, picketing, and the presentation of petitions are some of the forms public participation can take.

Section 19 stipulates that:

- (1) Every citizen is free to make political choices, which includes the right –
 - (a) to form a political party;
 - (b) to participate in the activities of, or recruit members for, a political party; and
 - (c) to campaign for a political party or cause.
- (2) Every citizen has the right to free, fair and regular elections for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution.

- (3) Every adult citizen has the right –
 - (a) to vote in elections for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution, and to do so in secret; and
 - (b) to stand for public office and, if elected, to hold office.

With regard to labour relations, sections 23(2) and (3) respectively stipulate that:

- (2) Every worker has the right –
 - (a) to form and join a trade union;
 - (b) to participate in the activities and programmes of a trade union; and
 - (c) to strike.
- (3) Every employer has the right –
 - (a) to form and join an employers' organisation; and
 - (b) to participate in the activities and programmes of an employers' organisation.

The above provisions show that the right and freedom of people to participate in policy-making and implementation are guaranteed in the Constitution. However, such rights and freedoms should be utilised responsibly and within prescribed limits.

4.4.1.2 Constitutional Provisions for Public Participation in the Local Government Sphere

Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) contains provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation in the local government sphere. Section 152(1)(e) of this Chapter stipulates that one of the objectives of local government is “to

encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government”.

The councillors are the policy-makers in local government. Section 156(2) of the Constitution stipulates that, “ A municipality may make and administer by-laws for effective administration of the matters which it has the right to administer”. In order to ensure that public participation in policy-making occurs, section 160(2)(a) of the Constitution prescribes that the passing of by-laws may not be delegated by a Municipal Council, and section 160(4) stipulates that: “No by-law may be passed by a Municipal Council unless –

- (a) all the members of the Council have been given reasonable notice;
- and
- (b) the proposed by-law has been published for public comment”.

This means that members of the public are given an opportunity to comment on proposed legislation, in order to influence the policy-making process before a policy is adopted, and shows that the Constitution encourages public participation in policy-making.

Although the Constitution contains said provisions, it does not specify how the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government should be encouraged. However, section 164 of the Constitution stipulates that, “ Any matter concerning local government not dealt with in the Constitution may be prescribed by national legislation or by provincial legislation within the framework of national legislation”. Therefore, methods of public participation to be applied in the local government sphere are a matter of national and/or provincial legislation.

4.4.1.3 Public Participation as a Basic Principle of Public Administration

Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) focuses on the basic values and principles governing public

administration. In this Chapter, section 195(1) of the Constitution stipulates that:

Public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including the following principles:

- (a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- (b) Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.
- (c) Public administration must be development-oriented.
- (d) Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- (e) People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.
- (f) Public administration must be accountable.
- (g) Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.
- (h) Good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated.
- (i) Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

In terms of section 195(2) of the Constitution, these principles apply to all spheres of government. The principle of public participation is enshrined in the Constitution through section 195(e). However, the Constitution does not specify how the public should be encouraged to participate in policy-making. Therefore, it leaves scope for legislation to set out how the public should be encouraged to participate in policy-making.

4.4.2 Statutory Provisions for Public Participation in the Making and Implementation of Policy

With effect from the first term of the democratically elected government in South Africa (1994-1999), legislation containing provisions for public participation in policy-making and implementation has evolved. The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994 (Notice 1954 of 1994); the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995); the White Paper on

Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997 (Notice 1459 of 1997); the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 (Notice 423 of 1998); and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Bill, 1999 (Notice 1776 of 1999) are examples of legislation that contains provisions for public participation. Details with regard to these provisions follow below.

4.4.2.1 Provisions for Public Participation in the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development

In terms of section 1.1.1 of Chapter 1 of the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Notice 1954 of 1994) the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is a policy framework that seeks to fundamentally transform South Africa by –

- developing strong and stable democratic institutions;
- ensuring representivity and participation;
- ensuring that our country becomes a fully democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society; and
- creating a sustainable and environmentally friendly growth and development path.

The RDP rests on six basic principles, which are: an integrated and sustainable programme, a people-driven process, peace and security for all, nation building, linking reconstruction and development, and the democratisation of South Africa (African National Congress 1994:4).

Public participation is therefore one of the six principles of the RDP. This is manifested in section 1.3.3 of the White Paper on RDP, which stipulates that the RDP must be a people-driven process and should involve citizens in the delivery of services through forums.

In order to facilitate public participation in the RDP, Chapter 7 of the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Notice 1954 of 1994) makes provision for consultation, participation and capacity-building. For instance, in terms of section 7.5.1 of said White Paper, provincial governments are supposed to encourage the establishment of sub-regional and/or local forums comprised of representatives of all stakeholders in their areas. Local authorities, in consultation with such forums, should then promote development in their respective areas.

In terms of section 7.6.1 of the White Paper on RDP (Notice 1954 of 1994) capacity-building is essential for the effective participation of civil society in the implementation of the RDP, since the government will have to co-operate with civic organisations and other community-based organisations in the process of service delivery. Furthermore, section 7.6.7 of said White Paper highlights the need for an independent civil society in the democratisation of the South African society, which finds expression in the view that organisations of civil society can facilitate the democratic process by ensuring that government does not act unilaterally, without transparency, corruptly, or inefficiently.

4.4.2.2 Provisions for Public Participation in the Labour Relations Act

The Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995) established a coherent industrial relations system by promoting collective bargaining and co-operative relations between unions and employees. Chapter V of this Act provides for the establishment and functioning of workplace forums in the workplace. Such forums should serve as vehicles for public participation in the workplace. In terms of section 79 of the Labour Relations Act a workplace forum established in terms of Chapter V:

- (a) must seek to promote the interests of all employees in the workplace, whether or not they are trade union members;
- (b) must seek to enhance efficiency in the workplace;
- (c) is entitled to be consulted by the employer, with a view to reaching consensus, about the matters referred to in section 84; and
- (d) is entitled to participate in joint decision-making about the matters referred to in section 86.

Section 85 of the Labour Relations Act reinforces the process of public participation in the workplace by making provisions for consultation. These provisions stipulate that:

- (1) Before an employer may implement a proposal in relation to any matter referred to in section 84(1), the employer must consult the workplace forum and attempt to reach consensus with it.
- (2) The employer must allow the workplace forum an opportunity during the consultation to make representations and to advance alternative proposals.
- (3) The employer must consider and respond to the representations or alternative proposals made by the workplace forum and, if the employer does not agree with them, the employer must state the reasons for disagreeing.
- (4) If the employer and the workplace forum do not reach consensus, the employer must invoke any agreed procedure to resolve any difference before implementing the employer's proposal.

In terms of section 84(1) of the Labour Relations Act, the specific matters for consultation referred to in the previous paragraph stipulate that:

Unless the matters for consultation are regulated by a collective agreement with the representative trade union, a workplace forum is entitled to be consulted by the employer about proposals relating to any of the following matters –

- (a) restructuring the workplace, including the introduction of new technology and new work methods;
- (b) changes in the organisation of work;
- (c) partial or total plant closures;

- (d) mergers and transfers of ownership in so far as they have an impact on the employees;
- (e) the dismissal of employees for reasons based on operational requirements;
- (f) exemptions from any collective agreement or any law;
- (g) job grading;
- (h) criteria for merit increases or the payment of discretionary bonuses;
- (i) education and training;
- (j) product development plans; and
- (k) export promotion.

4.4.2.3 Provisions for Public Participation in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service

In terms of section 5.2.6 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (Notice 1227 of 1995), "it is also clearly essential that the public service transformation process be based upon broader public involvement and support". Furthermore, the establishment of effective mechanisms for consultation and involvement should "provide opportunities for public service staff and unions, as well [as] civil society stakeholders, to play a meaningful part in shaping, implementing and monitoring the on-going transformation process".

4.4.2.4 Provisions for Public Participation in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (the *Batho Pele* White Paper) (Notice 1459 of 1997) provides eight principles of service delivery:

1. Consultation

Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.

2. **Service standards**
Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.
3. **Access**
All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.
4. **Courtesy**
Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.
5. **Information**
Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.
6. **Openness and transparency**
Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.
7. **Redress**
If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.
8. **Value for money**
Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

Furthermore, with respect to consultation, section 4.1.1 of the aforementioned White Paper stipulates that: "All national and provincial departments must, regularly and systematically, consult not only about the services currently provided but also about the provision of new basic services to those who lack them. Consultation will give citizens the opportunity to influence decisions about public services, by providing objective evidence that will determine service delivery priorities. Consultation can also help to foster a more participative and co-operative relationship between the providers and users of public services".

4.4.2.5 Provisions for Public Participation in the White Paper on Local Government

Section B(3.3) of the White Paper on Local Government (Notice 423 of 1998) makes provision for public participation in the South African local government sphere. For instance, according to this section, municipalities should continuously involve local citizens, business and community groups, in order to build local democracy. The same section of this White Paper further identifies four capacities in which citizens can actively participate in local government affairs, namely –

- As voters, to ensure maximum democratic accountability of the elected political leadership for the policies they are empowered to promote;
- As citizens, who express, via different stakeholder associations, their views before, during and after the policy development process in order to ensure that policies reflect community preferences as far as possible;
- As consumers and end-users, who expect value-for-money, affordable services and courteous and responsive service; and
- As organised partners, involved in the mobilisation of resources for development via businesses with a profit motive, non-governmental organisations and community-based institutions.

Furthermore, section B(3.3) of the aforementioned White Paper on Local Government suggests approaches which could be adopted in order to promote public participation in policy processes. These approaches are:

- Initiating forums in or outside of local government, so that organised bodies can make and/or help formulate policies, as well as take part in monitoring and evaluating activities;

- Stakeholders should be involved in Council committees, especially those that are issue-oriented and that are temporary structures only;
- Participatory budgeting initiatives which encourage the link between community priorities and capital investment programmes;
- Focus groups and NGOs and CBOs should do action research together. Thus everyone will gain information about a range of needs and values; and
- Associations should be developed, especially in marginalised areas where there are fewer participatory skills and resources available.

4.4.2.6 Provisions for Public Participation in the Municipal Systems Bill

In terms of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Bill (Notice 1776 of 1999) municipalities are obliged to put people first in the way they run their administrations.

Chapter 3 of the aforesaid Bill makes provision for public participation in the local government sphere. It provides stipulations with regard to the development of a culture of public participation; mechanisms, processes and procedures for public participation; capacity-building; public notice of meetings of the Municipal Council; and admission of members of the public to such meetings.

Development of a Culture of Public Participation

7.(1) A municipal council must seek to develop a culture of municipal governance that is participatory rather than representative, and should help promote a climate conducive to the participation of residents, communities and other stakeholders in local government through:

- (a) structures for participation and the code of conduct for councillors in terms of the Municipal Structures Act ;

- (b) the core systems and processes for municipal governance established in terms of this Act;
- (c) other appropriate structures and procedures adopted by the municipality; and
- (d) general provisions for participation discussed in this chapter.

(2) To facilitate such participation, a municipal council must –

- (a) conduct its business in a manner that the public can understand;
- (b) articulate the objectives and policies regulating its main activities in such a way that they can be understood by the public and monitored and evaluated by stakeholders; and
- (c) ensure that the public understands and has access to its by-laws and other legislation; and
- (d) keep residents and communities within the municipality and, where appropriate, national government and relevant provincial government, informed of its main activities.

(3) However, subsection (1) may not be interpreted in such a way as to allow interference with the right of a municipal council to govern and to perform the functions and exercise the powers of the municipality.

Mechanisms, Processes and Procedures for Public Participation

8.(1) A Municipal Council must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable residents, communities and stakeholders in the municipality to participate in local affairs in the municipality, and must, for this purpose, provide for –

- (a) the receipt, processing and consideration of petitions and complaints lodged by residents, communities and stakeholders in the municipality;
- (b) the receipt, processing and consideration of written objections and representations with regard to any matter with regard to which it is required to invite public comment;
- (c) public meetings of residents, on a ward or any other basis;
- (d) public hearings by the council and its committees when appropriate; and
- (e) surveys among residents when appropriate and the processing and publication of the results.

(2) When establishing mechanisms, processes and procedures in terms of subsection (1) the Municipal Council must take into account the special needs of –

- (a) people who cannot read or write;
- (b) people with disabilities; and
- (c) other disadvantaged groups.

(3) A Municipal Council must, within the financial and administrative capacity of the municipality, disseminate among residents, communities and other stakeholders in the municipality, information concerning these mechanisms, processes and procedures, taking into account –

- (a) the language preferences and usage in the municipal area; and
- (b) the special needs of persons who cannot read or write.

(4) A Municipal Council may establish one or more advisory committees consisting of persons who are not councillors to advise the council on any matter within the council's competence.

Capacity-building

9. A Municipal Council must, within the financial and administrative capacity of the municipality, build the capacity of residents and communities to participate in the local affairs of the municipality by disseminating information concerning –

- (a) the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate public participation;
- (b) the matters with regard to which public participation is encouraged;
- (c) the rights and duties of residents and communities; and
- (d) municipal governance, management and development.

Public Notice of Meetings of the Municipal Council

10. A Municipal Council must give public notice of the time, date and venue of every meeting of the council.

Admission of the Public to Municipal Council Meetings

11.(1) Meetings of a municipal council and its committees are, subject to subsection (2), open to the public, including the media, and the council or a committee may not exclude the public, including the media, from a meeting, except when –

- (a) it is reasonable to do so having regard to the nature of the business being transacted; and
- (b) a by-law or a resolution of the council specifying the circumstances in which the council or the committee may close a meeting and which complies with paragraph (a), authorises the council or the committee to close the meeting to the public.

(2) The meetings of an executive committee mentioned in section 42 of the Municipal Structures Act and a mayoral committee mentioned in section 60 of that Act are not open to the public, including the media.

(3) A municipal council –

- (a) within its financial and administrative capacity must set aside places for the public in the chambers and places where the council and its committees meet; and
- (b) may take reasonable steps to regulate public access to, and public conduct at, meetings of the council and its committees.

4.5 Dissemination of Information

In order to participate meaningfully in any activity, members of the public should have relevant information about such participation (Thomas 1995:141). For instance –

- They should be aware of the newly acquired opportunities and democratic freedom of interaction with both legislatures and organs of government and the need to take advantage of these.
- They should know whether or not they have a right to participate.

- They should know when they can participate, and how they should participate.
- They should know what role their participation is likely to play, and what issues they should raise at such public hearings.

According to Almond and Verba (1989:57), "Democratic competence is closely related to having valid information about political issues and processes, and to the ability to use information in the analysis of issues and the devising of influence strategies".

This indicates that having valid information could be crucial to one's ability to influence others. For instance, a well-informed person is likely to perform better in negotiations than an ill-informed person with the same ability and skill of using information. Therefore, public participation could flourish if relevant information were disseminated to the public (Gyford 1991:107). This should include the dissemination of information in policy documents such as the Constitution, acts, ordinances, by-laws, circulars, and memoranda.

The dissemination of information constitutes a basis for public knowledge and opinion, since one's knowledge and opinions are based on the information at one's disposal. Disseminating information is therefore a prerequisite for public participation.

Various methods could be used to disseminate information. Examples of such methods include radio and television broadcasting, the publication of information in newspapers and magazines, public libraries and posters, drop-in centres, and an open-door policy (Ranney 1975:129-36; Rosener 1978:118-21; Atkinson 1992:19-23). Details with regard to these methods are discussed below.

4.5.1 Radio and Television Broadcasting

A message sent through radio or television broadcasting is received by a large number of people (Ranney 1975:128). Therefore, radio and television broadcasting can play a crucial role in disseminating information. This is also due to the fact that most members of the public spend at least some of their time listening to the radio and/or watching television. Those who are interested in public affairs tend to regularly listen to and/or watch the news and programmes dealing with current public affairs. Fagence (1977:156) states that "...the communications media have an important role, both in disseminating information upon which opinions and attitudes may be formed, and in constructively contributing to the fashioning of those attitudes and opinions".

For instance, a radio or television announcement can be made to inform the public that a new type of driver's licence is to replace the current one at a specific date, or that the residents of a particular ward should attend a public hearing which will focus on the development of certain plans specific to their area.

In South Africa, the daily news and programmes on radio and television tend to include information about campaigns for public participation as well as proclamations of legislation dealing with public participation. In order to cultivate a culture of public participation, radio and television should be encouraged to devote some of their broadcasting time to programmes that focus on contentious public issues. This could serve not only to disseminate information, but also to educate the public and generate public interest in public issues (Thomas 1995:142).

However, due to factors such as the manipulation of information and prejudices that the media might have, the public does not always believe the output of the media (Fagence 1977:157-158). To overcome the credibility

problem, therefore, the media (in all its forms) should make on-going attempts to have or put in place "an appropriate reporting structure to cover the interests of its audience"; "a concern to be involved in public affairs (i.e. to be educative rather than wholly entertaining)"; "principles"; "accurate perception and transmission of political realities"; "willingness to encourage [and] promote informed discussion"; "a propensity towards unbiased comment"; and a desire to "[further] the total community interest" (Fagence 1977:157).

Another technique that could be used to disseminate information via radio and television is 'media-based issue balloting' (Rosener 1978:120). This technique is applied "when citizens are informed of the existence and scope of a public problem, alternatives are described, and then citizens are asked to indicate their views and opinion".

4.5.2 Newspapers and Magazines

Newspapers are read by a substantial section of the public – in fact, for some people newspapers are the main source of information about the state of affairs in government (Ranney 1975:129). Magazines have a lesser audience compared to newspapers, but that does not imply that magazines do not play a role in disseminating information.

In order to enhance the dissemination of information, newspapers and magazines could be encouraged to publish special "think" pieces, or to carry short questionnaires to be completed and returned by interested readers (Thomas 1995:142).

Information can also be disseminated via public newspapers, newspaper supplements and magazines (Atkinson 1992:19). Public comments and/or letters of objection are usually invited through notices placed in the newspapers. For example, on 12 July 1998, a notice inviting individuals and

organisations to submit written comments about the Employment Equity Bill was placed in the *Sunday Times* (Oliphant 1998:18).

4.5.3 Public Libraries and Posters

Libraries are a source of mainly written and electronically captured information. Public libraries do not limit their services to certain readers as school, university and technical libraries usually do. Therefore, information about the municipal council and its deliberations, legislation, and current public affairs should be available for public consumption in local public libraries.

Local councils such as Dorset and Bradford in the United Kingdom use their libraries for providing council information to the public (Gyford 1991:110). However, information in libraries is accessible mainly to those who deliberately go to libraries in order to read.

Another method of disseminating information could be the use of posters. This occurs when a cardboard or cartridge paper is used to display information for the purpose of advertising or giving notice (Webster 1995:784). The information on posters could be widely accessible, since posters are usually placed where they are likely to be seen by many members of the public. The use of posters to disseminate information becomes prominent during election campaigns, to spread election-related messages. Posters are also used daily for important newspaper headlines, and cultural events are also advertised on posters fairly regularly.

4.5.4 Drop-in Centres

Drop-in centres constitute another technique that could be used to disseminate information. Drop-in centres are "manned information

distribution points where a citizen can stop in to ask questions, review literature, or look at displays concerning a project affecting the area in which the centre is located" (Rosener 1978:119). Rosener's idea of drop-in centres is in keeping with Gyford's (1991:108) one-stop-shop service, such as was first introduced by the Westminster City Council in 1986 for the purpose of facilitating the dissemination of council information. The Westminster service established –

- "an access point for all council services and information on one floor;
- links to other council buildings by phone or by facsimile machines;
- a computerised database of council information;
- an open-counter service with staff who have had training in public awareness skills (and self-defence);
- private interview rooms;
- toilets, photocopiers, telephones, seats and a special counter for disabled people" Gyford (1991:108).

4.5.5 Open-door Policy

An open-door policy is a technique that "involves the encouragement of citizens to visit a local project office at any time on a 'walk-in' basis (Rosener 1978:120) and is suitable for individuals or groups seeking information. The technique facilitates communication between citizens and officials, since it provides an opportunity for both parties to engage verbally or through correspondence in a dialogue about government issues (Clapper 1993:113).

4.5.6 Constituency Offices

The role of constituency offices is to inform the citizenry about political parties and law-making processes. This concept is based on the assumption that constituency offices can be a useful information and communication tool. Past opinion and 'street wisdom' among elected representatives to national

and provincial departments suggest that parliamentary constituency offices are important for public participation.

4.6 Willingness to Participate

Approaches to participation discussed in section 3.8.1 indicate that participation need not necessarily flow from the will of the participants. For instance, voluntary participation is more of a direct consequence of one's willingness to participate than obligatory participation. Factors that could determine the willingness or unwillingness of members of the public to participate in policy-making and implementation include the availability or lack of information about the right to participate, the method of participation, the necessity of participation, and the belief in participation (Clapper [Sa](b):56-58; Brynard 1996:42; and Rosenstone & Hansen 1993:16). Details with regard to these factors follow below.

4.6.1 The Right to Participate

Section 4.4 indicates that the constitutional and statutory provisions for public participation provide a legal framework through which public participation should take place. Any process of public participation that is inconsistent or in conflict with those provisions would therefore be deemed illegal. A member of the public would therefore want to know – prior to actual participation – whether or not he/she has a legal right to participate, since few people choose to involve themselves with illegal activities. Information about one's right to participate in a certain issue or not is therefore very important in deciding whether one is willing or unwilling to participate in policy-making and implementation.

Legally protecting the right of every citizen to participate in policy-making and implementation is good for democracy, since the implementation of any

policy might affect the individual citizen (Clapper [S.a.](b):56). This right is therefore legally protected in South Africa (see section 4.4.2).

4.6.2 The Method of Participation

The method of participation determines the manner in which one should participate. For instance, in voting in a general election, a participant is supposed to cast a vote, and in a committee meeting a participant is supposed to contribute to the discussion by presenting and debating ideas.

The method of participation may require skills that are not necessarily available to prospective participants. For instance, good communication skills of the kind that are linked to the understanding of and fluency in a certain language may be an obstacle. In addition, a fear of those in authority could jeopardize participation in a discussion between policy-makers and the public.

Where communication skills are inadequate or not available to public participants, policy-makers need to be tolerant and considerate, lest they dampen the public participant's willingness to participate.

In order to encourage people to participate, the method of participation should accommodate the differences and shortcomings of participants to as great a degree as possible, in order to eliminate embarrassment for the participant.

4.6.3 The Necessity of Participation

Understanding why participation is necessary can also contribute to people's willingness or unwillingness to participate. For instance, in the case of obligatory participation, people might not understand why they have to pay for water, since they regard it to be a freely available natural resource

(Kroukamp 1995:198). Consequently, they might resist paying for water. However, once it is explained to them that through the use of an expensive infrastructure purified water is brought to convenient places for them, their perception might change.

If members of the public knew that their participation would help create policies different from those made without public participation, it would encourage them to participate even more. If comments on and/or objections to a proposed by-law are invited and the public does not respond, the council is likely to proclaim the by-law without any amendment. However, if comments and/or objections are received, the council has to consider these before proclaiming the by-law. Consequently, such comments and/or objections may lead to the amendment of the proposed by-law before it is finally proclaimed. The knowledge that participation is necessary to enable the process of policy-making to be sensitive to the values of the public may therefore also encourage people to participate.

4.6.4 Belief in Participation

Some people believe that participating in public affairs is their responsibility (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993:19). Those who feel strongly about this belief tend to participate more than other people. To them, participation is not motivated by the expectation of certain outcomes but by the willingness to discharge the obligation to participate (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993:20). In the light of the above, cultivating such a belief among members of the public may help sustain the culture of public participation.

4.7 Interest Groups

The scope and nature of societal needs and expectations is in a state of flux (Cloete 1998:126). In order to formulate policies that will address such needs and expectations, policy-makers need current information about those

needs and expectations. Interest groups are usually comprised of members of society who want to influence the process of public policy-making so that their interest(s) can be accommodated in public policy (Anderson 1997:71).

According to Hanekom (1987:37) an interest group can serve as a mouthpiece for a specific community group in society. Interest groups could therefore supply policy-makers and public officials with vital information pertaining to the nature and possible consequences of policy proposals, which would otherwise not be available (Anderson 1997:70). When such information is supplied, it should create a basis for public participation in policy-making and implementation.

Interest groups tend to be more reactive to situations that are unacceptable to them (Hanekom 1987:38). However, this does not imply that they do not pay attention to acceptable situations. It is through such reactions that interest groups tend to be very instrumental in generating and highlighting the process of public participation. For instance, the negative reaction of an interest group with regard to the implementation of a certain policy may lead to a dialogue between the public officials and the concerned interest group. Furthermore, the existence of interest groups indicates that people are willing to participate in policy-making and implementation (Hanekom 1987:38).

4.8 Responsiveness of Policy Makers to Public Needs

The methods of disseminating information given in section 4.5 could help inform the public about the affairs of government. However, for public participation to occur, government should not use such methods to tell the public what to do, as that may be detrimental to democracy (Thomas 1995:143). For the dissemination of information to serve as an ingredient of public participation, the public should have a say in the policy makers'

decision-making process (Thomas 1995:142) and should be given the opportunity to inform policy makers of its views in relation to the matter of concern.

Furthermore, policy makers should be prepared to take the views of the public into account when decisions are made. To enhance the responsiveness of policy makers to public needs, the public should make its preferences known to the policy makers concerned (Brynard 1990:60).

4.8.1 Participation Techniques that could enhance the Responsiveness of Policy Makers to Public Needs

In order to facilitate the responsiveness of policy makers to public needs, use could be made of techniques that provide policy makers with information about public needs, such as public hearings, radio and television talk shows, charrete, citizen representation in policy-making bodies, referenda, and questionnaire surveys (Atkinson 1992:19-23; and Rosener 1978:118-121). For more detail, the abovementioned techniques are discussed below.

4.8.1.1 Public Hearings

Public hearings provide an opportunity for citizens to express their views and also to question policy makers about certain issues (Zimmerman 1986:8). They are usually held when major programmes are about to be implemented, or prior to the enactment of legislation (Rosener 1978:121). In such cases they give the public an opportunity to comment before the actual implementation of the programme or the enactment of legislation. For public hearings to be effective, members of the public should have background information that enables them to make meaningful comments about the matter of concern. Furthermore, the timing of the hearings should be such that the citizens' comments could still divert the course of action (Zimmerman 1986:8-9).

4.8.1.2 Radio and Television Talk Shows

Radio and television talk shows are comprised of programmes in which members of the public participate directly, while in the studio or through the use of a telephone network, in the discussion of a particular issue. Political office-bearers are sometimes invited to appear on such shows to clarify certain issues, answer questions, and listen to the views of the public. While participants in radio and television 'talk shows' may not be sufficiently representative of the public, they could nevertheless give an indication of the public opinion regarding the matter of concern.

4.8.1.3 Charrete

A charrete is a "process which convenes interest groups (governmental and non-governmental) in intensive interactive meetings [with policy-makers and/or public officials] lasting from several days to several weeks" (Rosener 1978:118). It is a means through which good working relations between the community, local government officials, and planners could be developed (Atkinson 1992:23). Such working relations could create an environment conducive to the continued existence of the process of public participation.

4.8.1.4 Citizen Representation on Public Policy-making Bodies

This technique advocates for the inclusion of elected or appointed citizen representatives in policy-making bodies (Rosener 1978:119), the purpose of which is to enable such representatives to contribute to the policy-making process. To make citizen representation on public policy-making bodies worthwhile, the citizens' reasonable and feasible recommendations should be given serious consideration (Atkinson 1992:20-21).

4.8.1.5 Referenda

A referendum gives citizens an opportunity to inform policy makers about the popular view on a controversial issue (Zimmerman 1986:11). However, referenda are most suitable for single issues or a small number of issues (Atkinson 1992:20). The results of a referendum should be taken into account when a policy relating to the issue for which a referendum has been done, is developed.

4.8.1.6 Survey Questionnaires

Survey questionnaires are undertaken by asking certain questions of a population sample that is statistically representative of all the members of the public in order to find out what the attitudes and opinions of the public are about a particular issue (Rosener 1978:119). Such surveys could be used to make planners aware of public preferences (Atkinson 1992:20).

4.9 Summary

Through public participation, policy makers and policy implementers could get current information about public needs and demands. In this way public participation contributes to ensuring that public needs and demands are taken into account during the processes of policy-making and implementation; therefore, the interaction of legislatures and public officials with the members of the public is important.

In order to encourage continuous interaction of members of the public with the legislatures and public officials, public participation should be preserved. For this reason, provisions for public participation in policy-making and

implementation are entrenched in the South African Constitution and also integrated in the recent legislation. These provisions show that the public has a right to participate – a right that is legally protected and encouraged. The provisions therefore constitute a basis for the process of public participation in policy-making and implementation in South Africa.

A 'public' armed with relevant information can participate meaningfully in policy-making and implementation; therefore, the dissemination of information is a prerequisite for public participation in policy-making and implementation. The methods that could be used for this purpose include radio and television broadcasting, newspaper and magazine reporting, and providing information through public libraries and posters, drop-in centres, and an open-door policy.

Legal provisions and access to information are not sufficient for ensuring that public participation does occur. People have to be encouraged to participate. Meaningful participation is only likely to occur if people are willing to participate. Factors that might affect the willingness or unwillingness of people to participate include whether they know about their right to participate, the method of participation, the need for participation and their belief in participation.

Interest groups are able to supply policy makers with vital information that could be used in policy-making and implementation. The endeavour to ensure that their interests are accommodated in policy-making will contribute to boosting and sustaining the process of public participation in policy-making and implementation.

The responsiveness of policy makers to the needs emanating from public participation could reinforce and encourage public participation. Techniques that could be used to facilitate this process include public hearings, radio and

television talk shows, charrete, citizen representation on policy-making bodies, referenda, and survey questionnaires.

The above explanation shows that public participation in policy-making and implementation is underpinned and driven by a comprehensive and complex exercise.

The problems in public participation to be discussed in the next chapter, are fundamentally affected by the prerequisites for public participation in policy-making and policy implementation. The next chapter will indicate why public participation is essential, and why it is complicated by certain problems inherent to the process.

CHAPTER 5

THE NECESSITY FOR AND PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have shown that, for a meaningful public participation in policy-making and implementation to occur, a collective effort of several participants is necessary. For instance, legislators and officials are responsible for establishing a legal framework through which interest groups and individual members of the public can participate in policy-making and implementation, while the media plays a crucial role in the dissemination of information. This indicates that public participation in policy-making and implementation is a comprehensive and demanding process, yet nevertheless allowed and encouraged by the Constitution and the government. The constitutional and statutory provisions discussed in the previous chapter have already shown this.

In this chapter, the need for and problems related to public participation in policy-making and implementation in general, and particularly to the Port Elizabeth Municipality, are investigated. Attention is firstly paid to the need for public participation in policy-making and implementation. In this regard, factors necessitating public participation in policy-making and implementation, which include the provision of information, democratisation of the policy-making and implementation processes, and promoting responsiveness to public needs, are discussed. This is followed by the problems encountered with public participation in policy-making and implementation. Thereafter, the research findings derived from the survey

questionnaires and interviews are discussed and interpreted in the light of information obtained in the preceding chapters, leading to the next concluding chapter.

5.2 Factors Necessitating Public Participation in the Making and Implementation of Policy

In order to ensure that the needs and aspirations of the people are taken into consideration during the policy-making and implementation processes, there should be constant interaction between the governors and the governed (Reddy 1996:4-5). Therefore, a situation that encourages and/or allows participation in general elections only is not entirely democratic; even though the results of a general election may clearly specify who should govern, they do not adequately address the question of *how* the government should govern. In fact, public participation in decision-making is an imperative for a democratic government (Gildenhuys, Fox & Wissink 1991:124).

It is also important to note that the encouragement of popular support for democracy and the institutions that give expression to it, is not limited to voting in an election, as is often assumed, but is also dependent upon regular interaction between the public and such institutions. The encouragement of interaction is important, as interaction of this kind provides a basis not only for the long-term democratic stability of South Africa, but also for its future economic stability and prosperity.

Therefore, in any democratic country, public participation in the policy-making and implementation processes is necessary. Factors that can substantiate this include the provision of information to policy makers and members of the public, democratisation of the policy-making and implementation processes, promoting responsiveness to public needs, facilitating the process of policy implementation, facilitating the reconstruction and development process, the establishment of a control

mechanism for policy-making and implementation. These factors are discussed below.

5.2.1 Democratisation of the Policy-making and Implementation Processes

During the apartheid era the function of controlling citizens' actions at local government level was strongly emphasised (White Paper on Local Government, Notice 423 of 1998). The involvement of local citizens, especially blacks, in policy-making and implementation was severely lacking. It was mainly limited to compliance. The majority of citizens, especially those who were eager to participate in public affairs, perceived the government to be undemocratic and illegitimate. Such perceptions brought anger and frustration, which were manifested through boycotts and protest actions against public policies. Indeed, it was undemocratic, since democracy requires that all people should have access to resources which could empower them, as well as the right to exercise their power in such a way that they are able to participate in public affairs (African National Congress 1994:120). It is hoped that the new democratic order in South Africa, and the democratisation of institutions and processes, will contribute to the deepening and broadening of a democratic culture in South Africa.

Democratisation requires that the structures and functioning of public institutions be re-established in such way that they can allow and encourage public participation (African National Congress 1994:120-121). In fact, public participation provides a mechanism for democratising the planning process in particular and the public management process in general, to the extent that public participation in local government affairs is considered to be a democratic right in many countries (Brynard 1996:41). In order to democratise the local authorities, section B(1.3) of the White Paper on Local Government (Notice No. 423 of 1998) encourages municipal councillors to promote the involvement of citizens and community groups in the design and

delivery of municipal programmes. Furthermore, in terms of section 5.12.14 of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (African National Congress 1994), "Local authority administrations should be structured in such a way as to ensure maximum participation of civil society and communities in decision-making and developmental initiatives of local authorities". Therefore, public participation in policy-making and implementation is necessary in order to democratise the processes of policy-making and implementation.

The survival of a government depends, among other things, on its legitimacy. The government mainly derives such legitimacy from public support (Midgley *et al* 1986:5). Public involvement in policy-making and implementation makes a positive contribution to government legitimacy (Fagence 1977:340).

5.2.2 Provision of Information to Policy Makers and Implementers

Policy makers make policies for and on the behalf of society; therefore it is necessary for them to understand the needs and aspirations of the public. This will enable them to take such needs and aspirations into account during the processes of policy-making and implementation. For this to happen, policy makers rely on information from the public, since they can hardly understand the needs and aspirations of the public without consulting the public. On the other hand, information about the needs and aspirations of the public can hardly be obtained by policy makers without the public co-operating. Public participation at the local government sphere is therefore a mechanism by which information about local conditions, needs, desires, and attitudes can be obtained (Brynard 1996:40).

The survey conducted in Port Elizabeth has shown that, in spite of the fact that public participation is a legal obligation upon South African local authorities, councillors and municipal officials need information from the public for policy-making and implementation purposes. For instance, all

respondents to the survey questionnaire administered to the senior officials of the City of Port Elizabeth said they would like the City Council and the municipal officials to involve the public in the policy-making and implementation processes. This is attributed – among other reasons – to the fact that experience has shown that when policies are formulated without consultation, and simply imposed on communities, problems tend to develop, since communities may reject those policies when they reach the implementation stage. Therefore, taking the input of the public into account during the processes of policy-making and implementation is important, since it contributes towards combating dictatorship and the promotion of the principles of good governance.

In order to ensure that the local government gets the information it needs from the public it is supposed to serve, it should communicate with the public (Craythorne 1997:100). For effective communication to occur, the local authority should be able to supply the public with information and, when necessary, get a response. The same should also apply to the public. In this regard, the appointment and utilisation of public relations officers as well as dialogues between the representatives of interest groups and/or community organisations on the one hand, and the representatives of the local authority on the other, could help.

According to Cloete (1997:151), public relations officers could be employed in order to determine the views held by the public with regard to the activities the institutions intend to undertake, as well as the public opinion and the attitude in respect of the results obtained with policy implementation. Such views, opinions, and attitudes could be used to evaluate the policy objectives and implementation activities.

In an attempt to ensure that matters of common interest are accommodated in the policy-making and implementation processes, members of the public

tend to act collectively as interest groups (see sections 4.3.1 & 4.7). In Port Elizabeth, the Civil Society Forum has been established for the purpose of ensuring that the views of the public are taken into consideration during the policy-making and implementation processes (see Appendix 8).

5.2.3 Provision of Information to the Public

In terms of section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), local government exists *inter alia* in order to provide services to the communities in a sustainable manner. Therefore, for proper service delivery to occur at local government level, members of the community should receive information about such service from the local government, otherwise they may resist and/or reject the delivery of such service.

Clapper (1993:180) argues that members of the public would be highly motivated to play an active role in the formulation and execution of policies that affect them, directly or indirectly. He further states that the fact that the citizens of any particular local authority are the ones who pay in the form of rates, taxes and other levies for the rendition of services on their own behalf; puts them in a position to demand the delivery of such services, and also to hold local government responsible for any problems deriving from the non-delivery of service.

A lack of information among the public could, among other ways, be cured through the dissemination of information and the utilisation of the participation techniques discussed in chapter four. This could inform the public on how the local government serves or intends to serve it, thus enabling people to establish whether or not they are in fact being properly served. Such a state of affairs could serve as an incentive for people to participate in local government affairs, and to insist on being served properly.

Consequently, participation could empower members of the public to identify their needs and aspirations, and to mobilise local resources in order to meet such needs and aspirations (Midgley *et al* 1986:9). In this way the provision of information to the public could lead to, among other things, improved service delivery at local government level.

5.2.4 Promoting Responsiveness to Public Needs

Responsiveness of the public official to public needs can be defined as the taking of non-arbitrary, pertinent and timely actions by a public official in response to needs expressed by the public (Brynard 1990:60). There are three important requirements for the responsiveness of policy makers and public officials to public needs:

- (i) The public should express its needs;
- (ii) There should be adequate perception of the expressed public needs by policy makers and/or public officials (Kaufmann 1991:75); and
- (iii) Policy makers and public officials should not only have the will to take expressed public needs into account during policy-making and implementation processes, but *should* actually take them into account.

Therefore, for policy makers and officials to actually be responsive to public needs, there should be mechanisms through which the public can express its concerns. Methods of participation such as consultation and committee meetings could contribute towards enhancing the responsiveness of policy makers and public officials to public needs.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (*Batho Pele* White Paper) (Notice 1459 of 1997) was promulgated for the express purpose of promoting the responsiveness to public needs in South Africa. The White Paper lists eight principles for service delivery to guide public officials,

particularly in the national and provincial spheres of government, to serve citizens in a responsive manner (see section 4.4.2.4). The basic intention of the *Batho Pele* White Paper is to encourage public officials to respond to people's needs by –

- “listening to their views and taking account of them in making decisions about what services should be provided;
- treating them with consideration and respect;
- making sure that the promised level and quality of service is always of the highest standard; and
- responding swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised standard”.

The White Paper on Local Government (Notice 423 of 1998) provides principles for service delivery that should guide municipalities in choosing service delivery options. In terms of section F(2.1) of this White Paper, such principles are: the accessibility of services; the affordability of services; the quality of products and services; accountability for services; integrated development and services; sustainability of services; value-for-money; ensuring and promoting competitiveness of local commerce and industry; and promoting democracy. Said principles also provide a scope for policy-making and implementation that is responsive to public needs at the local government level. For instance, the accessibility and affordability of services and the quality of products and services all have a bearing on responsiveness to public needs, and the public could supply information on all of these aspects, thus making them serve as a yardstick in order to determine –

- when the services are accessible;
- when the services are affordable; and
- which quality of product and service is acceptable.

An adequate response to citizens' needs and aspirations cannot always be attained by relying on legislators as the citizens' representatives (Kaufmann

1991:71). The utilisation of strategies such as citizen participation, decentralisation, the employment of public relations officers, reorganisation, and citizen awareness in order to enhance responsiveness (Brynard 1990:63-66) remain important throughout.

5.2.5 Facilitating the Process of Policy Implementation

Public participation paves the way for the process of policy implementation to run smoothly (Midgley *et al* 1986:34). Policy implementation requires the support of the community, since policies are meant to be implemented in communities. Public participation fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to the outcomes of the process (Clapper [Sa](a):76). Therefore, public participation can contribute to policy implementation by building support and eliminating resistance. In addition, it could save costs by minimising and/or eliminating the need for policy implementation to be policed.

For instance, if people have participated in the policy-making process and eventually are not opposed to policy outcomes, they are more likely to support the implementation of such a policy, since they would feel that they are recognised shareholders of the process. They may even convince other people to support such policy implementation, at least by complying. The prudent warning of Catanese (1984:127) should not be forgotten: "The local political process will usually overrule a rational planning process if it is based upon long-range planning principles that do not reflect local values and goals".

Public participation may convert opponents of certain municipal programmes into supporters of such programmes (Clapper [Sa](a):76). Strategies like co-optation could be utilised for this purpose. Programmes that enjoy the popular support of the community are usually not difficult to implement.

5.2.6 Facilitating the Implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

One notable sponsor of community development was the Government of National Unity, through the introduction of the RDP. A major aspect of the strategy of the programme is the importance placed on public participation to ensure the success of the various programmes (White Paper on Reconstruction and Development 1994:33).

This emphasis on the importance of participation and informed decisions is in accordance with the general acceptance of public participation as a *sine qua non* of community development. The RDP also emphasised socio-economic development. In the present stringent economic climate, the continued viability of projects is dependent on available funding and policies that are both efficient and effective.

The RDP, which is the policy framework of the government, rests on six basic principles: an integrated and sustainable programme, a people-driven process, peace and security for all, nation building, linking reconstruction and development, and the democratisation of South Africa. Through the principle of a people-driven process, the idea of public participation is a crucial aspect of the RDP. For instance, through this principle the idea of public participation is furthered: "Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment" (African National Congress 1994:4-7).

In terms of section 1.1 of the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Notice 1954 of 1994), the RDP is a policy framework for socio-economic progress. "Social development is facilitated if people participate fully in making decisions that affect their welfare and in implementing these decisions" (Midgley *et al* 1986:3).

However, before the introduction of a democratic dispensation in South Africa, public participation in public affairs was not the norm. Capacity-building for the purpose of facilitating public participation in the reconstruction and development process had to receive attention when democracy was introduced. Section 7.6.1 of the White Paper on RDP (Notice 1954 of 1994) states that, "Capacity-building is essential for effective participation of civil society in RDP implementation."

5.2.7 Facilitating Community Development

As was mentioned in chapter two, community development is a process that demands community involvement and participation and helps ordinary people to overcome the feeling of powerlessness and develop a strong sense of community in order to develop community bonds by way of interaction.

In any community, people differ from each other in many respects. For instance, people have different levels of education and different types of personalities, while some are poor and others are rich. This causes varying status levels among people. Community participation provides an avenue by which all members of the community, irrespective of their status, can influence the policy-making and implementation processes.

Apartheid policies such as the Group Areas Act have divided residential areas in South African local authorities into black local areas and white local areas. Consequently, such local authorities remain predominantly white or predominantly black. Port Elizabeth is not an exception in this regard. Public participation provides a platform from which all members of the community can participate in policy-making and implementation, irrespective of their backgrounds.

5.2.8 Control Mechanism for the Making and Implementation of Policy

“Control can be defined as the process of monitoring activities to determine whether individual units and the organisation itself are obtaining and utilising their resources effectively and efficiently so as to accomplish their objectives, and, where this is not being achieved, implementing corrective action” (Hanekom & Thornhill 1988:178-179). Therefore, informed members of the public could exercise control over the policy-making and implementation processes of their local authority by monitoring the activities of policy makers and public officials.

A situation that limits public participation to general elections only is not quite democratic, since the government concerned may abuse its authority after a general election (Reddy 1996:4). Continuous public participation in policy-making and implementation could serve as a mechanism to limit the abuse of authority. For instance, an informed citizenry could ensure that public officials use their discretion in a responsive and responsible manner (Clapper [Sa](a):76). Members of the public can do this *inter alia* by demanding accountability and complaining about poor service. Public participation may therefore contribute not only to ensuring that there are smooth processes of policy-making and implementation in place, but also to ensuring that local government is run in accordance with the principles of good governance (Bekker [S.a.]:32). However, although public participation could serve as a control mechanism, it should not be based exclusively on mistrust, since this may generate unnecessary conflict.

5.3 Problems encountered with Public Participation in the Making and Implementation of Policy

Public participation in policy-making and implementation could present numerous problems, such as: lack of a culture of participation, lack of

information, polarized sectoral interests, negative attitudes towards participation, and lack of government response to public needs.

5.3.1 Lack of a Culture of Participation

Culture can be defined in various ways. For instance, culture has been defined as:

- "...a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group" (Storey 1996:1).
- "...shared values, which include religion, language and principles (value culture)" (Lategan & Bekker [Sa]:121).
- "... not only ... values or personality, but rather the great corpus of techniques, knowledge, models of social organisation, ideas and aspirations, specific to a society, which is handed down and learned in each generation and enables a form of social life to take place" (Kotze 1997:93).

From the definitions quoted above, the following characteristics of culture can be deduced:

- It is a lifestyle that is based on certain values (Storey 1996:1);
- It may be specific to a certain group of people in society (Lategan & Bekker [Sa]:121);
- "... techniques, knowledge, models of social organisation, ideas, and aspirations" are elements of culture (Kotze 1997:93); and
- Culture is "handed down and learned in each generation and enables a form of social life to take place" (Kotze 1997:93).

In view of the above, the culture of participation could be described as a lifestyle that upholds the principle of participation while it can also be handed down from one generation to the next. Culture is therefore highly relevant to public participation.

During the apartheid era public participation in local government has neither been encouraged nor been the norm. Organised public participation at the local government level was limited to the Ratepayers' Associations in the white local areas. The majority of South Africans, particularly blacks, were not allowed to participate in policy-making and implementation processes although they were encouraged to comply with the implementation of policies that were affecting their lives. Towards the end of this era, in the 1980s, the struggle against apartheid, mainly from blacks, was intensified through *inter alia* boycotts and political protests. The political activists played a leading role in organising such boycotts and protests. Following their lead, many people became involved in initiatives intended to dismantle apartheid. Because this was not an overt operation, there was insufficient time to educate people in how to participate in initiatives against the state, to the extent that measures that included intimidation had to be used in order to get people to participate. In the run-up to and during the 1994 general elections and 1995 local government elections, political participation reached high levels. This was probably due to the high expectations people had, based on promises made during the election campaign.

After the elections, the focus of participation had to change from being against the state to being in favour of the state. This meant that those community members who had for quite some time boycotted the payment for services rendered by their local authority would now have to pay for such services, and also that those who have been actively involved in opposing the policies of the state would now be expected to be actively involved in supporting the policies and initiatives of the state.

Unlike in general elections, it seems to be difficult to attain high levels of participation at the local government level. The launch of initiatives such as the Masakhane Campaign and the debts following the non-payment for services rendered by local authorities are indicative of these difficulties (Kroukamp 1995:196). In a word, the tools used to dismantle apartheid

policies could not be used *unmodified* in the reconstruction and development process, and promises of a better life for all could not be met overnight.

One can deduce from the foregoing that a culture of public participation in local government affairs in South Africa has never prevailed, and has yet to be entrenched.

5.3.2 Lack of Information

The majority of South African citizens are ignorant about the activities and even the existence of public institutions to the extent that they cannot make effective use of provisions for contact with such institutions (Cloete 1996:27). A lack of information about the functioning of local government could also limit public participation at local government level. The findings of a recent survey conducted nationally by the Khululekani Institute for Democracy in South Africa have shown that many citizens do not understand the functioning of their own local council and at the same time feel ill-informed about decisions made in parliament. This implies that due to a lack of understanding, it may be that the opportunities for public participation offered by certain institutions are not utilised effectively. For instance, members of a community in a certain ward may not bring their problems, needs and aspirations to the attention of their ward councillor, due to lack of such understanding.

A lack of information may have a bearing on the competence of the members of the public with regard to meaningful participation. For instance, it is argued that people should possess a certain minimum amount of intelligence and knowledge for any participation programme to succeed (Beach 1985:360). Therefore, the fact that the public may lack information about the functions, functioning, and even technical matters of local government, may render public participation ineffective.

Commonly utilised participation techniques do not always accommodate lay inputs into the participation process (Fagence 1977:339). Therefore, members of the public who do not have sufficient knowledge to understand and/or make a meaningful contribution to the process of public participation may feel powerless and discouraged.

5.3.3 Inadequate Skills for Participation

In addition to the basic knowledge, the effectiveness of participation may depend upon the availability and effective utilisation of skills such as public speaking and community organisation (Banovetz 1972:56). The skill of public speaking, for instance – since it can influence one's ability to express oneself – could play a role in meetings, radio and television talk shows and public hearings. People who lack the skills needed in public speaking situations may feel intimidated by the environment of participation and consequently withdraw from the process (Banovetz 1972:56).

Community organisation also plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of participation. Properly organised communities have better prospects of being effective in the process of participation than the poorly organised ones. This can be attributed to the fact that their members can co-ordinate their efforts properly and direct them towards their common problems. Therefore, if communities are poorly organised, it may have negative effects on participation.

5.3.4 Population Diversity

Population diversity in local government constituencies could be detrimental to public participation. For instance, according to Banovetz (1972:57), social, cultural and language diversity in constituencies could impede effective participation.

Due to language diversity in South Africa, English, which is not the mother tongue of most members of local communities, is the main language used in local authority meetings and negotiations. This could have implications for the effectiveness of participation, since communication skills play an important role in participation.

5.3.5 Attitude towards Participation

“An attitude may be defined as a predisposition to respond in a consistent manner to a particular person, group, situation, or object” (Silverman 1982:399). An attitude could show whether or not one is in favour of something (Robbins 1986:97). The attitude of both public officials and members of the public towards public participation could therefore determine how they respond to it. Problems may develop when such attitudes are unfavourable. Negative attitudes to public participation could be due to the perceptions people harbour about public participation.

5.3.6 Perceptions about Public Participation

Public participation could be perceived by public officials to be time-consuming, inefficient, irrational, and not productive (Langton 1978:113). In fact, full citizen participation may retard the planning process (Brynard 1996:47). For instance, this may occur due to delays which could result from attempts by public officials to explain the situation to members of the public since the latter may not understand some technical aspects relating to plans and programmes (Zimmerman 1986:4).

Public participation, if it does not lead to a satisfactory government response, could be perceived by members of the public to be a futile exercise. In addition, members of the public may mistakenly feel that participation is only successful (and government is only responsive) if eventually the people's point of view prevails (Banovetz 1972:56).

5.3.7 Reconciliation of Efficiency and Responsiveness to Public Needs

Administrative procedures are usually designed to ensure that efficient delivery of services is achieved in a manner consistent with public policy rather than to accommodate the needs of the public, which may change from time to time.

According to Clapper ([Sa](a):71), public participation may collide with established and inflexible institutional arrangements and work procedures designed for efficiency rather than for responsiveness to public preferences. Therefore, public participation may frustrate public officials who would like to adhere strictly to the rules and regulations while performing their duties, since in some instances responsiveness to public needs may not be attained without bending such rules and regulations.

5.3.8 Representativeness of Public Participation

The participating members of the public may not be representative of citizens at large. Consequently, what is best for them may not be best for all the members of the public within the local authority (Zimmerman 1986:4). For instance, some members of the public may favour street hawking in the city since it gives people an opportunity to sell their goods from points that are accessible to many prospective buyers. On the other hand, members of the business community may oppose street hawking, since it may interfere with shopping patterns, and they may lose customers.

5.3.9 Polarized Sectoral Interests

People tend to be reluctant to participate in activities in which they have no particular interest or which are unlikely to affect them directly (Brynard 1996:42). This accounts for the development of sectoral interests in a community.

Different community organisations and/or community sectors in one local area may have different interests with regard to a particular issue. This could lead to a situation where public opinion in a community may be so divided and polarised that it becomes difficult for the local authority to be responsive to those interests in a manner that satisfies all the parties (Brynard 1990:62).

The viewpoints held by various participating community organisations may differ not only from each other, but also from those held by local authority. This indicates that public participation may complicate the decision-making process, since the democratic norms would require that all views be taken into consideration during the decision-making process. Furthermore, it may create the perception that it is more difficult to democratically control an active citizenry than an inactive one (Chapin & Deneau 1978:6).

5.3.10 The Effect of Public Participation on Representative Democracy

Representative democracy may be threatened or even prejudiced by public participation in policy-making (Fagence 1977:339). Policy makers may even feel that their representative capacity is being undermined by the process of public participation (Atkinson 1992:8).

5.3.11 Costs of Participation

Citizen participation may be costly in terms of staff, time and money (Fagence 1977:359). For instance, members of the public usually have other commitments, and it is a myth that poor people have an excess of free time (Midgley *et al* 1986:36). The time available for participating in public affairs may be limited; hence, consistently high levels of participation tend to be the ideal rather than the practical norm over a long period of time, especially as far as the attendance of meetings and/or public hearings goes. On the other hand, it may be necessary to hire more staff or train current members of staff to cope with the demand for increased dialogue (Fagence 1977:360).

5.4 Prospects of Public Participation the Making and Implementation of Policy

In spite of the problems encountered with public participation in policy-making and implementation, certain factors – which include those identified and explained in section 5.2 – actually necessitate it. Solving said problems could contribute substantially towards an effective and sustainable process of public participation.

This section has attempted to investigate factors that can contribute towards the realisation of an effective and sustainable process of public participation in policy-making and implementation. This includes attempts to find ways and means of dealing with some of the problems associated with public participation. Mechanisms that could be utilised to pursue the stated objectives include: cultivating a culture of participation, public education, organising for participation, capacity-building for participation, reforming attitudes towards participation, utilising appropriate methods of participation, and publicising local government affairs. These mechanisms are discussed below.

5.4.1 Cultivating a Culture of Public Participation

Participation could occur as a result of government's initiative or the public's initiatives, or a combined initiative of both government and the public. However, irrespective of who the initiator is, for public participation to flourish the support of both government and the public is necessary.

In order to cultivate a culture of participation, the legislation of a democratic state should allow and encourage ordinary members of the public to participate in the political decision-making process, so that they can influence it (Almond & Verba 1989:3). This could contribute towards ensuring

that participation in policy-making and implementation does not become the prerogative of political activists and/or members of the ruling party or privileged classes of the society (Midgley *et al* 1986:9).

People should transcend the apathy of traditional culture and of remaining chained in superstitions and oppressive beliefs (Midgley *et al* 1986:3). For instance, some may not complain about poor service simply because they do not want to cause trouble; others may refrain from asking questions about something they do not understand, for the simple reason that it appears to them to be the idea of an expert. People should realise that to complain about poor service and to ask for explanations when they do not understand is not only their right, but also their duty (Brynard 1990:66).

Raising the level of social and political consciousness among local people could contribute towards the cultivation of a culture of participation (Midgley *et al* 1986:31). It could help community members become aware of their problems, and organised public participation can help them act collectively in an attempt to find solutions to such problems. Furthermore, political consciousness can also make them aware of the various alternatives at their disposal.

Some writers maintain that non-participation is indicative of a basically stable and contented society (Fagence 1977:346). Such a perception could have a dampening effect on a culture of participation – after all, participation is not always an ingredient of instability! In fact, it may actually contribute to ensuring that stability and efficiency prevail.

The gap between the practitioners and specialists involved in the field of public administration as a whole on the one hand, and members of the public on the other, should be minimised. This could be done *inter alia* by presenting policy problems to the public for information and discussion in non-technical terms that stress (i) alternative ways of solving problems, and

(ii) the possible consequences of each suggested alternative (Banovetz 1972:58).

Members of the public should be involved from the initial stages of the policy-making process. This could be a significant factor, since it creates an opportunity to take into account the attitude and opinion of the public before great costs are incurred. Once the decisions and/or plans of policy makers have been realised at a high cost, it is difficult for them to reverse those decisions and/or plans to accommodate public demands. Therefore, despite the fact that it is not always possible to involve the public in technical, sensitive and tentative aspects of policy-making, attempts should be made wherever possible to involve the public from the beginning to the end of the policy-making process.

5.4.2 Organising for Participation

Although public participation may be ineffective without government support, the participation which best produces community leadership is the kind which stems from the community's own initiatives rather than flows from the efforts of governmental officials (Midgley *et al* 1986:38; and Banovetz 1972:58). A culture of participation could be deeply entrenched in communities if they could participate in public affairs not only in a reactive manner, but also in a pro-active manner – or better yet, if they could participate in public affairs in a *mainly pro-active manner*.

Community organisations should be properly organised, and in such a way that particular attention is paid, among other things, to the significance of: (i) the continuity and strength of their leadership and/or delegation, (ii) working with local leadership, and (iii) decentralisation.

A lack of continuity in the tenure of the delegation of community organisations has been identified as one of the problems encountered with

public participation in policy-making and implementation in Port Elizabeth. In some instances, this lack necessitates revisiting decisions and agreements already made, consequently delaying progress.

Organising for public participation should not be restricted to organisations established exclusively for the purpose of interacting with the local authority. Community structures such as churches, youth clubs and sports organisations should also be involved.

Ward committees should also be established, in order to decentralise the participation process. This will ensure that opportunities for public participation are brought down to the doorsteps of ordinary members of the public.

Community organisations and fora should be organised on the basis of aspects of local governance rather than political motives. This could contribute towards eliminating the traditional and racist undertones in the composition of such organisations and fora. Consequently, attention could be focused on finding solutions to the social problems confronting the communities in question and on the local authority, and not on power struggles.

5.4.3 Capacity-building

Apart from the fact that most members of the public have insufficient knowledge of how their local authorities function, disadvantaged people often cannot participate effectively in local government affairs because they have trouble understanding the professional jargon and find it difficult to conceptualise (Brynard [Sa]:48). Capacity-building is therefore essential – both for public officials and members of the public – if participation is to be effective. In this regard Midgley *et al* (1986:32) recommend the introduction of training that includes workshops and programmes designed to equip

community workers with participatory skills. It would appear that training of this nature could contribute towards boosting public participation in the mean time.

However, a long-lasting approach that will educate members of the public about the nature and functions of their local authority as well as their rights and duties, is needed. In this regard, it appears that the inclusion of 'Civics' as a school subject at primary and/or secondary level may be a solution. This would contribute to capacity-building, by ensuring that the dream of meaningful public participation by an informed citizenry is realised in future.

"If the programmes of citizen participation are to be developed and sustained in a productive and positive fashion, there is a clear need for planners with special skills" (Fagence 1977:357). However, planners will have to learn to present problems for information and discussion in non-technical terms (see sections 3.3.2(b), 4.6.2, 5.3.2 & 5.5.2).

5.4.4 Utilisation of Appropriate Methods of Participation

The ideal is to identify and utilise methods of participation that could ensure that ordinary members of the public participate in such a way that they can actually influence policy-making and implementation. For instance, studies have brought to light that public hearings – historic and traditional though they may be – have little effect on plans and policies (Catanese 1984:125).

5.4.5 Publicising Local Government Affairs

As part of the process of disseminating information, the opinion(s) and input of members of the public in respect of current and proposed policies should be documented and publicised on a consistent and continuous basis. This would inform the non-participating members of the public and also help them

to realise whether or not the local authority might take their views into account if they were to participate in policy-making and implementation processes.

5.5 Findings based on the Survey Questionnaires and Interviews

The aim of this section is to relate aspects elucidated in this as well as previous chapters, to the findings and specific practices brought to light by way of the survey questionnaire (see section 4.8.1.6) and interviews.

As stated in the first chapter, the research is also aimed at establishing the perceptions of respondents regarding their own understanding of local councils and Parliament and their knowledge of policy formulation processes. Such policy formulations include the Constitution, departmental Green Papers, White Papers, Bills and the passing of Acts by Parliament, and the ordinances and by-laws of local councils.

The findings are both interesting and somewhat disconcerting.

5.5.1 Lack of Information and Knowledge

Most respondents felt that they did not know enough about the policy-making phases (see section 2.6.3.2); most respondents were also uncertain whether they knew enough about legislation¹. Only 7% of the respondents indicated that they knew enough about the phases of the policy-making process (see section 2.6.3.2).

Understanding what happens in political institutions is another crucial aspect of knowledge about policy-making processes. A large majority of respondents indicated that they do not understand what goes on in their local council and do not consider themselves to be well-informed about decisions made in Parliament². Regarding local councils, less than one-fifth

(20%) of respondents indicated that they understand what goes on in their council. Respondents had to indicate their level of agreement with the statement regarding Parliament which read "*I am well informed about the political decisions in Parliament that affect my community.*"

The above indicators of understanding and knowledge about policy-making processes and institutions must be understood as related but not coinciding. People who think that they know enough about the stages of policy-making may have little understanding of what happens in their local council and feel ill-informed about political decisions in Parliament and/or understand what goes on in their local council, may feel that they do not have enough knowledge about the stages of policy-making (see Khululekani Institute for Democracy HSRC Report 1999). Knowledge of the functioning of a local council does not necessarily imply knowledge of national Parliament or elements of the policy-making process such as the Constitution, Green Papers, White Papers, Bills and/or Acts.

In order to improve understanding of political institutions and how they function, and to have a better understanding of local government affairs, the public should be better informed and educated, which clearly encompasses more than just being taught about the existence of policy formulation and legislation. Local communities would like to be consulted with regard to the formulation and implementation policies that are likely to affect them.

¹ Respondents were asked: "Would you say that you have sufficient knowledge of the role of the constitution, acts, ordinance and by-laws?"

² Respondents were asked: "Would you say you have enough knowledge about the Constitution, Green Papers/ White Papers/ Bills/ Acts/ ordinances/ by-laws?" Note that the responses from those who participated in the survey are subjective in as far as these reflect their own perceived knowledge and understanding of the process/institutions.

The provision of information to policy-makers and implementers by the public, the expressed need of the public to be informed, and an active interest among members of the public in the affairs of public institutions are all factors that may play an important role in people's understanding of policy-making and implementation.

It also appears from the survey questionnaire that the public does not understand how local government operates. For instance, members of the public do not have adequate information about the full spectrum of services offered by the local authority; nor do they understand the problems faced by local government, such as insufficient funds, or how best to prioritise services. Knowledge of by-laws will enable members of the public to raise matters of concern since this could ensure that by-laws not only address the needs of the community but also get the necessary support from it.

As knowledge and participation seem to be linked, the survey attempted to establish how respondents obtain most of their information¹.

The results indicated that 60% of the respondents received information through the media – the most often mentioned media sources are radio (22%), television (19%) and newspapers (7%). Twenty three percent of the respondents received information through the community, 6% through political parties and 3% through local government. Respondents receiving information through the Internet are less than 1%, and posters and billboards were only mentioned by 2% of respondents.

¹ Respondents were asked: "Where do you get most of your information on the political decisions that affect your community?"

5.5.2 Lack of Education as an Obstacle to Public Participation.

It is generally believed that knowledge about policies is strongly related to the level of people's formal education. This would imply that less educated people will only be able to significantly increase their understanding and knowledge of political institutions and policy-making and implementation processes once they have reached a higher level of formal education.

However, the survey and interviews revealed a stronger relationship between the level of education and knowledge of policy formulation: the higher one's education, the more knowledge you have of the stages. Understanding local councils and feeling that one is informed regarding decisions made in Parliament are not significantly related to formal education. A greater understanding of local councils and Parliament is more likely among respondents who have completed their secondary school education (Standard 10 or Grade 12) or who have some tertiary qualification. On the other hand, respondents with grade 8 or less showed a very low level of knowledge in terms of policy-making, whereas the highest qualified respondents displayed relatively high levels in the same regard.

The relatively high proportion of graduated respondents can be attributed to the fact that the respondents included many employees of NGOs or other community organisations and the municipality. This is significant in that skilled staff members are regarded by Robinson and Riddel (1990:71) as conducive to successful participation programmes. The majority of respondents completed their secondary school education, which would have made them more receptive to programmes requiring social and technical skills such as leadership training and civics.

Language and literacy also seemed to be a problem. For instance, some respondents from disadvantaged communities complained about a lack of basic education that could have assisted them in a better understanding of

the issues at stake. Some respondents acknowledged, during interviews, that their knowledge regarding the implications of certain decisions was limited, or that there were certain issues they did not understand.

5.5.3 Participation of the Public

Respondents were asked about their intention to join public hearings and council meetings, as well as actually participate in policy-making processes and community activities. The intention to join public hearings indicates people's willingness to participate in policy-making, whereas reported participation might provide some insight into actual activities within civil society.

Respondents were given various options of participation in policy-making and implementation. The question was whether they *"would participate or ask advice in public hearings if they had the opportunity to do so"*.

Respondents with a better understanding and knowledge of policy-making institutions and processes were more likely to participate. The intention to participate on local level was higher among black respondents than among white, coloured and Asian respondents. Some respondents reported that they don't have enough time to plan their attendance of a public hearing because they are usually not informed about it in time. They are also daunted by council meeting protocols, and unsure of the correct procedures.

In the question, *"How often would you say that you personally participate?"* respondents were asked about various aspects of civil participation such as participation in local councils, public hearings, in organisations active in neighbourhood affairs and enquiries at parliamentary constituency offices.

The majority of the respondents who reported active involvement in community organisations and neighbourhood affairs were female. This may be because many organisational activities take place during the day, and

because more women than men are available during the day to participate in activities, which would make it difficult for many men, as the breadwinners, to become involved. The survey questionnaire produced evidence that contradicted another study in this regard (Van Wyk 1993:170).

Knowledge of the five phases of the policy-making process was related to willingness to attend public hearings at the provincial legislature and national Parliament and to the intention to participate in the policy formulation processes of a government department: The more knowledge a respondent had, the more willing he/she was to participate. Attending public hearings of local councils was more likely among respondents who had a better understanding of the how local councils function. Respondents who felt that they were well-informed about the political decisions made in Parliament, were more willing to participate in all five phases of the policy-making process (see section 2.6.3.2).

Respondents who reported higher levels of participation in their local council and in public hearings displayed a higher understanding of local councils and felt better informed about parliamentary decisions. Participation in activities of community organisations seemed to have a positive effect in terms of the understanding of the respondent, whether the respondent felt informed, and the respondent's knowledge of policy-making.

5.5.4 Participation in Relation to Standard of Living and Trust in Government

Respondents who professed allegiance to the ANC, were somewhat more likely to be involved in public processes. Participation in policy-making processes is generally more likely among those members of the public who trust the government than among those who do not feel that they can trust the government. The survey revealed that the higher the level of trust, the more frequently there was an intention on the part of the respondent to join

in, and the more often the respondent reported participation in various activities.

It was also interesting to note that the greater the mutual trust between community, community leaders, and outsiders, the greater the participation in the community organisation.

The respondents indicated a gap between the trust of the community organisation and the councillors. This was also reflected in the feeling of some respondents that councillors do not represent the community that elected them. When they made certain demands, they got the impression that certain councillors were not willing to take responsibility, and that the councillors viewed the community organisation as a rival in representing the community¹.

5.5.5 Participation in Community Organisation and Institution-building

The survey questionnaire also attempted to establish what – in the view of the respondents – was "*the most important organisation/institution to address problems in the community*". It seemed that the community played a far more important role than local government in assisting people in their immediate vicinity. Respondents did not differentiate much between certain community organisations. The majority just said that the community block (living areas) or community in general was the most appropriate level at which to address their problems. Civics were most often mentioned among respondents who raised – at public hearings – problems such as access to water, electricity, roads and other services.

1 It was interesting to note that political participation seems to be far from an elitist endeavour of a higher standard of living. Those worse off reported to participate more often than respondents who live at a relatively higher standard.

Respondents who were active in community organisations (either as staff or as participants) claimed that community organisations are much more efficient in improving the social conditions of their respective communities (see section 5.3.3) because they have to deal directly with issues that relate to policies of social change. Also, it was the task of community organisations to open the policy process to groups and individuals in society. The structure of the organisation was generally characterised by the creation of a steering committee. This was the forum of the organisation and consisted of delegates from the neighbourhood councils and service groups that had been established. The neighbourhood council usually consisted of a group of neighbours from the same block or street who had elected someone to represent them. For those who did not want to work within the confines of a street group but wanted to address other needs, the service groups – the aged, youth, and so forth – provided a vehicle for them.

The majority of the respondents (70%) agreed with the statement that "it made a big difference to [their lives] when [they] joined a community organisation". Not one respondent disagreed with this statement. Their motivation involved the benefits they received as members and workers, such as acquired community development skills, personal growth, new personal experiences, recognition, neighbours getting to know each other, meeting new people, training, and networking with other organisations.

Respondents were also asked to describe their negative experiences, since these would have influenced their perception of the organisation.

Twenty four percent reported negative experiences such as: did not receive employment as promised; expected radical politics from the organisation as befitting its radical community work image; failure to assist the very poor in specific areas (mostly black areas); failure to train administrators; lack of commitment from local informal community leaders; lack of funds; lack of

contribution from the youth; lack of continuity and sustainability; insufficient intervention at neighbourhood level for lasting change; and failure to succeed as a national movement.

Improvements attributed to the community organisation in the neighbourhood included the following: physical changes in the neighbourhood; it created a feeling of togetherness; it initiated public awareness; improved responsiveness to local authority; development of community participation; and improvement of the neighbourhood.

Though respondents were not questioned about the role of community leaders, it was evident during interviews that they play an important role in the community. Generally, the street leaders seem to perform an important role, but for safety and security, friends are mentioned relatively frequently.

5.5.6 Important Issues Participants would raise at Public Hearings or Meetings

On a national level, the three most often reported issues that respondents would raise at public hearings were: services, the economy, and safety and security.

In answer to an open question – *"What are the most important issues in your community that you would raise at a public hearing?"* – respondents indicated that their concern for the economy was linked to the creation of jobs, poverty, safety and security, education and housing. Concerns over services in terms of water, electricity, roads, and so on, are also most frequently raised when asked about issues to discuss at public hearings. This indicates a concern about the responsibility of local and provincial institutions that have to provide, sustain and enhance basic services in the community. Many respondents listed the most important questions as those related to the issue of employment (the removal of discrimination, exploitation and oppression in employment practice); to education issues

(the abolition of unequal education, state support of pre-school education, development of literacy training); to housing issues (equal and affordable housing); and to poverty issues (the elimination of poverty, breaking the poverty cycle).

5.5.7 Perceptions of the Municipality

The survey questionnaire has shown that public participation in policy-making and implementation in Port Elizabeth is inadequate. About 82% of the respondents said that current public participation in the making and implementation of by-laws in the City of Port Elizabeth is inadequate. Despite the fact that members of the public are invited to public meetings through radio, newspapers, the Civil Society Forum and ward councillors, such meetings are very poorly attended.

This gives the impression that members of the public are not interested in municipal affairs. Issues raised were bureaucratic complaints, such as: that some officials do not give sufficient attention and explanation in respect of the concerns of members of the public; that members of the public are usually referred from person to person when they make enquiries (specifically regarding their accounts); and that local government officials do not respond promptly to enquiries. In some cases, repeated enquiries have to be made (or complaints lodged) in order to get a response.

5.5.8 Religious Affiliation of Respondents

The reason for seeking this information was that cultural and religious affiliations play an important part in preparing people to be participants outside their immediate group affiliation. Of all the respondents, the majority belonged to Protestant churches. The single Muslim representative would seem to under-represent the Muslims if one took into consideration the active Muslim group in Port Elizabeth. A high proportion of the respondents were churchgoers. This was an indicator that they had been exposed to organisational activities and were therefore at ease with group activities.

5.6 Summary

Public participation in policy-making and implementation is necessary in order to: provide policy makers and members of the public with information; democratise the policy-making and implementation processes; promote the responsiveness of policy makers and public officials to public needs; facilitate the processes of policy implementation and community development; and control the policy-making and implementation processes. The investigation has shown that these factors could also account for the need for public participation in policy-making and implementation in Port Elizabeth.

However, there are certain problems with public participation in policy-making and implementation, namely: a lack of a culture of participation; a lack of information; inadequate participation skills; negative impact of the population diversity; negative attitudes towards participation; perceptions about public participation; reconciliation of efficiency and responsiveness to public needs; representativeness of public participation; polarized sectoral interests; the effect of public participation on representative democracy; and the costs of participation. Some of these problems also apply to public participation in policy-making and implementation in Port Elizabeth.

In view of the problems encountered with public participation, it appears that the prospects of public participation in policy-making and implementation could be found through: cultivating a culture of public participation; proper organisation for participation; capacity-building; utilisation of appropriate methods of participation; and publicising local government affairs.

On the basis of these findings, certain conclusions can be drawn and recommendations made. This is the focal point of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis was mainly to describe and analyse the special role played by public participation in policy-making and policy implementation in the South African political and administrative system.

The question of how the interaction of public participation in policy-making and implementation can be strengthened and made more fluid, formed the core of the problem statement of the thesis. From the problem statement, set out in chapter one, the study follows the hypothesis that the levels of knowledge regarding legislation, institutions and processes of public interaction with the legislative and policy-making and implementation institutions, and the intention to participate in these processes, are important, as they can serve as useful indicators and yardsticks whereby the progress of democratisation and empowerment in South Africa can be both reflected and acted upon. To ensure that this study is also seen as an appraisal of a process and not only as a description of the role of public participation in the making and implementing of policy, it was necessary to consider the above hypothesis and problem statement and weigh them against the accumulated evidence and the results of conclusions drawn from the examination of the other aims of the study. This is also dealt with in the following section, where the main issues of concern and problem areas of this study are addressed.

The stated problem representing a study problem in chapter one for the purposes of this study remained until September 1999, that is, shortly after the second national general elections in June 1999, which, it is hoped, will usher in new developments for public participation in democratic local government.

As discussed in chapter one, the focus of the research aims and objectives of the study were:

- To examine the impact of the process of public participation in order to effectively and efficiently integrate and encourage public participation in policy-making and policy implementation;
- To clarify the concept public participation for the purposes of this thesis in order to establish a framework of prerequisites for public participation in the making and implementation of policy;
- To examine the extent of awareness of the South African public with regard to its democratic rights and freedom and newly acquired opportunities of interaction in the process of policy-making and policy implementation;
- To ascertain the extent of the processes that manage this interaction between the public and the institution conducive to involvement by the public in having a say in policy-making and implementation; and
- To determine the issues of concern the South African public would like to have a say in (regarding how they would like to be governed) if they were prepared to take advantage of the opportunities to participate.

The recommendations made in the following section are linked to the information obtained in the light of the previous chapters, particularly leading to chapter five,

where the findings of the research are discussed and interpreted, which in turn leads to the conclusions and recommendations in this chapter. Information has been obtained with regard to all of these aims. The first two aims must be regarded as contributing to the understanding of the participation process as a whole. The last three aims deal with the findings resulting from the study of primary sources. Being a concluding chapter, it will offer a brief but analytical presentation of the arguments and statements (with cross-references to the relevant sections in the text) so that the chapter does not repeat every aspect contained in the content and summaries of the various chapters in the thesis. In so doing, it is hoped that the conclusion will be worth presenting.

The conclusions and recommendations pertain to two areas of enquiry. They deal with main issues and areas of concern central to a number of factors that tend to weaken public participation in governance and that need to be addressed. Furthermore, they also deal with recommendations on the public participation process itself, in terms of challenges and issues facing existing mechanisms to strengthen and facilitate public participation in policy-making and implementation, and to make it more fluid.

6.2 Main Areas and Issues of Concern Pertaining to the Strengthening of Public Participation

The main areas and issues of concern in terms of public participation in the making and implementation of policy to be addressed here are linked to considerations of a number of proposals pertaining to the improvement of public participation in policy-making and implementation on the various levels of government.

6.2.1 The Public's General Knowledge of Legislation, Institutions and Policy-making Processes

The recommendations below are based on the assumption that the public needs to be provided with a clear understanding of the process of lawmaking at all times – how policy is converted into legislation, the different stages it goes through, the making and implementing of policy (see sections 2.6 & 2.7) and how the public can participate in the process (see sections 3.8.2, 3.9, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8 & 5.5.3). This could be the joint responsibility of Parliament, joint parliamentary committees, public participation units in the national, provincial and municipal legislatures, the executive through the relevant departments and municipalities, political parties, elected representatives, non-governmental organisations working in the field, trade unions, and community-based organisations (i.e. consumer bodies, ratepayers' associations, civics, interest groups and lobby groups (see sections 2.6.3.4, 2.8, 4.2 & 4.3).

Public participation units in legislatures and public participation programmes need to be expanded and increased funding needs to be allocated to them. These units should be adequately staffed and equipped with the necessary resources to take the participation programmes out to the communities (see section 5.3.11).

Constituency offices (see section 4.5.6) should be redefined as vehicles for improving public participation in governance. This would include setting standards for training, defining the functions of constituency offices, and getting clarity about who is served by these offices. It may be best to centralise the development and management of such offices, as well as the training of staff. Such offices also need to provide links with the communities in a particular area. They need to be seen as fora where the public can articulate local interests, and should expose the general public to information about legislation and government

policy at national, provincial and local levels. This can be done by way of effective communication regarding their role and how it relates to the needs of constituents through the relevant media as will be mentioned later.

Organisations of civil society and public participation units should be drawn into the lawmaking process at an early stage so that they can more effectively disseminate information to the public and assist the public in making submissions (see section 5.4.1). Early and timely invitations to participate are crucial (see sections 5.3.11 & 5.5.3).

Standard rules, procedures and protocols should be put into place by Government in consultation with the above-mentioned actors so as to make it possible for the public to prepare themselves adequately and engage in meaningful participation in the legislative and policy-making and implementation processes for all three spheres of governance in South Africa.

6.2.2 Access to Proposed Legislation

The public should be provided with executive summaries of each Bill, ordinance and policy paper in an easily accessible format that enables them to grasp quickly and easily the contents, as well as the practical implications of the proposed legislation.

Jargon and technical language in the legislation should be kept to a minimum wherever possible (see section 5.4.3).

Specific items of legislation which have a direct impact on communities and individuals should make provision within the Bill or ordinance for widespread public education on the implications and impact of the proposed item of legislation, i.e. a widespread public education programme on the contents of the bill once it is passed into law (see sections 5.2.3 & 5.4.5).

6.2.3 Responses to Submissions

Those who make submissions find the lack of feedback discouraging (see section 4.2). For example, an interested party making a submission on policy in the early stages inevitably has to wait until such policy is published to determine whether that submission has had any impact on the proposed item of policy. However, it is also becoming increasingly difficult to make a meaningful and substantive intervention in the later stages of the legislative process.

There should be protocols which outline how structures and administrations should respond to submissions. For example, every organisation that makes a submission should get a written indication as to whether or not their submission has had an impact on the adopted policy or item of legislation.

Apart from giving written feedback to organisations, groups, civic structures or institutions on whether their submissions have had an impact on legislation (and to what extent), broader feedback should be given to the public in general, by means of radio, television and the press.

6.2.4 Improving Education

Education for the citizenry in the understanding of the functioning of the state and state processes, inclusive of public institutions in democracies, is of great importance. Education increases levels of awareness and understanding of state structures, institutions and processes. In order to develop and sustain public participation there must be a certain level of education and intellectual sophistication among most members of society within the specific municipality (see sections 5.4.3, 5.5.1 & 5.5.2).

The education system currently does not provide for a national, specific and systematic form of citizenship training in schools, resulting in learners who are not aware of the values, institutions, processes and functions of the institutions of a parliamentary democracy, or of their own rights, obligations and opportunities within a democratic system.

The youth should be engaged in issues of public participation through the school curriculum, which should include a greater emphasis on developing a national programme on civic education as an integral part of the standard school curriculum.

Institutions such as schools, universities and technikons could play a role in enhancing democracy through facilitating gatherings aimed at improving public participation in governance.

It is suggested here that education around the composition and functions of such structures should be included in formal curricula on secondary school level. Citizen education, if formalised within the educational system, is likely both to advance the levels of understanding and knowledge, and to cultivate the intention to participate. This may result in active participation that will benefit the vision and practices that sustain and deepen democracy in South Africa.

The Government should also give more resources to literacy programmes – increased literacy will increase the public's ability to participate in governance.

People who are unable to read should not be at a disadvantage because of their illiteracy. Public participation programmes should use other means of communication – such as TV, audio-cassettes, theatre and workshops – in creative ways. More resources should be allocated to the arts (street theatre, for

example) as a method of communication between the various communities and Government. Language and literacy barriers are more easily overcome by making use of the arts as a vehicle of communication. Through popular theatre, complex governance issues can be highlighted, explained and debated.

6.2.5 The Role of the Media

While the media play a critical role in facilitating public participation in both the policy-making process (including the legislative aspect) and the policy execution process (see section 4.5), they are not being used as effectively as they can be. Making use of newspapers to advertise public hearings and council meetings, or commentary on legislation in process, rests on three assumptions:

- that most people can **read**
- that most people have **access** to mainstream newspapers regularly
- that most people who can read and do have access also **understand** the full implications or context of the bill, ordinance or paper that is being advertised, since it is seldom explained.

Radio and television (preferably national television) are seen as the most wide-reaching media of communication (especially for the illiterate population), but these too are limited, in that advertisements generally only provide one-way communication (see section 4.5.1). Furthermore, because transmissions occur in "real time", advertisements can only be heard or seen at the time of transmission and therefore may miss their target audience.

The media (local, provincial and national), especially the radio, should be used more effectively in public participation programmes. The broadcasting of parliamentary deliberations, talk shows and phone-in radio programmes are relevant examples in addition to more formal feedback via news and/or actuality

programmes. Newspapers (see section 4.5.2) could have dedicated columns to inform and educate the public about new legislation and the process of participating in policy formulation and the legislative process. The findings of the study in the view of the respondents suggest that these media are far more effective than posting information in public libraries and on posters (see section 4.5.3) or even on websites.

6.2.6 Issues within the Administrative Sector

The administrative component of government authorities tends to hamper effective public participation in political processes. While many politicians are aware of and support the need for public participation, the administration (executing branch) of the political process tends to negate effective and meaningful public input. This is an unfortunate state of affairs, since public officials are in a position to make a positive contribution to public participation, and to direct and improve such participation (see sections 2.6.3.4.2 & 5.2.4).

Contributing factors are:

- Notification of public meetings, proceedings and hearings that are going to be held, very seldom takes place long enough before the time. Some public hearings take place a mere one or two weeks after notice has been given. The public should be given more time to prepare their submissions and to submit them to the relevant authorities in good time (see section 4.4.2.4, 5.3.11 & 5.5.3).
- Often when new legislation is presented for public commentary, it is written in highly technical, legalistic jargon, and there is a high volume of reading matter to be worked through (see section 5.4.3). All these content-related factors tend to preclude the layperson from participating meaningfully or substantively in the process.

- When the public is notified that certain public hearings are to take place, those preparing the notices assume that the South African population is highly literate and notices tend to be written with such a highly literate sector in mind. Language and literacy barriers make it very difficult for many people to understand advertisements or documents relating to submissions (see section 4.6.2). Also, most public hearings/meetings/proceedings are conducted in English (see section 5.3.4).
- Problems that respondents have had with the municipality include: Malperformance of municipal services in disadvantaged areas, an inability to redress grievances and handle complaints, disengagement from the poor and a lack of accountability in terms of administrative decisions (see section 5.5.7).
- Some officials believe that they alone are fit to take decisions on technical issues and that less educated citizens are not competent to take part in policy-making and implementation (see sections 5.3.5 & 5.3.6).
- Public participation can suffer negative effects from rigid, centralised planning that is not open to unexpected developments (see section 5.3.7).

Social and political changes that have taken place in the past decade – especially the abolition of apartheid and the institution of affirmative action and transformation – have had an impact on the composition of the personnel corps in executive institutions such as municipalities. Currently, the personnel corps comprises groups that did not traditionally hold such positions. An understanding of intercultural communication and interpersonal relationships has therefore become imperative in delivering services to the public (see section 5.3.4).

6.2.7 Issues regarding Communication

National and provincial legislatures (elected representatives), and executive and local councils should also spend time on making sure that communication is thorough and effective, and should consider evaluating their feedback to communities in order to ensure that citizens are well-informed. Apart from the media, feedback could also be channelled through community organisations, drop-in centres, an open-door policy and surveys of public opinion (see section 4.5).

Municipal officials should also, in their roles as community residents, interpret local authority policy and public needs with regard to service delivery (to individual citizens or to citizen groups) in the ward, residential area or street where they reside. Any information thus obtained could be fed back to decision-making and executive bodies for further action.

6.2.8 The Participation of the Public

On average, the **intention** to participate in policy processes is high. However, the high level of interest should be translated into **active involvement** if it is to add value to public participation for South African citizens (see sections 5.5.3 & 5.5.4).

Those who argue that the involvement of the public in the public hearings/proceedings/meetings and other direct participation measures undermines the right of elected office-bearers to perform their function as representatives of the electorate (see section 5.3.10), should take into account that the implementation

of public participation is an important principle and a fundamental basis for the evolution of a lasting democracy, and this can only enhance the work and output of elected members on all three levels of government.

Although the findings were that respondents would like to attend public hearings/proceedings/meetings, it was found that they appeared apathetic with regard to attendance, and did not actually take action and attend. One could ask whether more respondents might have attended such gatherings, had they really been confident that they actually had a voice, and also if they had been better informed regarding their freedoms and the privilege to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives (see section 4.2 & 4.6, especially 4.6.4).

6.2.9 Public Participation in Local Government

Within the sphere of local government, the level of public participation tends to be determined by the extent to which local authorities have succeeded in the transformation of service delivery to the public (see sections 2.4.1.4, 2.4.1.5, 4.4.1.2 & 4.4.2.5). The issues facing participation identified within the local sphere of government are disparities in service delivery, the extent to which development projects are inclusive of community input, obstacles facing project consultation and implementation in slum and crime infested areas, and the development of clear role definitions and functions for role players in the design and implementation of development projects within communities.

The administrative process (see section 2.6.1) must not only be seen as involving two parties, namely the officials (see sections 2.6.3.4.2 & 2.8.2) and the political office-bearers (see sections 2.6.3.4.1 & 2.8.1), but the public should also be taken into account. A passive community (see section 2.4.1.2.3) without a sense of purpose, that accepts with resignation the government and administration to which it is subjected – regardless of how good

or otherwise that government or administration might be – will in the end cause a government to believe that autocratic ways are acceptable. Such a state of affairs encourages bureaucratic organisation and fosters a negative attitude in public officials towards public participation. Such officials then begin to perceive the public as being passive, apathetic and an obstacle to procedure.

6.2.10 Role of Municipal Councillors and Political Parties in Wards

In order to make a meaningful contribution to the process of policy-making, councillors should have current information on the status quo in their constituencies. They should therefore continuously interact with interest groups, prominent individuals and members of their communities (see sections 2.6.3.4.1, 2.8.1 & 5.2.2). Some politicians believe that they should represent communities, as they have been elected by popular vote, and see grassroots leaders as their rivals. The issue of democracy is related to the question of accountability. Participation challenges traditional views on the roles of councillors, officials and citizens, but it may lead to power being fragmented, so that in the end, no one can be held accountable (see section 3.5).

The ideal is that councillors should be sensitive to the problems and needs of the public, and should feel responsible for dealing with such problems and needs. In short, they should realise that they are accountable to the public, and are there to serve not themselves but the public at large (see section 2.4.1.5). They should be active agents in serving their constituency in order to meet the needs of those who elected them.

The offices of councillors or political parties are also potential mechanisms for linking legislators with the public. Many people are either unaware of their existence, or not sure how to use them. The role and function of such offices is not clear and they are seldom utilised to their full potential in bringing the

business of the legislature, and the work of the elected representative within the ward to the citizens in the area. Another issue is that many political party offices tend to be too closely associated with the political party of the elected representative utilising the office, which is alienating to those who do not support that specific political party.

6.2.11 Role of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can play a very important role in public participation, especially in making legislative and policy issues more understandable and the language used more accessible, as well as in providing links and access between legislative and government institutions and communities. However, NGOs working in the field of public participation need to be acutely aware of the attendant risks of confusing their own organisational objectives and agendas with the aspirations of the communities they work in, which may differ.

NGOs involved in issues of public participation in governance should form a coalition which could work towards –

- establishing a clearing house of best practices in public participation;
- monitoring policy formulation and the legislative process;
- building networks between different stakeholders who can more effectively participate in the lawmaking process;
- educating for a transparent and democratic society and gathering and disseminating information on public participation;
- assisting people to work for change through public participation in their communities; and
- promoting grassroots public participation actions by residents so that the quality of life can be improved.

6.2.12 Issues regarding Community Participation in Community Development and Community Organisation

Chapter one stated that it was possible – despite the complexity and the variety of public participation activities – to identify specific variables (see section 2.9.) in an attempt to determine what the nature of public participation is, and whether the way in which public participation functions, is affected by those variables and to establish whether support can be found for the proposition that community participation through development programmes (see sections 2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 3.4, 5.2.6 & 5.2.7) could enhance the involvement of people in public participation to a certain degree. The conclusions drawn from the survey and interviews show that there is some support for the above proposition.

The nature and scope of community participation in community development programmes (see sections 2.3, 5.2.6 & 5.2.7) is an important variable. From the examination of the definitions in chapter two, participation is seen as covering a wide spectrum, from consultation to citizen participation. Community participation is a developmental process and a form of grassroots democracy where the poor become aware of their situation, build up self-confidence and realise that they have power if they act in concert.

Another important part of the community participation process comes to the fore when people recognise the needs and problems they have in common with others and utilise the community-building possibilities to identify and mobilise their own resources in finding solutions to their problems. Through participation, people become aware of the real state of their living conditions and organise themselves to obtain better conditions for the community as a whole, prevailing upon the authorities to meet their obligations.

In the literature review it was mentioned that efforts to initiate participation projects in Thailand failed, due to an inability to sustain community interest when long-term goals were established and no immediate gratification was available (Hafner 1995:73). It was also noted that the sustainability of participation was dependent on certain conditions (Lisk 1988:10), such as when it becomes possible to meet long-term goals such as community upliftment and services, expectation of benefits, capable leadership and self-reliance and self-confidence through participation.

Respondents expressed the opinion that community organisations (see section 2.3.3, 3.3.1, 4.3.2 & 5.5.5) preferably had to deal directly with issues relating to public participation in policy-making and implementation. It was their task to open the policy process to groups and individuals in society.

According to respondents involved in community organisation activities, the political changes in the country have removed a strong motivation of why people joined organisations in the years prior to these changes. In the past, community participation was virtually assured by a high level of social and political consciousness among people. However, contentious issues will raise their heads from time to time and organisations should keep their eyes open for opportunities to mobilise and influence public participation. The role that community participation could play as a basis for the furtherance of public participation is an interesting field of research.

If government wants to change the behaviour and attitude of people from one of dependence to that of self-reliance with the support of community organisations, it will have to find ways of making an impact that would excite and interest groups in the community. It should seek a rallying call, a definite way of doing things or

an emotive appeal that will attract community support and hasten public participation in the way that community participation did for the community development programmes.

Co-production (see section 3.6), where the public, as service consumer, and the public institution can together produce and provide the specific service, such as refuse removal or neighbourhood policing, can enhance public participation in policy decisions in order for it to be implemented successfully. Co-optation, which involves electing meritorious and knowledgeable individuals onto local government committees involved in service delivery, is also a means of encouraging public participation. In order to sustain the trust of the public, however, special attention should be paid to making sure that such committees do not become mere rubber-stamping bodies that do not actually transfer any powers (see sections 2.4.1.5.3 & 5.5).

It seems that a number of respondents joined community participation initiatives for different reasons (see section 5.5). Some joined because they sought community involvement in the sense of their own empowerment. Their responses can be regarded as an indicator that respondents were involved in a developmental process in which they had built up self-confidence in their abilities to contribute to their community that strengthened their feelings of efficacy, increased social interaction and produced positive personal changes (see sections 2.3 & 3.2).

Some respondents stated that the biggest weakness of community organisation was its failure to reach the very poor (see section 5.5.5). The literature study (Austin 1956; Brager 1975; and Van Wyk 1993) showed how the lack of organisation structure and the lack of resources threatened the ability of poor communities to accomplish their goals of developing their communities.

Community organisations tend to favour their own neighbourhood communities rather than poorer areas. This may be grounded in the perception that investing in one's own community brings with it tangible achievements and benefits. Problems facing deprived areas such as crime and a shortage of housing were mentioned by respondents as needs to be addressed, through public participation in local authorities because they required resources and decisions that could not be taken at neighbourhood level.

The need for leadership in community organisation is considered a vital part in the process of public participation. Leaders acquire technical and social skills (see section 5.3.3), which allow communities access to information on various issues. In turn, leaders pass on opinions of the community to policy makers in the governmental sphere, in order to be in touch with the needs of the community. The neighbourhood groups generally provided leadership.

The realities of participation are, however, complicated. The relevance of specific variables (community participation, development) differs, depending on the situation concerned. Often public participation gathers momentum, and becomes an important variable in its own right. For that reason, this thesis has placed the emphasis on the importance of judging specific decisions in the context of specific circumstances when evaluating the role of public participation in policy-making.

The survey tentatively proves that an issue-based approach, i.e. to examine what communities' immediate interests are and to mobilise them on the basis of their needs and the problems that they face, is more effective in getting people interested and involved in the public participation process in policy-making and implementation (see sections 5.2.5 & 5.2.6).

Communities can see more easily how they can influence policy and how lawmaking and delivery are directly linked. Respondents provided information about the issues uppermost in people's minds and the fact that people would rather participate in activities that will address and resolve such issues, than in those issues that they do not consider important (see section 5.5.6). Legislatures on various levels should be aware of their constituents' concerns when feedback is given and /or participation invited. Public participation programmes should be designed around people's real needs – for example living conditions, or pensions.

Local and provincial authorities have to mobilise support for public participation programmes set out on the following conditions:

- They should establish links with groups influential in the community's political, religious and social life (see section 5.5.8).
- There should be resources, powers and an expectation of benefits.
- They should establish a communication network between decision-makers, community leaders, civics and community organisations. There should be mutual trust between the community, the leaders and outsiders. The greater the trust, the greater the participation (see section 5.5.4).
- Communities need to be at the centre of all programmes in public participation (see section 5.4.2). They should not be mere "rubber stamps" but should be given the opportunity to truly participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities.

- Communities should be encouraged to take the initiative and to determine the programmes themselves. They should have a strong sense of ownership and the goal should be that the local or provincial authority concerned should be participating in *their* programme, rather than the other way round. This could lead to the enhancement of citizenship and contribute to an active citizenry that has confidence in government (see section 5.4.2).
- Newspaper coverage should be sought, both as a measure of the significance of a public participation programme and as a confirmation of its worth (see sections 5.2.3 & 5.4.5).

Because communities are never completely homogenous, there are multiple viewpoints, interests and needs that have a real impact and influence upon public participation programmes. Working in communities requires a sustained interest and commitment of resources from those organisations implementing public participation programmes.

To be able to work within the process of transformation, public participation programmes should assist communities to understand the reasons for and potential impact of proposed legislation. This will also contribute towards addressing public feelings of alienation from the lawmaking process.

A "culture of entitlement" should be developed among communities. Ordinary, excluded people should be empowered to fill the spaces that the law has given them. Civil society should be encouraged to participate in the legislative process as well as the policy-making process of Government.

Public participation programmes should assist communities to be involved in the initial stages of the legislative process, through to its completion (see section 5.4.1).

Public participation programmes should encourage individuals to form and join in with interest groups that share the same concerns. The ability of groups from communities to exert influence over the legislative process needs to be strengthened.

The ability of rural communities to engage in activities beyond those to do with survival will be minimal, until such time as basic living conditions in poor areas improve. To this end, public participation programmes should combine participation strategies with development initiatives.

Issues relating to problems with the provincial legislatures include the lack of a coherent and thorough strategic planning, monitoring or evaluation process, and insufficient funding. A lack of communication between provincial and local structures often results in the poor utilisation of limited resources and a duplication of effort.

At provincial level, the challenge is to get groups without the necessary financial resources to play a more active role in public participation. To achieve this it will be necessary to reach out to the rural areas. An awareness programme should be launched, which could include:

- creating a computer database to improve access to information;
- using electronic media effectively; and
- reaching out to communities to elicit public participation that benefits more than just the social pathologies that they are confronted with on a daily basis.

On the other hand, disregarding the above factors could result in better organised and well-resourced groups dominating the process of public participation (see sections 2.6.3.1.2 & 4.2), thus reinforcing a system of inequality in South Africa – a situation that should be guarded against.

6.2.13 Strengthening Democratic Principles

The issue of democracy is related to the question of accountability. Some governments may be reluctant to give power to the people, and prefer to restrict their participation to simple decisions. The other extreme may be to give in to increasing demands. Through evaluating the actions of governance and establishing to what extent the Constitution and policies are implemented, and through enabling people to enjoy their rights, the principles of democracy are respected (see section 4.4).

As stated in chapter one, in order to reinforce democratic principles in public institutions, public participation in the field of public administration should be encouraged (see sections 2.4.1.2 & 4.4.1.3). Public policy-making process is partially undertaken by public institutions and public participation in public policy-making and implementation should be part of this process (see section 2.6.3.4.2).

6.3 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the author believes that the study has achieved what it set out to do, as described in chapter one, but has also served as an effort to expand the limited existing literature within the South African context on the subject of public participation in public administration. The author hopes that the thesis is a fairly

accurate exposition of some of the most important challenges that public participation in governance has faced in South Africa over the past five years.

It is important that the observations made in this thesis justify a need for more research on the salient features of public participation in both policy-making and policy implementation, effective engagement of the public in the legislative process and the facilitation of representation of the public's views through the elected representatives, insofar as this applies, in a practical sense, to the South African situation.

The participation of local government in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) process should also be considered for further research towards the establishment of basic principles that will guide the creation and/or improvement of consultative mechanisms during the law-making process, to enhance effective meaningful public involvement.

The author would like to add more questions that continue to stare public participation in the face:

- Has enough been done to ensure that public participation will deepen democracy? What mechanisms are in place in the legislative process to reach out to the masses that cannot read?
- Has enough been done to solicit inputs of specific sectors of society around pieces of legislation of particular interest to them, so that they are not brought into the process at the end when experts have already designed the legislation and it is more difficult to amend?

It is through evaluating the actions of governance, the extent to which the Constitution is implemented and the enabling of the people to enjoy their rights that democracy will grow. Public participation is an involvement in reinforcing power, rather than decentralising it. While services are essential, so are participatory democracy, transparency, accountability and access to information, in order to implement a good programme of public participation in policy-making and implementation.

In the light of the background to this study given in chapter one, it is clear that public participation is a non-negotiable, fundamental anchor of the 'new' democracy in South Africa (see section 5.2). Such constitutional provisions are not an end in themselves – they are a means to an end.

It should never be forgotten that although an election is primarily a conferral of a mandate upon a government, the implementation of that mandate should be a subject of continuous negotiation with the electorate. The ideal is a transparent policy-making process, in which people from all walks of life have a voice. The participation of the people has to be facilitated by creating and/or improving consultative mechanisms through which the public can influence the laws and policies generated by governmental institutions.

The realisation of the South African vision of a democratic and open society depends *wholly* on such consultative mechanisms, for in no other way will South Africa's past be changed, nor a new future created.

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APPENDIX 1

Vista University
Port Elizabeth Campus
Private Bag X 613
Port Elizabeth
6000

9 December 1998

Director: Administration
Port Elizabeth Municipality
P.O. Box 116
Port Elizabeth
6000

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

I am a Public Administration student at the University of South Africa and also a lecturer in the same subject at Vista University (Port Elizabeth campus). I am currently undertaking a study of Public Participation in Port Elizabeth, whose title is:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE PORT ELIZABETH MUNICIPALITY

As you may be aware, the idea of Public Participation has become an integral part of recently enacted legislation (post 1994) in South Africa. Your institution is a dominant player in policy-making and implementation in the Port Elizabeth municipal area. Therefore, through this study, it could provide valuable information, which may facilitate South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme. Hence, I humbly request your permission to undertake this research.

I would be very grateful for your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully



Reuben S. Masango
Telephone: (041) 408-3139

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO RESPONDENTS

Dear Participant

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STUDY

This is an appeal for your help, and for about thirty minutes of your time.

I am a Public Administration student at the University of South Africa and also a lecturer in the same subject at Vista University (Port Elizabeth campus). I am currently undertaking an investigation of Public Participation with reference to the Port Elizabeth municipal area, in an attempt to fulfil the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Administration in Public Administration.

As you may be aware, the introduction of the democratic order in South Africa has highlighted the idea of Public Participation. As an academic, and due to my great interest in the field of 'Public Participation in Governance', I have a desire to contribute to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) by undertaking this study.

You are a member of the public and therefore in a position to assist me in determining the extent of your knowledge of and participation in public affairs.

Your views in this regard are very important and their confidentiality is assured. I would be most grateful if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope, or to the person who distributed the questionnaire to you.

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

Yours faithfully



Reuben S. Masango
Telephone: (041) 408-3139

LETTER TO THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS INTERVIEWED

Vista University
Port Elizabeth Campus
Private Bag X 613
Port Elizabeth
6000

Dear _____

With reference to our telephonic conversation, I am hereby sending you a questionnaire regarding the basic factors that could ensure the smooth functioning of a municipality. The aim of my study, as I explained, is to contribute to the enhancement of public participation in governance.

The information obtained from the questionnaire will be regarded as confidential.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully



Reuben S. Masango
Telephone: (041) 408-3139

CONSENT FORM

Reuben S. Masango
Vista University
Port Elizabeth Campus
Private Bag X 613
Port Elizabeth
6000

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STUDY

I hereby agree to an interview with the above in connection with the Public Participation Study.

I will be available on _____

(please specify date(s) and time(s).)

Yours faithfully

Signature

Title: _____

Full name: (please print): _____

Contact telephone number: (_____) _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be administered to community members)

Objectives of the questionnaire

This questionnaire is administered as part of a larger research project that studies the nature of public participation in policy-making processes and institutions in the Port Elizabeth area. The purpose of the questionnaire is to investigate –

- to what extent the South African is public aware of its democratic rights and freedom and newly acquired opportunities of interaction in the process of policy-making and implementation;
- to what extent the processes that manage this interaction between the public and the institution are conducive to involvement by the public in having a say in policy-making and implementation;
- which issues of concern members of the South African public would like to have a say in (in terms of how they would like to be governed), should they be prepared to take advantage of opportunities for participation;
- how public participation can be effectively and efficiently integrated and encouraged in the process of policy-making and implementation in the South African government.

Note: The information required in this questionnaire will only be used in the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire.

SECTION A

Please tick (✓) the block next to the appropriate answer or supply the required information.

1. Age Group		2. Gender	
18-29 years		Male	
30-49 years		Female	
50 and older			

3. Marital Status		4. Residential Area (please complete)
Single		
Married		
Divorced		
Living together		

5. Ward Number		6. Residential Status	
		Ratepayer	
		Tenant	
		Family member	
		Other (specify)	

7. Level of Education	
Primary	
Secondary	
Undergraduate	
Graduate	
Post Graduate	
Other (Specify)	

8. What is your occupation?

9. What is your religious/cultural affiliation?

10. How would you rate your standard of living?

Low	
Average	
High	

Can you give reason(s) for your answer to Question 10?

11. Are you willing to furnish information about your political affiliation?

YES	
NO	

IF NO:

Are you a member/supporter of a political party?

YES	
NO	

IF YES:

Which party?

ACDP	
ANC	
DP	
PAC	
NNP	
Other (specify)	

SECTION B

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer or write a brief answer in the space provided.

1. Would you say that you have sufficient knowledge of the role of the Constitution, acts, ordinances and by-laws?

	Constitution	Acts	Ordinances	By-laws
YES				
NO				
UNCERTAIN				

2. What would you say about your understanding of what goes on in the Port Elizabeth City Council?

Do not understand anything	
Understand a little bit	
Understand everything	

3. Are you well-informed about political decisions in Parliament that affect your community?

YES	
NO	

4. Are you well-informed about political decisions in the Port Elizabeth Municipal Council that affect your community?

YES	
NO	

5. Are you well-informed about policy-making processes in Port Elizabeth Municipality that affect your community?

YES	
NO	

6. Would you like the making of by-laws in the City of Port Elizabeth to be the prerogative of municipal officials and the City Council?

YES	
NO	

Can you give reason(s) for your answer?

7. Have you ever:	YES/NO	How often in the past six months?		
		Less than once a month	Once a month	More than once a month
Made a statement or statements at public hearings?				
Taken part in radio talk shows that dealt with activities of the City of Port Elizabeth and/or its by-laws?				
Taken part in a community organisation's activities?				
Made any enquiries to officials and/or councillors of the City of Port Elizabeth?				
Made any recommendations to officials and/or councillors of the City of Port Elizabeth?				
Taken part in a peaceful protest against officials and/or councillors of the City of Port Elizabeth?				
Taken part in a violent protest against officials and/or councillors of the City of Port Elizabeth?				

7.1 If you have ever taken part in community activities, can you mention those activities?

8. Are you aware of the appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable residents, communities and other stakeholders to participate in municipal affairs?

YES	
NO	

9. How often do you feel you can trust Port Elizabeth local council to do what is right for people like you?

Never	
Seldom	
Often	
Always	

10. What are the most important issues you would raise at public hearings?

11. Have you ever encountered problems when interacting with the officials and/or councillors of the City of Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

IF YES:

Can you mention the problems you encountered?

11.1 Can you suggest solutions to these problems?

12. Would you say members of the public or their representatives should take part in the making and implementation of by-laws in Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

Can you give reason(s) for your answer?

13. Would you say that the current public participation in matters of the City of Port Elizabeth is sufficient?

YES	
NO	

IF YES:

What would you say should be done to ensure that adequate public participation continue to occur in the City of Port Elizabeth?

IF NO:

What would you say should be done to ensure that public participation in the making and implementation of by-laws in Port Elizabeth is sufficient?

14. Are you aware of any formal attempts made to co-ordinate public participation in policy-making and implementation in Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

IF YES:

By whom?

Municipality	
SANCO	
Ratepayers' Association	
Civil Society Forum	

IF NO:

Do you want such co-ordination to take place?

YES	
NO	

14.1 Who should undertake it?

Municipality	
SANCO	
Ratepayers' Association	
Civil Society Forum	

15. Are you a member of any interest group or association?

YES	
NO	

IF YES:

Can you mention the name of the interest group/association?

16. What do you expect to achieve through your membership of this interest group/association?

16.1 Does this organisation facilitate public participation?

YES	
NO	

IF YES:

How does it do it?

17. Are you a member of a community organisation?

YES	
NO	

17.1 IF YES:

Did it make a difference in your life when you participated?

YES	
NO	
UNCERTAIN	

Can you give reason(s) for your answer?

17.2. What benefits did you receive as a participant?

17.3 What were your negative experiences?

17.4 What were your organisation's achievements?

17.5 Can you think of an expectation you had when joining the community organisation, which was not fulfilled?

YES	
NO	

IF YES:

Please specify:

18. Can you mention any improvements in your neighbourhood which may be attributed to community organisations?

19. How do you evaluate the Port Elizabeth Municipality's contribution to making your community a better place to live in?

VERY GOOD	
GOOD	
AVERAGE	
BAD	
VERY BAD	

22. Where do you get most of your information on political decisions that affect your community?

Media	
Community	
Political Parties	
Local Government	

23. Has your community ever been visited by a local councillor, in order to discuss the problems faced by your community?

YES	
NO	

QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be administered to the officials of the City of Port Elizabeth)

NOTE: The information required in this questionnaire will only be used in the analysis of responses to the questionnaire.

SECTION A

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

1. Age Group		2. Gender	
18-29 years		Male	
30-49 years		Female	
50 and older			

3. Marital Status	
Single	
Married	
Divorced	
Living together	

4. Level of Education	
Primary	
Secondary	
Undergraduate	
Graduate	
Post Graduate	
Other (Specify)	

SECTION B

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer or supply the required information.

1. Would you like the making of by-laws in the City of Port Elizabeth to be the prerogative of the municipal officials and the Municipal Council?

YES	
NO	

- 1.1 Can you give reason(s) for your answer?

2. Do you ever experience problems when interacting (serving or taking part in the decision-making process) with the members of the public?

YES	
NO	

- 2.1 IF YES:

Can you say what the common problems are?

- 2.1.1 Can you suggest solutions to these problems?

3. Would you say members of the public or their representatives should take part in the making and implementation of by-laws of the City of Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

3.1 Can you give reason(s) for your answer?

4. Would you say that the current public participation in the making and implementation of by-laws in the City of Port Elizabeth is sufficient?

YES	
NO	

4.1 **IF YES:**

What would you say should be done to ensure that adequate public participation continue to occur in the City of Port Elizabeth?

4.2 **IF NO:**

What would you say should be done to ensure that public participation in the making and implementation of by-laws in Port Elizabeth is sufficient?

5. Are any formal attempts made to co-ordinate public participation in policy-making and implementation in Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

5.1 IF YES:

By whom?

Municipality	
SANCO	
Ratepayers' Association	
Civil Society Forum	

5.2 IF NO:

Do you want such co-ordination to take place?

YES	
NO	

5.2.1 Who should undertake it?

Municipality	
SANCO	
Ratepayers' Association	
Civil Society Forum	

6. Does the Port Elizabeth Municipality offer (in-service or outside) training in order to achieve intercultural communication (with people of different races, ethnic groups, religions, et cetera)?

YES	
NO	

6.1 **IF YES:**

What kind of training?

7. Are you a member of any interest group, association or organisation?

YES	
NO	

7.1 **IF YES:**

Please specify the organisation.

- 7.1.1 Does this organisation facilitate public participation?

YES	
NO	

7.1.2 **IF YES:**

How does it do it?

QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be administered to members of Port Elizabeth Residents' and Ratepayers' Association)

Note: The information required in this questionnaire will only be used in the analysis of responses to the questionnaire.

SECTION A

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer or supply the required information.

1. Age Group		2. Gender	
18-29 years		Male	
30-49 years		Female	
50 and older			

3. Marital Status		4. Residential Area (please complete)
Single		
Married		
Divorced		
Living together		

5. Ward Number		6. Residential Status	
		Ratepayer	
		Tenant	
		Family member	
		Other (specify)	

7. Level of Education	
Primary	
Secondary	
Undergraduate	
Graduate	
Post Graduate	
Other (Specify)	

SECTION B

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer or supply the required information.

1. Have you ever:	YES/NO	How often in the past six months?		
		Less than once a month	Once a month	More than once a month
Made a statement or statements at public hearings?				
Taken part in radio talk shows that dealt with activities of the City Council of Port Elizabeth and/or its by-laws?				
Taken part in a community organisation's activities?				
Made any enquiries to officials and/or councillors of the City Council of Port Elizabeth?				
Made any recommendations to officials and/or councillors of the City Council of Port Elizabeth?				
Taken part in a peaceful protest against officials and/or councillors of the City Council of Port Elizabeth?				
Taken part in a violent protest against officials and/or councillors of the City Council of Port Elizabeth?				

2. Would you say citizens should take part in the making and implementation of by-laws in the City of Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

2.1 Can you give reason(s) for your answer?

3. Do you ever encounter problems when interacting with the officials and/or councillors of the City of Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

3.1 **IF YES:**

Can you say what the common problems are?

3.1.1. Can you give any suggestions for solving these problems?

4. Would you say that current public participation in the making and implementation of by-laws in the City of Port Elizabeth is sufficient?

YES	
NO	

4.1 IF YES:

What would you say should be done to ensure that adequate public participation continue to occur in the City of Port Elizabeth?

4.2 IF NO:

What would you say should be done to ensure that public participation in the making and implementation of by-laws in Port Elizabeth is sufficient?

5. Are any formal attempts made to co-ordinate public participation in policy-making and implementation in Port Elizabeth?

YES	
NO	

5.1 IF YES:

By whom?

Municipality	
SANCO	
Ratepayers' Association	
Civil Society Forum	

5.2 IF NO:

Do you want such co-ordination to take place?

YES	
NO	

5.2.1 Who should undertake it?

Municipality	
SANCO	
Ratepayers' Association	
Civil Society Forum	

6. Are you a member of any interest group, association or organisation?

YES	
NO	

6.1 IF YES:

Please specify the organisation.

6.1.1 Does this organisation facilitate public participation?

YES	
NO	

6.1.2 IF YES:

How does it do it?

CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PORT ELIZABETH CIVIL SOCIETY FORM

1. PREAMBLE

In terms of the provisions of Section 5.13 of the Reconstruction and Development Policy Document on Civil Society read with **Article 21** of the Port Elizabeth "One City Agreement", the **Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum (PECSF)** has been established with a membership consisting of organisations, associations and groupings based in the City of Port Elizabeth.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this Constitution, unless inconsistent with the context:

CEC	–	is the Central Executive Committee implementing all decisions of the Peoples Council and managing the affairs of the Forum.
Committee	–	is a Committee established by the Peoples Council to facilitate the functioning of the Forum.
Employee/official	–	is a full-time, part-time or seconded official/worker.
Forum	–	is the Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum.
Member	–	is an organisation, association or group affiliated to the Form.
Peoples Council	–	is the decision-making body of the Forum.
Peoples Council Delegate	–	is a person who has been elected by the Sectoral Forum to serve on the Peoples Council and its Committees.
Sector Delegate	–	is a person of a member organisation who has been elected as the representative of that organisation to serve on a Sectoral Forum.
Sectoral Forum	–	is a group of members functioning in the same field of discipline.
Sub-Committee	–	is a working group, steering group or an ad hoc or occasional committee.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To firmly commit itself to strive for a unified, non-discriminatory, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic City of Port Elizabeth.

- 3.2 To commit itself to combat division amongst the citizens of Port Elizabeth and to encourage, build and reinforce all sectors of local community by promoting and engaging in effective and constructive interaction with all levels of government, business, labour, other organisations and the community.
- 3.3 To promote people-centred, community-driven and integrated development.
- 3.4 To strive for the improvement of all people in the social, economic, sport and cultural life of the City and Country as a whole.
- 3.5 To enhance mass participation in the elaboration and implementation of the role of government at all levels in the Reconstruction and Development Programme and for nation building.
- 3.6 To render capacity building assistance to all structures of civil society to enable them:
 - 3.6.1 to develop RDP and other programmes of action and campaigns within its own Sectors and communities;
 - 3.6.2 to develop their members to enhance their abilities in order to participate in public life;
 - 3.6.3 to empower community-based organisations to effectively participate in the process of governance, upliftment and development of their respective communities.
- 3.7 Through consultation, ensure democratic government structures with mechanisms for liaison with the public/citizens on all relevant legislature and policy matters.
- 3.8 To develop delivery or enforcement mechanisms for social and economic rights as a means of achieving social justice.
- 3.9 To encourage institutions of civil society to improve their accountability in their various constituencies and to the public at large.
- 3.10 To ensure participation of all people, individually and collectively in the processes of governance at all levels.
- 3.11 To popularise the universal declaration of human rights.
- 3.12 In achieving the above aims and objectives:
 - 3.12.1 To unite all governmental structures towards a common vision, accountability to the public, reconciliation and nation building.
 - 3.12.2 To be non-partisan, autonomous from the State and inclusive of all structures in the community.
 - 3.12.3 To unite residents in the communities with workers at the factory floor as members of an independent, autonomous and non-partisan civil society.
 - 3.12.4 To unite all sectors of civil society and promote tripartite and co-operative alliance between all levels of The State, the private (business) and labour sectors, all other sectors and civil society and/or community.

- 3.13 To take constructive action on any matter affecting the life and welfare of the people, individually or collectively.
- 3.14 To promote the development of capital and other projects within the area of jurisdiction of Port Elizabeth.

4 MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Membership will be open to all organisations which:
 - 4.1.1 are not affiliated to or constitute a political party;
 - 4.1.2 subscribe to Preamble and Aims and Objectives of the Guiding Principles of this Constitution;
 - 4.1.3 represent any section of the community or pursues any activity in the interest of civil society;
 - 4.1.4 obtains the approval of the CEC upon a written application for membership.
- 4.2 Any decision of the CEC to approve, defer or reject an application for membership will be submitted to the Peoples Council for consideration or information which may overrule such a decision.
- 4.3 Payment of a membership fee as determined from time to time.

4.4 Qualification of Members

Any organisation which operates within the Municipal boundaries of the Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum may qualify as a member.

4.5 Disqualification of Members

- 4.5.1 No organisation shall be eligible to be a member of the Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum if:
 - 4.5.1.1 the organisation ceases to be a bona fide organisation properly constituted;
 - 4.5.1.2 the organisation fails to submit its Terms of Reference and Constitution to the Office of the Civil Society Forum within one year of affiliation;
 - 4.5.1.3 the organisation is found guilty of contravening any of the provisions of this Section and Section 12 (Code of Conduct).

4.6 Qualification of Peoples Council/Sector Delegates

A person who resides permanently within the Municipal boundaries of Port Elizabeth may qualify as a delegate.

4.7 Qualification of Peoples Council/Sector Delegates

- 4.7.1 No person shall be eligible to be a delegate of the Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum if:
- 4.7.1.1 he/she is subject to a final order sequestering his estate under the Insolvency Act, 1936;
 - 4.7.1.2 he/she has within the preceding three years been convicted of contravening any of the provisions of the Code of Conduct;
 - 4.7.1.3 he/she holds the position of an official in the Port Elizabeth Civil Society Forum;
 - 4.7.1.4 he/she ceases to be or resigns from the organisation which is affiliated to a Sector of the Forum.

5 COMPOSITION OF THE FORUM

The Forum will comprise the following organs:

- 5.1 The Peoples Council (PC).
- 5.2 The Central Executive Committee (CEC).
- 5.3 Committees – i.e. Finance, Media/Publicity, Strategic Planning Committee, Membership, Staff and Disciplinary Committee, etc.
- 5.4 Sectoral Forums.

6 THE PEOPLES COUNCIL

- 6.1 The Peoples Council will be the supreme decision-making body of the Forum and responsible and accountable for all affairs of the Forum.
- 6.2 The Peoples Council will be made up of the various Sectoral Forums, as identified by the Peoples Council, each of which will be represented at Peoples Council meetings by three delegates, except the Civic and Ratepayers and Labour sectors who shall have 6 delegates each, with a voting right each.