The critical need for effective leadership to promote service delivery by local government in South Africa

The case of Ramotshere Moiloa Municipality

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study examines the problem of public service delivery by the Ramotshere Moiloa municipality in the North West province, which has one of the highest deficits in the provision of basic services and the lowest level of access to basic services. This article argues that there is a critical need for effective leadership to promote service delivery at the local sphere of government. The purpose of this article is therefore to suggest the adoption of a strategic leadership approach, an approach that management can use to tackle service delivery challenges in local government in South Africa.

Using a qualitative case study of service delivery in the Ramotshere Moiloa municipality in the North West province, the article investigates local government service delivery. The challenges impacting on local government service delivery in South Africa are examined. The article argues that there is a critical need for effective leadership to promote service delivery at local government in South Africa. A strategic leadership approach is suggested for management, an approach that could be used to tackle service delivery challenges in local government municipalities in South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Local government in South Africa (SA) has contributed to the achievement of significant social and economic development since the ushering in of the new democratic municipal dispensation in December 2000. The majority of South Africans have increased access to a wide range of basic services and more opportunities have been created to enable participation in the economy. However, notwithstanding the valuable role that local government has played in South Africa's new democracy, poorer municipalities are showing signs of distress in terms of service delivery to the community.

Central to the article is one question: has the local sphere of government in South Africa addressed basic service delivery backlogs, especially in poorer municipalities? The evidence in this article suggests that service delivery has tried to keep up with increasing demand, but has failed to significantly reduce the underlying backlogs, especially in poorer communities. Furthermore, this article suggests that the actual realities of poor service delivery at local government are often concealed in government statistics and the ongoing reality on the ground highlights some fundamental flaws in service delivery. Utilising evidence from a qualitative analysis of service delivery in the Ramotshere Moiloa municipality in the North West province, the article considers some of the possible causes of service delivery deficiencies there, and suggests a strategic leadership approach may assist this, and other municipalities, facing similar problems.

POLICY CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Constitution, the *White Paper on Local Government* of 1998 and the legislative framework for local government provide municipalities with a structure for managing their administration. It also outlines political decision-making systems, and defines principles for structuring administrations. The main policy and legislative requirements that have a direct influence on local government are primarily contained in the Constitution (1998), the *White Paper on Local Government* (1998), the *Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act*, the *Local Government Municipal Structures Act* (2000), the *Local Government Municipal Systems Act* (2003) and the *Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act* (2003) (Holthauzen and Naidoo 2010:2).

Every part of the country now falls under the jurisdiction of a municipality, with many communities, during the past decade, experiencing local and democratic government for the first time. A central challenge for local government has been its viability and ability to build strong municipalities capable of delivering on the

principles of Section 53 of the Constitution, which states that: "… a municipality must structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community, and participate in national and provincial development programmes".

If a municipality can achieve the above objectives consistently, within its financial and administrative capacity, it could be described as a functional, well-performing municipality. South Africa has 283 municipalities, based on three constitutional categories: metropolitan municipalities (6); district municipalities (46); and local municipalities (231). The distinct differences in capacities and institutional context within the 283 municipalities have implications for public service delivery (COGTA 2009:7). A municipal classification system was designed according to municipal profiles in terms of functionality, socio-economic profile and backlog status. The four municipal classifications developed by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA 2009:76) are:

Class 1: Most vulnerable (57 local municipalities)
Class 2: Second most vulnerable (58 local municipalities)
Class 3: Second highest performing (58 local municipalities)
Class 4: Highest performing (58 local municipalities)

The municipalities found in classification 1 are the most vulnerable local municipalities that fall within the lowest quarter nationally. When examining the spatial location, class 2 municipalities tend to be found in commercial farming areas with small service towns; in other words, these are the municipalities in which a portion was previously located in the disestablished apartheid homelands and semi-desert areas or those with low population densities. The Ramotshere Moiloa municipality, which is focus of this study, is a class 2 municipality. The municipalities found in class 3 are the second highest performing group of municipalities. The majority of these municipalities fall outside the disestablished apartheid Bantustans. The municipalities that make up class 4 are South Africa's "best performers". The role of municipalities is largely to deliver basic services to South Africa's communities (Nyamukachi 2005:16).

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African government has a clear mandate to focus on universal household access to basic services and the Millennium Development Goals (COGAT 2009:3). According to Statistics South Africa, the government has

acted upon this mandate. Service delivery has improved substantially in the past ten years (Community Survey 2007). These statistics reflect increases in the major service delivery areas: building of formal dwellings, refuse removal, electricity connections and supply of piped water (Table 1).

Table 1 A comparative analysis of service delivery at local government from 1996 to 2007

Basic Service	Year 1996 Percentage	Year 2007 Percentage	Percentage Increase or Decrease in Services from 1996 to 2007
Building of formal dwellings	64,4%	70,5%	+6,1%
Refuse removal	51,2%	60,1%	+8,9%
Electricity connections	57,6%	80,0%	+22,4%
Connection of piped water	84,5%	88,6%	+4,1%

Source www.statssa.gov.za/publications/CS2007RDP/CS2007RDP.pdf

From 1996 to 2007, there was an increase of 6,1% in newly built formal dwellings. In the case of refuse removal, there was an increase of 8,9%. With regard to electricity connections, there is a notable increase to 22,4% and to piped water an increase of 4,1%. The National Treasury has reported that, since 2000, the financial allocation to the municipalities has increased substantially from R2,1 billion in 1998 to R13,2 billion in 2004. For the year 2007/08 the allocation increased to R21,3 billion. (National Treasury - Budget Review 2008). The 2008 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) focused on helping poorer municipalities constrained by limited revenue-raising capacity to meet their service-delivery objectives. As a result, proportionally larger amounts of the municipal infrastructure and financial management grants were allocated to poorer municipalities. These revisions resulted in national transfers to local government annually of the public spending budget. For example, in 2007/08, a national transfer of R39,2 billion was made to the local sphere of government and a further transfer of R58,1 billion will occur in 2010/11.

Despite the increase in funding, and efforts to promote service delivery, the Auditor-General reports of 2006/2007 and 2008/2009 indicated serious problems regarding local government service delivery. For example, of the 25 municipalities in the North West Province, only four received unqualified approval in the Auditor-General's Reports, while one received qualified approval and one outright criticism as far as service delivery was concerned,

The Republic of South Africa, Auditor-General's Report 2006/07 and 2007/8). 19 municipalities had disclaimers for the financial year 2006/07. Ramotshere Moiloa, which is the focus of this study, has, over the past two years, been one of those municipalities to be strongly criticised by the Auditor-General.

Furthermore, although the statistics indicate that overall access to water, housing, sanitation and electricity have improved over the last sixteen years, access to such basic services themselves have been insufficient to substantially raise the quality of life of poorer communities. It is argued that, although the statistics quoted indicate improvements, they do not provide an accurate picture of the quality of life, and mean little when contextualising the realities on the ground. The Ramotshere Moiloa municipality in the North West province was therefore assessed to reflect these realities.

A REVIEW OF SERVICE DELIVERY: THE RAMOTSHERE MOILOA MUNICIPALITY IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

A qualitative study of the state of service delivery was conducted of the Ramotshere Moiloa municipality in the North West Province of South Africa. The North West province is situated in the north of South Africa on the Botswana border, fringed by the Kalahari Desert in the west, Gauteng province to the east, and the Free State to the South. It is South Africa's fourth-smallest province, with a population of approximately 3,4 million people. The province compromises 25 municipalities (21 local and four district municipalities). Ngaka Modiri Molema district is one of the four district municipalities. It covers the local municipalities of Ditsobotla, Mafikeng, Ramotshere Moila, Ratloe and Tswaing (*Local government in South Africa 2007-2008 Yearbook* 2008:953).

Ramotshere Moiloa municipality has a population of 137 442. The number of households are 32 401 (Setsetse & Mkansi 2007:8). It comprises two townships, Ikageleng and Ntsweletsoku. A study was conducted into this municipality's service delivery. The data was collected by using open-ended interviews (primary data) and by using reports, statistics, journal articles and papers (secondary data). Open- ended interviews were conducted with a sample of 60 household heads in October 2009. 87% of households interviewed in the Ikageleng community raised their concerns pertaining to the lack of services, specifically: street lights that are always out of order; blocked sewage network; poor road maintenance and poor road infrastructure; accounts that are three months behind schedule; lack of serviced sites for housing for low- to middle-income groups; and leaking water meters.

The plight of the Ntsweletsoku community concerned lack of running water (Setsetse & Mkansi 2007:9). 80% of households interviewed indicated

that, although a reticulation system was completed in 2005, it was not yet functional. Since there is no piped water available for the residents, water is ferried to different points to the community by means of water trucks from the nearby town of Zeerust. However, this has also proved to be unreliable, since trucks transporting the water frequently break down, or water is simply not delivered to the community. Residents with vehicles fetch water from the nearby township of Welbedaght or from Zeerust (approximately 20 kilometres away). The majority of people rely on residents who have boreholes on their sites (at a cost of 50 cents per twenty litres) and unemployment is conservatively stated to be 43% (**www.statssa.gov.za/documents.htm**). Almost 90% percent of households interviewed indicated that no municipal services are provided directly by Ramotshere Moiloa municipality to the villages. There are a number of households without access to basic services such as water (5 198), refuse (13 581) and electricity (6 089).

Table 2 Households without access to essential services

Water	Refuse	Electricity
5 198	13 581	6 089

Source *Local government in South Africa yearbook 2007-2008:954*

The poverty rate is 64,2% (*Local government in South Africa yearbook* 2007-2008:954). 90% percent of Ikageleng and Ntsweletsoku residents interviewed complained bitterly about lack of services in their areas, which culminated in petitions and demonstrations that were often marked by violence. The community resorted to unlawful behaviour by blockading roads, destroying property such as water tanks, digging trenches in the middle of roads, staging protest marches and burning tyres. 80% of the households indicated that, since 2004 and to date, petitions have repeatedly been sent to the municipality regarding the lack of service delivery, but householders complain that little has improved. 67% of households indicated that, in the case of the Ramotshere municipality, both its officials and representatives are lacking in ethical principles. The householders indicated that 'there are officials and public representatives for whom public service is not a concern, but accruing wealth at the expense of poor communities is their priority'.

50% of householders interviewed indicated that the media and civil society have been ineffective in increasing municipal accountability and oversight as far as the Ramotshere Moiloa municipality is concerned. As a result, people have no confidence or trust in the municipality, as can be seen in the spate of community protests referred to above. These ongoing protests may be seen as a symptom of the alienation of citizens from their local government.

Another central issue surrounding poor service delivery in the Ramotshere Moiloa municipality is that formal channels of institutional representation are largely unused. While many individuals know who their representatives are, they seldom consult them, and are more likely to self-organise through street committees or to protest. In this respect, 72% of the households interviewed have never contacted their councillor in relation to serious service delivery problems. This indicates councillors' lack of accessibility and a lack of trust in the purportedly democratic ward-committee system. Municipal officials, MPs and even political party officials are seldom consulted. Citizens are not engaged in any significant way in the decisions that directly influence their lives and livelihoods. While the intention of the municipality is to improve and streamline delivery, the practice results in a shift away from popular engagement to interest-group representation. Moreover, councillors have been accused of being arrogant and insensitive to the needs of the community. Lack of effective complaints management and the fact that there is no coherent system in place to measure service delivery or the quality of client interface are other reasons underlying the protest action in the Ramotshere Moiloa municipality.

Service failures by the Ramotshere municipality can largely be attributed to a lack of effective leadership and human resource problems. All householders interviewed indicated that, in the municipality, there was a high incidence of irregular or inappropriate appointments, coupled with low ability, poor skills development programmes and weak institutional management.

Open-ended interviews were therefore conducted with ten middle and junior managers employed by the municipality of Ramotshere focussing on the quality of leadership and its impact on service delivery. Three formidable barriers were identified, all relating to the attitudes of the most senior managers in the municipality. The first barrier was that top management believed that the fact that they had been appointed in the most senior leadership positions meant that they possessed 'what it took' to be a leader, and regarded any further professional development, therefore, as unnecessary. Secondly, they believed that managers below them needed training. In fact, these managers had undergone leadership development initiatives, and this had made them much more aware of the poor quality of leadership practised by their superiors which, obviously, resulted in greater levels of frustration. This situation was made worse by the third major problem, which was that suggestions made by those who had just undergone training were either rejected or ignored by their somewhat defensive and/or reactionary bosses. The result was disenchantment, cynicism, and lower morale among this group, who eventually stopped making any suggestions or trying out new leadership ideas. In fact, the investment in leadership development had, arguably, created greater dissonance and frustration among those managers who had benefitted from leadership development, simply because it made them

aware of the poor quality of their senior leaders. According to the managers interviewed, the greatest challenge is that it is highly likely that the current top and senior managers were not appointed into these posts on merit alone, but selected on the basis of their political affiliation (i.e. to the government of the day). The Ramotshere Moiloa municipality therefore experienced the problems of a lack of management and leadership capacity, skills and experience, and personnel conflicts which did, and continued to, exacerbate the situation.

With some justification, the Romotshere Moiloa municipality complained that there are insufficient funds to eradicate infrastructure backlogs on water, sanitation and roads services, which resulted in infrastructure projects not being completed (e.g. RDP houses, roads, electricity and water). However, the Auditor-General's report 2008/2009 of the Ramothshere Moiloa municipality has also demonstrated examples of under-spending, a degree of wastage, inappropriate usage of funds, and poor oversight.

This paints a bleak picture as far as local government service delivery in South Africa is concerned. The critical question is: how deep-rooted is the state of distress in local municipalities and are these challenges insurmountable?

CHALLENGES IMPACTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY

Fraser-Moleketi (2007:3) pointed out that, while a number of initiatives were undertaken by the local sphere to improve public service delivery, a number of challenges still remained. In this regard, despite efforts to extend service delivery to poorer communities, it has become evident that poor communities have increasingly become more disadvantaged. For example, from 2004 to the present, many local municipalities have experienced ongoing protest marches, riots, and uprisings from communities, all of which can be attributed to the lack of service delivery. There have been over 500 protests relating to service delivery over the past decade in South Africa (Mafora 2009:1).

The unique challenges faced by weaker and more vulnerable municipalities include complex development problems, which include a massive infrastructure backlog legacy that requires extraordinary measures to address funding and delivery capacity requirements. This is supported by Lennnan (2007:12), who argues that many communities in South Africa find themselves outside the service delivery system as a result of poverty, geographical location or history.

Mogale (2003:233) in Thompson, and Nleya (2008:119) claim: "Providing services are doubly hard where large sections of these communities are afflicted by high levels of unemployment and poverty, historical backlogs in infrastructure and services, and an uneven spread of economic resources. Under these

circumstances, notions of a constitutionally guaranteed right to services based on full cost recovery becomes highly problematic, especially where service subsidies for the vulnerable are unavailable."

Lack of service delivery or poor service delivery is partly due to the scale of the challenge, the legacy of apartheid and the diversity that exists in South Africa. These obstacles are beyond the capabilities (institutional and fiscal) of the powers and functions of municipalities to confront by themselves (COGTA 2009:4). At the same time, the two other spheres of government, that is, national and provincial government, have not widened the reach of their programmes sufficiently, and have not fully supported poorer municipalities to the extent required.

There are some cases where the announcement of unrealistic promises are made by leaders, and this has created a crisis of expectation. A more developmental approach would be appropriate, where communities were empowered to understand the workings of local government and how service delivery and development can be addressed – with their participation and involvement. It is also the case that many municipalities have not been effective in meeting service delivery expectations, and have failed to mobilise and support communities and other agencies into tapping into the wider network of state and non-state resources (COGTA 2009:5).

Other critical challenges are non-performance or poor performance by public officials. Fraser-Moleketi (2007:3) suggested that non-performance by public servants either took the form of not delivering services, or goal displacement by complying with rules and regulations rather than achieving governmental goals. Sometimes, political sensitivities also inhibited director-generals' decision-making, such as the reluctance to dismiss non-performing public servants owing to political considerations (Naidoo 2006:257 and Naidoo 2009:206).

In assessing the reality of poor municipal performance, cognisance also needs to be taken of the unresolved challenges identified in previous assessments. A recent study conducted at the local sphere of government indicates some of the reasons for distress in municipal government as (COGTA 2009:10) being:

- Tensions between the political and administrative leadership.
- Poor ability of key leadership such as councillors to deal with the demands of local government.
- Insufficient separation of powers between political parties and municipal councils.
- Lack of clear separation between the legislative and the executive.
- Inadequate accountability measures and support systems and resources for local government.
- Poor compliance with the legislative and regulatory frameworks for municipalities.

- Huge service delivery and backlog challenges (e.g. housing, water and sanitation).
- Poor communication and accountability relationships with communities.
- Corruption and fraud.
- Poor financial management, e.g. negative audit opinions.
- Number of (violent) service delivery protests.
- Weak civil society bodies.
- Intra- and inter-political party leadership issues negatively influencing governance and delivery.
- Insufficient municipal capacity due to a lack of scarce skills.

From the evidence to date, it is clear that local government is indeed in distress, and it could be argued that this state of affairs has, amongst others, become deeply rooted as a result of poor and ineffective municipal leadership. It is clear that there is a critical need for effective leadership in local government.

CRITICAL NEED FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipalities not only need sound management, but also require effective leadership at all levels of the service delivery chain. Municipalities must, through education and training of its employees, develop its leadership capacity to a level that enables it to perform its functions in an efficient, collaborative and accountable way. The Draft Public Administration Management Bill (2008) requires managerial, professional and strategic leadership across all government institutions, including local government. A very clear lesson is that the transactional competencies of management, while crucial for municipalities, are simply not sufficient on their own (Rowe 2001). It is evident that effective strategic leadership is necessary to improve public service delivery by local government.

Senior leadership therefore ought to have a number of qualities, such as interpersonal, communication, creative cooperation, financial and human resource skills. The ability to analyse policy has also been identified by Cloete *et al.* (2000:210) as a critical skill for leadership in local government. Sensitivity to the political environment is another important quality. Senior management should also become more cognizant of the political dynamics and environment in which it operates.

Miller (2005:124) argues that it is necessary to empower, challenge and motivate managers at all levels to be visionaries, initiators, effective communicators and decision-makers, capable of responding proactively to the challenges of the change process, rather than acting as administrators of fixed

rules and procedures in government organisations. Fraser-Moleketi (2007:2) argued that there was a need to "build leadership, to produce critical thinkers at every level of the chain, who dare to be different, to look at problems with new eyes, to recognise problems where others see the situation as an indisputable way to do things". According to Schwella and Rossouw (2005:762), managers need specific competencies to enable them to manage and lead their organisations effectively into the future, while maintaining and improving effectiveness and efficiency. Local government not only needs sound management, but also requires leadership at all levels of the service delivery chain. Rowe (2005:86) argues that managers ought to be trained in strategic leadership (a synergistic combination of managerial and transformational leadership), so that they can become more effective managers.

Local government needs leadership competence, at all levels, including senior management level. In terms of the Draft Public Administration Management Bill (2008:31), the head of a government organisation must, through education and training of his or her employees, develop the human resource capacity to a level that enables the organisation to perform its functions in an efficient, collaborative and accountable way. To this end, the Senior Management Service (SMS) was created at national and provincial government; this body consists of a cadre of senior managers and professionals across public institutions. The purpose is to develop a management culture based on the values and principles of good governance enshrined in section 195(1) of the South African Constitution (1996).

Local narratives and contexts are also crucial when deciding on a leadership approach for each municipality. The leader, the followers, the situation, values, ethics, cultural factors and the task are all important factors in determining the appropriate leadership approach. Local government stresses the need for partnership in engaging an extensive range of internal and external stakeholders, by actively networking with them, gaining their confidence and support through sensitivity to their varying needs.

Conventional wisdom in the field of public administration research suggests it is impossible for managers to adopt a single leadership approach that effectively serves multiple, complex and mutually exclusive goals in a volatile and highly demanding environment. Municipalities in South Africa demand a combination of managerial and transformational leadership (i.e. strategic leadership) if service delivery is to be improved.

Research conducted by Rowe (2001:82) suggests that the impact of a combination of transformational and managerial leadership on organisational effectiveness is far greater than that based on only one leadership approach. Naidoo (2009) argues that public managers could transform situations that seem impossible to change simply by adopting more than one approach to leadership. The intention in this article is to suggest a unique approach of strategic leadership

– one that combines diverse perspectives, approaches and sensitivities to culture and language, and one that takes into account socio-economic and political perspectives for local government municipalities in South Africa.

A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP APPROACH FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A strategic leadership approach refers to a framework that is multifaceted and multidimensional, with its own unique characteristics, diverse perspectives, approaches and strategies. This framework caters for sensitivities of culture, gender, religion, ethnic origin, socio-economic and political differences. These divergent perspectives, approaches and sensitivities are incorporated and developed in such a way that municipalities can optimise their full potential. A combination of leadership approaches is essential if service delivery is to be improved. The aim, therefore, is to utilise the divergent perspectives within local government in order to achieve the highest possible levels of performance.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP?

Strategic leadership is a combination of managerial and transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is better known as "visionary" or "charismatic" leadership; it is future-oriented, and is prepared to take risks. Managerial leadership (also known as transactional leadership) involves stability and order, and the preservation of the existing order. Managerial leaders are more comfortable handling day-to-day activities, and tend to be oriented to the short-term. Strategic leadership is the ability to influence others to voluntarily make day-to-day decisions that improve the organization's long-term viability (Rowe 2001:81-82)

Rowe (2001:86) argues that local government will be more viable in the long-term and better able to maintain stability in the short-term if strategic leadership is the norm rather than the exception. Freedman & Tregoe (2003:18) suggest that a strategic leader will promote greater productivity than either a managerial leader or a transformational leader. Managerial leaders maintain the existing order, but are not likely to invest in innovations that will change the organisation and improve organisational effectiveness in the long term. However, transformational leaders want to change and be innovative: combining these two leadership types to provide strategic leadership will promote organisational effectiveness and above-average performance (long-term goals), and help maintain short-term stability. The key features of strategic leadership are summarised below (Table 3):

Table 3 Strategic leadership

STRATEGIC LEADERS
Synergistic combination of transformational and managerial leadership
Emphasis on ethical behaviour and value-based decisions
Operational oversee (day-to-day) and strategic (long-term) responsibilities
Formulate and implement strategies for immediate impact and preservation of long-term goals to improve organisational performance and long-term viability
Have strong, positive expectations of the performance they expect from their superiors, peers, subordinates and themselves
Use and interchange tacit and explicit knowledge at individual and organisational levels
Use linear and non-linear thinking patterns
Believe in strategic choice, that is, their choices make a difference in their organisations and environment

Source Adapted from Rowe (2001:82)

Strategic leaders emphasise ethical values and moral principles. Strategic leaders oversee both day-to-day operational and long-term strategic responsibilities. They formulate and implement strategies for immediate impact and the preservation of long-term goals to improve organisational efficiency and viability (Freedman & Tregoe 2003:18). Strategic leaders have strong, positive expectations of the performance that they expect from their managers, public servants and themselves. They utilize and interchange tacit and explicit knowledge at both individual and organisational levels. They use both linear and non-linear thinking patterns. They believe in strategic choice and they promote organisational effectiveness to enhance future performance by using different approaches in their organization. Strategic leaders therefore need to understand both managerial and transformational leadership, and utilise the skills and knowledge of both.

The decisions voluntarily made and the actions voluntarily taken by managers and employees on a day-to-day basis eventually determine what strategy emerges in an organisation (Naidoo 2004:156). Strategic leaders understand and use this process to ensure the future viability of their organisations. Strategic leadership presumes a shared vision of what an organisation needs to be, so that the day-to-day decision-making, or emergent strategy process, is consistent with this vision. It presumes agreement among senior management about opportunities that can be taken advantage of, and threats that can be neutralized, given the organisation's resources and capabilities.

Rowe (2001:87) contends that the rewards of adopting strategic leadership quickly become evident, because those with whom the leader works becomes energised and more productive, and accomplish more in less time. As members of an organisation become more creative and innovative, they come to enjoy work more, and are more willing to take risks. Working through the paradox of leading and managing is demanding and difficult, but is achievable in public service organizations that have been lacking in strategic management. There is a need to understand the concepts of explicit and tacit knowledge and linear and non linear thinking and how to integrate both for the benefit of the organisation. The rewards of doing all this are improved and above-average organisational performance. Influencing public servants to voluntarily make decisions that will improve the functioning of the organisation is the most important part of strategic leadership (Freedman & Tregoe 2003:24). The manager should be able to influence subordinates, peers, and superiors. Strategic leadership assumes a shared vision of what an organisation should be. It focuses on the opportunities that can be taken advantage of, and the threats that can be neutralised, given the organisation's resources and capabilities. Strategic leadership also assumes transformational leadership that is willing to take risks and presupposes a managerial leadership that views the world rationally. Strategic leadership suggests that managerial leadership and transformational leadership can coexist. Strategic leadership therefore synergistically combines the two types of leadership.

ADOPTING STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is important that the current leadership framework be strengthened and that strategic leadership be revived and extended for the benefit of local government in South Africa. The emphasis is on improving the current leadership framework within multicultural and multiethnic communities to improve and accelerate service delivery performance. Strategic leadership is about "being honest and consistent". It also relates to integrity, to transparency in behaviour, but also reflects the attitude of placing the good of the community before personal gain. It should relate to consultation, an intention to discuss areas of disagreement openly with others, and a willingness to modify one's ideas after listening to other people's views. It is about being accessible, approachable and in touch. Strategic leadership reflects a style which is not status-conscious, and which attempts to ensure that staff at all levels feel comfortable and can access the individual (Naidoo 2004:94).

An analysis of the situational context of each municipality is required. Within the dynamics of the approaches proposed, leaders in municipalities ought to

have equal concern for people and outcomes. The valuing of diversity and inclusion is necessary. Leaders should adopt an approach that builds on local African culture working in combination with effective strategic leadership. Leadership should be fair and competent, and should actively try to maximize participation and understanding throughout the municipality. The degree to which leaders empower others will influence their legitimacy and determine how much influence they have on others. The strategic leadership approach should create an inclusive culture, which ought to foster the feeling, in everyone, that he or she is part of a community. It is about "inspiring others" and keeping in touch, and is concerned with exceptional communication skills, keeping in close contact with others, and encouraging others to work on a common vision of local government.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE APPROACH

How dynamic is this approach for local government in South Africa? The most obvious implication is the staggering complexity of the role of leadership in local government. Another very clear lesson is that the transactional competencies of management, while crucial for municipalities, are simply not sufficient by themselves. This leadership approach emphasises the role of the leader, which is fundamentally about engaging others as partners in developing and achieving the shared vision and enabling them to lead. It is also about creating an empowering environment for creative thinking and for challenging assumptions about how public services should be delivered. It is also about much closer sensitivity to the needs of a range of internal and external stakeholders, both inside and outside municipalities. It is about connectedness and inclusiveness.

CONCLUSION

Local government has many problems that are typical of a developmental state, and this is seen in the ongoing protests (on the part of the community) and a patchy service delivery record (on the part of municipalities). It is evident that the past pervades the present and continues to skew redistributive efforts and expanded service delivery. In addition, the scope and scale of redress required stretches the capacity of the local sphere of government. Although governmental statistics indicate that basic services have improved since 1994, basic services are in themselves insufficient to substantially improve the quality of life of South Africa's poorer communities. The statistics referred to in this article do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the quality of life, and

mean little without contextualizing the demographic realities of the space in which they were collected. The article explores challenges impacting effective service delivery at the local sphere of government and argues that in order to improve local government service delivery, there is a critical need for effective leadership.

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