AN INVESTIGATION INTO SERVICE DELIVERY: A CASE STUDY OF EZAKHENI TOWNSHIP, LADYSMITH, KWAZULU-NATAL

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by

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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: ........................................

DATE: ........................................
DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my parents, Mrs. B.R.F. Hlophe and the late Mr. K. A. Hlophe. The late Mr. Hlophe held the philosophy that “education is central to a child’s success” and Mrs. Hlophe supported me through the darkest times of striving to complete this study.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am eternally grateful to God for affording me the opportunity to embark on such a journey. It was a challenge indeed, but He gave me the strength and the appropriate people to guide me through this study.

I am thankful to my supervisor, Mrs. Enaleen Draai, who had to deal with my continuous confusion and threats to quit this study before it was completed. I am thankful for her patience, guidance and knowledge of the subject matter, which aided me tremendously throughout the study.

I am deeply grateful to my mother, who is my central support. I appreciate her love, motivation and support, which made it possible for me to complete this study. I must sincerely thank my fiancé, Simphiwe Dumakude, for his continuous love and support. I would have aborted this project if it was not for him. I would also like to thank my younger brother, Khonzumusa Hlophe, for always seeing the best in me, and my sister, Zanele Hlophe, for being my unofficial academic supervisor. To the rest of my family, I am forever grateful for your love and words of encouragement.

I would like to thank the community of Ezakheni, the ward councillor and other provincial government officials, who enabled my study through providing relevant information.

This was indeed a tiresome journey, which I would not have completed without everyone’s support.
ABSTRACT

South Africa has been experiencing a continuous bout of service delivery protests since the late 1990s. Protests are a public manifestation of conflict and therefore this study uses the term conflict and protest interchangeably. The cost of the damage which results from these protests is immense. It is critical that solutions to this protest ensure that the underlying factors leading to the protest are addressed, in order to reduce the probability of its reoccurrence.

This study seeks to investigate whether or not service delivery conflict could be prevented through improved implementation of government services in all spheres. The provision of basic service delivery is critical for the livelihood of any community and even more so for previously disadvantaged communities. It is important to verify if the lack of, or poor, service delivery can lead communities to revolt against each other or the governing authority. The challenge with any conflict situation is that when it erupts into destruction, only the visible symptoms are addressed, because addressing the underlying factors is a long-term process which requires a holistic understanding of the conflict.

Previously disadvantaged communities are experiencing a backlog of service delivery, the exploitation of their plight by different agencies and mismanagement by public servants, which further delays service delivery. The Ezakheni community has been one of those communities who were previously disadvantaged and expected different levels of government to meet their service delivery needs, from land ownership to the building of houses. This community expected that the process of improving their livelihood would be fast-tracked instead it was delayed by community conflict. The conflict started as a revolution against agencies that were against the community’s process of acquiring land, but ended up as community members fought each other and government departments in order to survive. The Ezakheni community conflicts date back to 1998 and subsided during late 2005. Any conflict after that was latent, although there were still killings, but they were
sporadic and sometimes not linked to the conflict but categorised as criminal behaviour.

The present study takes the reader through the process of evaluating whether or not there is a logical relationship between Ezakheni community conflict and service delivery. Chapter One gives an overview of the study and the processes that were followed during this study. Chapter Two opens up theoretical debates that influence the epistemology of this study. Chapter Three gives the reader a detailed overview of the profile of the case study. Chapter Four describes the methodology that has been utilised in the study. Chapter Five presents the data and interprets it. Chapter Six concludes the study.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC  - African National Congress</td>
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<td>IFP  - Inkatha Freedom Party</td>
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<td>CDE  - Centre for Development Enterprise</td>
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<td>CDS  - Centre for Development Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>COGTA - Department of Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs</td>
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<td>DCSL - Department of Community Safety and Liaison</td>
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<td>KZN  - KwaZulu-Natal</td>
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CHAPTER ONE:
AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1. Introduction
Conflict is a complex phenomenon, in that it has diverse sources and dimensions. The focus of this study is the possible role that service delivery has in escalating conflicts. The South African historic landscape has seen numerous conflicts emanating from poor service delivery. The apartheid regime utilised the public service to enforce its rule of oppression and discrimination. This resulted in previously disadvantaged communities revolting against such services (Macdonald and Pape 2002: 17). It was therefore critical that the South African democratic government redefined the ‘new’ public service in a way that meets the needs of all South Africans. Immediately after the 1994 elections, the government established the policies, legal mandates and structural institutions that were supposed to uphold the vision of a transformed public service, but the conflicts targeted at such institutions persisted (Ramsingh 2008:2).

The Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE), which conducted studies in Khutsong, a township within the Merafong municipality in North West province, and Phumelela, a rural municipality in the northern Free State province, discovered that social conflict emanating from poor service delivery had been on the rise since 2004 (CDE 2007: 1). Such a study is relevant to this research, because the research seeks to determine if service delivery can be both the escalating and the mediating factor for social conflict. The CDE studied such dynamics within the municipalities of Matjhabeng and Phomolong, both of which are within the Free State province, with the aim of showing the importance of local governance and service delivery in furthering development and preventing possible conflicts. The above outcomes of the CDE studies were supported by the work of Admire Mare in 2008, who showed clearly in her research that the xenophobic conflicts which were prevalent in South Africa during early 2008 resulted from poor service delivery. In addition, during the national and provincial election of 2009, the
community of Alexandra township in Gauteng province withheld its votes on the grounds that they had received poor or no services from their local and provincial government. This was not termed a conflict, but a protest against poor service delivery. It is therefore important to explore the possibility of utilising effective local service delivery for the prevention of conflict in local communities.

Public service delivery is a political process informed by a social contract that exists between the ruler and the ruled. This means that delivering public services of the highest standards is important for the sustainability of the political elite and the well-being of the community at large (Besancon 2003). It can be concluded that failure to deliver services violates the social contract which, in turn, creates a vulnerable context for social conflict. In such a situation, the needs of citizens are poorly met or not met at all. Berry, Chris, Forder, Sultan and Moreno-Torres (2004: 9) observe that effective service delivery may prevent states or communities from sliding back into conflict. It can thus be concluded that service delivery is a critical tool for conflict management.

Working with KwaZulu-Natal social conflicts has encouraged the researcher in the quest to explore the relationship between service delivery and social conflict. Of most importance is to ascertain if the protagonist and communities perceive it as such. Most conflicts which I attended were triggered by the lack of service delivery by local municipalities or by provincial and national departments (Xaba 2006).

Ezakheni is a township within the Ladysmith (Emnambithi) local municipality, which is part of the Uthukela district municipality in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It has a history of political violence that stemmed from past friction between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and African National Congress (ANC). The targeted conflict for this study is the role that is played by poor service delivery in terms of the Land Restitution Programme of the Department of Land Affairs, lack of local services to the 'relocated' township, Ezakheni, and poor governance from local councillors and provincial
departments. The poor implementation of the Land Restitution Programme triggered the conflict between the Zondi Clan and the KwaMthandi Trustees. The Zondi clan were all the community members who resided at Ezakheni KwaMthandi, but paid allegiance to Inkosi Mkhipheni Zondi. The KwaMthandi Trustees were all the beneficiaries of the land that was bought by the Siwinile-Mthandi Trust. According to the Land Affairs documentation (LGTA 2006), the KwaMthandi Trustees had applied for land and been granted the land at Ezakheni, but because this process was not implemented properly by the officials of Land Affairs department, it left room for the Zondi Clan to take advantage of the process for its own benefit. This was aggravated by the lack of services to the affected areas, while the surrounding areas in Ladysmith municipality were benefitting from local services such as electricity, roads and water.

Past intervention strategies, rendered by the Peace Secretariat, Police and Department of Land Affairs, were perceived by the protagonists as discriminatory, which further exacerbated the conflict. This meant that the conflict was not specific to the Zondi clan fighting with the Mthandi trustees, but also about both parties revolting against perceived discrimination from local government, police, Land Affairs and the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs (LGTA).

Local research studies by the CDE concerning Phumelela and Khutsong townships and the Centre for Development Support (CDS) concerning Phomolong and Matjhabeng townships have provided the writer with some foundation to build on in terms of studying the role of service delivery, particularly at local and provincial government level in escalating and mediating community conflicts. This information will be utilised in cognisance of the different geographical dynamics of the above studies to the case study. For example, Ezakheni is a township within Ladysmith municipality, whereas the above case study is either from Gauteng or the Free State.
1. 2 Preliminary literature review

Social conflicts are usually tools utilised to achieve results, but not necessarily the targeted results. Parties to conflict utilise conflict as a tool to achieve their desired goals. At that particular moment they are blind to anything else that can assist them in achieving these goals. Conflict exists in a relationship where parties believe that their goals are mutually exclusive and cannot be achieved simultaneously. It is this realisation which leads parties to employ tactics to neutralise the other party, to ensure that their goals or aims prevail (Anstey 1991: 2-4). This definition distinguishes between two types of conflicts, namely latent and manifest conflict. According to Pruitt and Kim (2004: 8), conflict is “perceived divergence of interest”. This implies that conflict is a subjective phenomenon and that the situation itself may not necessarily be conflicting, but the interpretation of different parties may be mutually exclusive, therefore leading to conflict.

The idea of latent and manifest conflict is explained in Galtung’s (1969) model of conflict, which sees conflict as a triangle comprising contradiction, attitude and behaviour. Contradiction is the underlying situation that promotes conflict. Attitude is characterized by emotive, cognitive and conative elements and behaviour is the actual violent behaviour. Galtung argues that for conflict to occur, all three must be present. Conflict is explained as a process of continuous interaction between structure, attitude and behaviour (Ramsbotham 2005: 9-10). These premises are applicable in understanding the theoretical basis for the Ezakheni community conflict, because both parties co-existed peacefully when they believed they had mutual interests. Conflict started to manifest itself when these parties realised that their goals were mutually exclusive.

Whilst conflict can be studied from a vast number of theoretical perspectives, for the purposes of this study, they shall be categorised according to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraf (1990) terminology of microcosmic and macrocosmic approaches to conflict. This categorisation is supported by the
work of Neuman (2006:61), where he distinguishes between three levels of theory analysis, namely, micro-level theory, which focuses on micro-social life over short durations; meso-level theory, which focuses on relations and structures of society; and macro-level theory, which focuses on processes that occur over a long duration at a macro level of social life, e.g. entire societies or world regions, but such categorisation is not exhaustive.

The microcosmic approach focuses on individuals and groups, whereas macrocosmic focuses on society and beyond. These theorists consider vigorously the conscious, verbal motives and reasons behind people’s resorting to violence and propose that there is theoretically a sense behind any conflict situation, so much so that they say conflict is functional. They claim that violent conflict can be viewed as a tool to achieve certain goals, to such an extent that some leaders will evaluate the profitable outcomes of the conflict against the possible losses that will result from the conflict. If the gain outweighs the loss, it is deemed rational to utilise violent tactics (Dougherty et al., 1990:312). The functionality of conflict is further supported by the idea that conflict strengthens a group’s internal cohesiveness. This is relevant in such an explorative study because it is the perceptions of people that were actively involved in the conflict and those that observed, which are at the centre of the study. Burton stresses that the best way to understand and analyse another person’s perception is through their own point of view (Burton 1990).

For a holistic understanding of conflict, it is important to conceptualise its processes. The key process in the present study is conflict escalation, because it occurs when the conflict is manifested and destructive. It is also the process that forces intervention from leadership. According to Fisher (2000: 173), conflict escalation is a process that involves aggressive tactics, coercive methods and deadly force in striving to achieve one’s goal, while undermining the other group’s chances of success. This process is not a random and isolated event, rather it is influenced by many factors such as interpersonal relations, perception of the other party or group, zero-sum thinking - the only way to end the conflict is either they are eliminated or we are - the availability of resources to perform such an intensive task and the
phase to which the conflict has progressed - both parties can feel they have come too far to retreat (Fisher 2000: 173 -176). The increasingly aggressive behaviour that resulted in the deaths of community members was a result of unresolved conflict in the community of Ezakheni.

Eisikovits, Fishman and Winstock (2004:283) support the above assumption by reaffirming that escalation is a proliferation of deadly force from parties in conflict. Although their study was focused on youth behaviour, it did raise some important factors that are applicable in any conflict situation, namely, that escalation is a set of interactions between parties which may provoke, coerce or annihilate the other party.

It is critical for the present study to further consolidate the schools of thought that clearly define what conflict management means. Ramsbotham (2005: 29) acknowledges that conflict management is used to describe a collective of different conflict-handling mechanisms, but defines it as a limited process that is applied for the settlement and containment of conflict. Bradshaw (2007:69) describes conflict management as a process which addresses the manifestation of conflict on an ongoing basis, normally by an external actor.

Service delivery is a broad concept which forms part of a governance framework which defines the role of any state in society. Cloete (2000:15) cites the World Bank (1994) in describing governance as the approach of exercising power in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development. Elaissen et al. (2008:55) reiterate the importance of understanding public service within the context of governance because it clarifies the scope of the state’s role; creates a framework for improving the efficiency of what the state does; and outlines the guidelines of co-operating with other states in doing what it does. Governance influences policy, which in turn, forms the foundation of service delivery.

The South African White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997) stipulates that public services are not a privilege in a democratic society, but a legitimate expectation. Improving service delivery should be at
the core of national, provincial and local government and it means “redressing the imbalances of the past…a shift away from inward-looking bureaucratic systems, processes and attitudes and a search for new ways of working which puts the needs of the public first and is better, faster and more responsive to citizens’ needs” (White Paper 1997:3). The service delivery approach of government and its stakeholders is the Batho Pele principle which will be examined in this study, to verify if the services that were rendered for the Ezakheni community were according to the standards that were set in the White Paper.

Service delivery is conceptualised as the execution of policy objectives in the public sector (Cloete 2000). Berry et al. (2004) state that service delivery implies a relationship that exists between policy-makers, service by the providers and communities. This encompasses services and supporting systems that are regarded as the state’s responsibility. Service delivery within governance translates to the fact that all citizens must have the basic services they need. The types of services are decided upon by the policies that are steering government in power. The public service includes the various departments that provide public goods and services, which vary from safety and security, health, social and other services which directly or indirectly facilitate a quality of life as envisaged by the ideals of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996. Within public administration there is a public service for the Republic, which must function and be structured in terms of national legislation and which must loyally execute the lawful policies of the government of the day.

The provision of public services is a process of public administration and management. Section 197 (1) of the constitution sets it out as follows:
Schedule 4 of the Constitution stipulates the concurrent functional areas of national and provincial government. Schedule 5 part A sets out functional areas as they pertain to Provincial government, inter alia the management of provincial road, traffic and ambulance services. Part B lists the functional areas of local government, as set out in Section 156 of the Constitution.
Section 195 of the Constitution stipulates that public administration should adhere to a number of principles that govern the provision of public services:

- A high standard of professional ethics be promoted and maintained.
- People’s needs be responded to, economically and effectively.
- Public administration must be development oriented.
- Services be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- The public be encouraged to participate in policy-making.
- It must be accountable, transparent and developmental.
- Transparency must be fostered.

Section 2 of 195 of the South Africa Constitution states that these principles must apply to the administration in every sphere of government, organs of state and public enterprises. These stipulations entrust all spheres of government with the responsibility for the efficient and effective delivery of public services. The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997 sets the tone for the quality of service delivery. The policy document states that the focus of service delivery should be on citizen or client welfare, equity and efficiency.

In South Africa, services such as basic education, basic health care, security, water, electricity and housing are at the core of government plans of action and should be delivered within mandates and effectively in the best interests of the community. More specific to the present study, basic services for Ezakheni were about the provision of land, water, electricity and sanitation. This study sets out to verify if the lack of service delivery or poor service provision was at the core of the Ezakheni community conflict.

1.3 Motivation for the study

According to the work conducted by the CDE, there is a relationship between service delivery and conflict escalation and management. These articles stress the importance of local governance which they define as the process of decision-making by governing structures, but which is not limited to
government. Local governance can include civil society and even political leadership.

Another dynamic that has always been of interest to the writer is the lack of integrated conflict resolution mechanisms within government institutions, as well as the lack of funding thereof. In KwaZulu-Natal, which has experienced a highly violent past, there was no department that was mandated to address social conflict, until the former premier, Dr S.J. Ndebele, in his State of the Province Address (2006), pronounced that the Department of Community Safety and Liaison shall fulfil this mandate and create a platform for community dialogue, to prevent any escalation of conflict.

The South African government does not have a dedicated department that aims at dealing with conflict management, resolution and transformation. Instead, conflict management and resolution is left in the hands of organisations such as the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVIR), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and many others. The departments that deal with conflicts are the Department of International Relations and Co-operation and the Department of Labour. The types of conflicts that these two departments target are international and labour related conflicts. This structural arrangement of government leads to various questions such as: does the South African government need to establish a department which solely aims at promoting peace and stable co-existence of communities, or should conflict management and resolution be integrated within respective departments in a manner such as KZN had done, through mandating the Department of Community Safety and Liaison to lead peace initiatives within the province? These questions are beyond the scope of this study, even though they might have some impact on it, because when dealing with service delivery conflict it must be clear who is responsible for resolving such conflict. For example, if the conflict is caused by of lack of, or poor provision of, basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity, who will be the responsible department to resolve that conflict? This is an example of how such questions impact on the study.
Understating conflict processes and dynamic is central to conflict management and resolution. It is vital for municipalities and government departments to co-operate with each other in identifying and addressing latent conflicts while they are still grievances that have not turned into violent manifest conflict (Botes et al., 2007:53).

Ezakheni is a volatile township. It has a history of violence, so the Land Restitution Programme had to be handled sensitively. This was not done, as is evident from the report of McIntosh, Xaba and Associates. The study aims to find out if the community members, immediate stakeholders – community leadership and government officials actually perceive that such a conflict was accelerated by poor local service delivery and governance. The outcomes will assist in planning a proper intervention for the community of Ezakheni, because thus far intervention strategies that have been employed over time have not shown results.

1.3.1 Problem statement
Service delivery is a critical factor in conflict management and resolution. Berry et al. (2004:9) state that service delivery is an important tool which assists states and communities to avert from destructive conflict because it addresses some of the structural imbalances that can easily breed conflict. It does this by creating an entry point for addressing social, political and economic issues that are close to the heart of the community at large. It can therefore be hypothesised that poor local governance and service delivery are the cause of the Ezakheni community conflict.

a) Statement of hypothesis
Ezakheni is prone to poor service delivery by local and provincial government. In this township, the two prominent groups, the Mthandi Trustees and the Zondi Clan, experience poor service delivery from local government which, in turn, increases animosity toward each other. This animosity is exacerbated by the fact that an intervention from government departments requested by one party is perceived as biased towards the other. The hypothesis for this study is therefore the following:
Community conflict is more likely to manifest in communities where poor local governance and service delivery is prominent.

b) Assumptions of the study
The assumptions that support this hypothesis are:

- The conflict at Ezakheni can be resolved by improved local service delivery and participative governance;
- This conflict is about more than rendering justice to both parties, but also about creating a platform where both parties exercise their right of participative governance and actually receive the desired outcome;
- This conflict can be effectively addressed through an integrated approach, where each relevant and responsible department plays an important role.

1.3. 2 Significance of the study
The South African government adopted the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) and White Paper on Improving Service Delivery (1997), in order to make the public service accessible, accountable and effective. The public service was transformed so that it could be inclusive and responsive to the needs of communities. The process of transformation was seen as imperative in enhancing community development and resolving past conflicts. However, the envisioned transformation process did not take into account the fact that effective and efficient service delivery can assist in conflict management.

South Africa has witnessed an increase in protest related to service delivery. These protests have usually turned violent. This, in turn, curbed service delivery. It is therefore important to explore the possibility of service delivery assisting in conflict management because of its cost effectiveness. No new infrastructure will need to be established, but services will be implemented differently in order to meet developmental and conflict management needs.
1.3. 3 Aim and objectives of the study
The primary aim of the study was to explore the effect poor service delivery had on escalating violence in the Ezakheni community.

1.3. 4 Objectives of the study
The objectives of the study were to:

- Investigate the relationship between service delivery and conflict.
- Ascertain the perceptions of community members with regards to the role of service delivery in the escalation of conflict.
- Ascertain the perceptions of public servants and other stakeholders with regards to the role of service delivery in the escalation of conflict.
- Propose recommendations for future interventions.

1.4 Research design
This research was an explorative quest, involving the case of Ezakheni community conflict. It explored and described the perceptions of protagonists, government officials, community leadership and civil society in understanding the source of the conflict. The study was exploratory, because it was a ‘new’ study within the targeted area that would aim to prove or disprove the hypothesis which questions whether or not poor local governance and service delivery were the sources of the Ezakheni conflict. According to Neuman (2006: 33), this type of research is utilised to assist in formulating more precise questions and can create a foundation for further research. The investigation was descriptive in nature, because it aimed at presenting a comprehensive picture concerning the social conflict within the Ezakheni community.

The study sought to explore the role of service delivery in conflict management, by studying the role of various departments (provincial and local) in perpetuating and managing conflict; as well as the perceptions that community members and other stakeholders have about this hypothetical relationship.
The researcher used documentation and archives from the Mnambithi Local Municipality and provincial government, in particular the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, to give a comprehensive profile of the study area and unit. McIntosh, Xaba and Associates, a consultant company, conducted a preliminary research of Ezakheni. Their report was handed over to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs. The report was an important secondary source in this research.

The present research used the case study method because it assisted in focussing the investigation. The indirect outcome for such a study was to serve as a future reference for other researchers. It will only be possible to utilise the theories or statements from this study in other investigations if the cases share some basic similarities in geographical and socio-economic dynamics. For example, the geographical and socio-economic factors in the work of the CDE (2007), Mare (2008) and the Alexandra news report (2009) show similarities with the case study at hand and gave these studies reliability within the present research.

Finally, there are the research approaches or perspectives which influenced this study. The researcher concurs with the debates within the Interpretive and Critical Social Science. Interpretive social science disagrees with positivism, which upholds determinism, an approach that holds that human actions are solely the result of external factors and value-free science is possible. Interpretive social science (Neuman 2006: 88) strives to understand and analyse patterns of behaviour from the realities of the participants themselves. Critical research will influence data collection and the analysis process, because the researcher strove to facilitate the participant’s analysis of the underlying structures that facilitate oppression, social inequities and suffering. The present study suggested the strategies that could be utilised to reform structures for the benefit of all, or at least the disadvantaged.

The research was about creating some basis for change. The researcher’s approach is more critical, because it aimed to promote and facilitate a platform which allowed participants to critically engage research theory, thus
eventually conceptualising strategies that will strive to alleviate suffering through the critique of sources of oppression (Bentz and Shapiro 1998: 39).

1.5 Research methodology
The study utilised a qualitative methodology. The application of a qualitative approach provided an in-depth analysis and understanding of the problem statement. Data has been collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and public documents. Such a process was intense and outside the parameters of a laboratory. It followed what Babbie et al. called the “laboratory of community life” (2006:56). Since this is a qualitative study, the types of questions that were utilised during the interview process were to be open-ended, thus allowing the participants to relate their stories from their own perspectives.

The study was based on the Ezakheni community in Ladysmith. The Ezakheni community was a case study, which meant that such an environment was not manipulated in any way to suit the researcher’s assumptions, but it was a direct experience for the researcher and the participants. This approach was suitable for this study, because the researcher had no control over the occurrence of events, but, dealt with them as they occurred or according to the themes in the participants’ and stakeholders’ stories. According to Hamel et al. (1993), the case study method is considered to be a field method. Adopting this method means that, from the onset, such an investigation will be based on direct field contact with the participants and thorough consideration of meanings that participants create as social actors.

Case studies are useful qualitative tools in social research, but they have been severely criticised on the basis of the validity of the findings. This means that it is difficult to generalise the theories that have resulted from a case study; it can help, however, in forming a foundation for future research. Another challenge with this method is gaining access through “gate-keepers”, especially since the researcher has interacted with some of the participants in her capacity as a government employee.
The research methodology was also influenced by the research conducted by the CDE (2007: 2) concerning Phumelela and Khutsong townships, which utilised the following methods which the researcher adopted:

- Secondary research on socioeconomic conditions and the infrastructure of the study unit;
- Interviews of stakeholders such as government employees, non-government employees, community leaders (councillors, business owners and others) that would be identified once in the field;
- Focus groups with those who were involved in the conflict and those citizens that did not participate in the conflict.

This information influenced the methodology, as will be shown. The investigation concerns people narrating their understanding of the sources of this particular conflict and experience. It is about people constructing their knowledge through interaction with their environment (Crotty 1998:9).

### 1.6 Data collection

There were three focus groups, namely the Zondi Clan, Mthandi Trustees and the other community stakeholders. The officials from the municipality, provincial government and local leadership were interviewed separately, so as to improve openness. The interviews were an in-depth process, clarifying the participant’s perceptions of conflict sources and related issues. Each focus group had a minimum of five participants and a maximum of ten, depending availability of the participants during the data collection process.

The author used non-probability sampling, particularly purposeful and quota sampling, because, for a qualitative research, it is the relevance to the research topic of the participants that is important, rather than their representivity (Neuman 2006). The data collection process targeted the protagonist of the conflicts, the government officials who work with, or have knowledge of the conflict, community leaders and ordinary community members.
1.7 Data analysis
In qualitative research data analysis is an integral part of the research, it can also be a separate process. Neuman (2006) gives two critical methods of qualitative data analysis, namely conceptualisation and coding. Conceptualisation is an important process because it allows the researcher to formulate new concepts or refine concepts through data analysis. This data is analysed by organising categories on the basis of themes and similar features.

Coding, which is closely related to conceptualisation, is part of the qualitative method. It is used to condense and reduce large amounts of raw data into small and manageable analytical units (Neuman 2006: 460). Strauss (1987) differentiated among three kinds of qualitative data coding, that is, open coding, which occurs when the researcher examines data with the aim of compartmentalising it into analytical categories; axial coding which is a second stage of coding, at which the researcher organises the codes with links that assist in discovering key analytical categories; and selective coding, which is the final stage of coding where the researcher reaches conceptualisation conclusions that may lead to further research or finalise the research at hand (Neuman 2006: 461-464).

The researcher recorded all the processes of interaction with the participants. A voice recorder was used, but in the event that it was a problem to use the voice recorder, a note pad was used. The notes from the interviews and focus groups will be categorised according to common concepts and codes which will further be translated to findings. Logical sequences of arriving at the ‘final’ concept will be clearly explained in the research. Conceptualisation will be categorised according to different groups, namely government officials, protagonists, community members and others.

A challenge in this phase of the process is the translation of transcripts, in the sense that through interpretation the information gained may eventually not be that of participants, but that of the researcher’s interpretation of the meaning. It is advantageous to be aware of this limitation, because it shows the
researcher’s awareness of her subjectivity. This research employed both conceptualisation and coding as an integral part of data collection and data analysis.

1.8 Ethical concerns
Since social research involves human subjects, it is imperative that the process be ethical. This implies informed consent on the part of the participants, protecting the rights and anonymity of participants and respecting the participants’ privacy and integrity in the researcher’s approach. This research complied with ethical requirements by protecting the privacy and anonymity of participants, obtaining written consent from each participant, respecting the participant’s right to withdraw from the process at any time they wish and being transparent with the findings to all the participants (officials and community members).

Burton (1990: 204) states that the reality that is relevant to the individual is their own. The researcher subscribes to the above notion, which makes it logical for this study to be guided by the constructionism school of thought. This means that the participants of this study will be respected as human beings who create their own meanings through their interactions with their context and have the capacity to relate such meanings to others. Such thinking promotes a qualitative approach, because this research is not about proving the researcher’s hypothesis, but about learning and conceptualising the meaning of the research participants, to ascertain if it proves or disproves the hypothesis. The approach took into cognisance the fact that participants are likely to be biased towards a narration that concurs with their own personal beliefs.

1.9 Outline of chapters

Chapter One: Introduction and research overview
This chapter introduces the research topic under investigation. It gives a descriptive overview of the research environment. The problem statement,
background, aims and objectives are critically discussed, with the inclusion of limitations, challenges and ethical issues.

**Chapter Two: Literature review**

Literature is discussed in detail, with relevance to the research at hand. This chapter focuses on the literature concerning conflict and service delivery. It provides an analytical and critical discussion.

**Chapter Three: Ezakheni community profile**

This chapter is a comprehensive profile of the Ezakheni community and provides the rationale behind the research.

**Chapter Four: Research methodology**

The design and methodology used in the study is discussed, with its limitations and advantages. Challenges experienced during the process are discussed in the light of possible modifications that could have been made.

**Chapter Five: Research findings and interpretations**

This chapter discusses findings and interpretations, in detail.

**Chapter Six: Recommendations and conclusion**

This chapter presents recommendations and a conclusion, in terms of the topic and problem statement explored.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Local government is the closest sphere of government to the people. In terms of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, it has the responsibility of rendering basic services such as water, sanitation, housing and electricity. If local government cannot meet these basic needs, the potential for community conflict is created.

According to the South African Constitution (1996), Section 152, local government has the responsibility of ensuring that basic services are provided in a sustainable manner; of promoting economic and social development; of encouraging communities to participate in governance; and of guaranteeing the creation of safe and healthy communities. These objectives create community expectations which, if not met, may lead to the community retaliating against government authority.

This study seeks to investigate the role of service delivery in escalating community conflict. Chapter Two will fundamentally establish a theoretical link between service delivery protest and conflict. It will present perspectives which are applicable to the case study. In this chapter the words “protest” and “conflict” are synonymous and are used interchangeably.

2.2 Service delivery in the context of South Africa

The South African Constitution Act of 1996 clearly stipulates the formula for service delivery in all spheres of government. It is stated in Section 195 (1) that public service delivery should be guided by the following democratic values, namely, human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism (van der Waldt 2004: 85). These principles are further enshrined in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery 1997 and Municipal Systems Act
2000). It means that public service delivery should be characterised by efficiency, accountability and equity. This is a paradigm shift from the past, where the public service was characterised by discrimination, inefficiency and racism.

South Africa inherited an overwhelming backlog of government services from the apartheid regime. Local government suffered badly, because investment in local infrastructure was not made for so-called Black, Indian and Coloured townships. This meant that, after the first democratic local government election in 1996 and the amalgamating of municipalities, many municipalities had to provide a wider range of services and infrastructure to an increasing population, over a much larger area than before. Community disparity was apparent within local municipalities. This was an added pressure on the newly elected government, because programmes needed more funding, which was not readily available.

Funding which could have been raised through the paying of local service rates could not be raised, because previously disadvantaged communities were not used to paying for such services, since it was the key feature of civil disobedience which opposed apartheid policies (Gitsham, Reddy, Ntshangase 2003: 199-201). The challenges of the service delivery backlog and transformation issues within municipal structures are critical when striving to improve service delivery for local communities. Co-operative governance also impacts on service delivery because not all services are the mandate of local municipalities. This does not change the fact that communities will approach municipalities for any service required.

Service delivery is the responsibility of government as a whole. Hughes (2003: 72) emphasized that government has a variety of roles to perform within the country, the scope of which cannot be easily measured, The government’s most critical role is ensuring the livelihood of communities through the provision of services such as quality schools, hospitals, community care, public transport, law and order, town planning and welfare services.
According to du Toit, Knipe, Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Dolve (2002: 64), government is responsible for making laws, creating institutions that implement those laws and for providing services or products that these laws prescribe. Service delivery in this context implies services that are delivered by government. These can be either collective or specific services. As communities became more sophisticated, so did their need for better services. Collective services benefit the whole community, whereas particular services intend to meet a specific need for individuals and households. The South African Constitution Act (1996) and Municipal Systems Act (2003) proclaim that local government is responsible for the provision of particular services to communities.

Craythorne (2006: 158) cites the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 in defining local service delivery as a process that the municipality employs in order to ensure a reasonable quality of life for the community. Such a process facilitates and promotes public health and safety. It is when municipal services are not delivered that fertile ground for conflicts is created. Since councillors are mandated by the Municipal Systems Act of 2000 as the facilitators of local service delivery, it is imperative that they address service delivery problems when they surface, otherwise they will be the target of community rage. Councillors have the responsibility of interacting with their wards in relation to development issues. They should be able to communicate service delivery challenges and delays in order to curb the manifestation of community conflict into violent action.

Burger (2009: 2) states that the primary reason behind service delivery protest in South Africa is dissatisfaction with the delivery of basic services such as water, electricity and toilets. The protests are more common in the informal settlements and other poor communities, who feel that violent protest is the only way to voice their concerns. The high levels of poverty, poor infrastructure and lack of houses add to the growing dissatisfaction. This has increased the pressure for local government to deliver basic services. Municipalities had to strive to meet the challenges but failed to meet community expectations (Memela, Mautjane, Nzo 2008:10). The Minister of
Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Mr. Sicelo Shiceka, has proposed the implementation of a Local Government Turn-Around Strategy, which will provide long-term and sustainable citizen-centred interventions (COGTA 2009: 4). Such a strategy is aimed at turning the tide on service delivery protest by addressing backlogs and complaints from citizens.

Numerous incidents of service delivery conflicts have been cited in the media and official reports by independent organizations or government occurred for various reasons, such as the following (Roux 2005: 55; CDE 2007: 3; COGTA 2009:11):

- Khutsong Conflict (Molele 2007) – this conflict manifested around 2007 because the community of the Merafong municipality refused to be incorporated into the North West Province, since they perceived that they would receive poor service delivery. Khutsong is a community within the Merafong municipality, which is situated 65 kilometres from the Gauteng border. The community believed that remaining in the Gauteng province had more opportunities for development. Despite the community protest, the demarcation board and parliament persisted with the decision, which was against the interests of the community. This decision precipitated conflict in such services such as schools, health and general functions of the municipality were halted. In 2009, the government was in the process of reincorporating the Merafong municipality into Gauteng province. If this had been done initially, unnecessary financial and human loss, that was the result of the conflict, could have been avoided.

- Xenophobic violence during 2008 – Mare (2008) states that the origins of the xenophobic conflicts trace back to recurrent municipal service delivery challenges, which negate the objectives of developmental local governance.

- Siyethemba conflict during July 2009 (Ncanana 2009) – this conflict started when the residents of Siyethemba township in Mpumalanga province revolted against poor service delivery and their being left out
of the decision-making processes of their municipality. It is clear that communities believe that protesting is the only tool available to them to have the decisions of any level of government swayed in their favour. The Minister for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Sicelo Shiceka, pronounced that such conflict that is increasing across the country is because of poor service delivery. He proposed strengthening municipal ward committees. This would be one of the strategies utilized by government to address local service delivery issues.

- Diepsloot community conflict during 2008 and 2009 (Cutting Edge TV programme, aired 11/08/09) – this conflict emerged as a result of the community being frustrated by poor service delivery. According to community members who were interviewed on this show, Diepsloot was intended to be a temporary shelter, while permanent housing was being arranged by local and provincial government. Diepsloot, which is within Gauteng, had been a temporary shelter for three years. The community share one toilet, there is no sanitation system and there are no permanent houses. The community is frustrated with their ward councillor, who does not give them the positive feedback that they expect.

These cases highlight community conflicts that are prevalent across South Africa as a result of poor service delivery and poor community participation in governance.

A challenge with service delivery conflicts is that they draw attention when they have manifested in public violence and are captured by the mass media. Local government fails to investigate, manage and intervene in latent conflicts, because it lacks the skills and programmes to intervene (Roux 2005; Memela et al., 2008, Ramsingh 2008). This can result in uninformed interventions, which will curb the violence temporarily, but rarely resolve the underlying factors that led to the conflict.

The studies that were conducted in 2007 by the CDE of Phumelela and Khutsong townships and the CDS of Matjhabeng and Phomolong
municipalities were supported by the findings of the COGTA 2009 assessment. It was concluded that service delivery conflicts were a result of the following factors:

- Poor governance, which resulted in mismanagement of resources, finances and human capital. This meant that communities were excluded from the council decisions that affected their livelihood. For example, in the Phumelela municipality there was no council quorum achieved from mid-2003 to about September 2004. This meant that the council could not take any decision and this hampered service delivery.

- Administrative problems, which resulted from the amalgamation of local municipalities, left the municipalities unable to function because most managerial posts were vacant; agreements with union representatives concerning employee placements were not materializing; and a functional human resource system was absent.

- Individual political struggle resulted in political in-fighting. Communities lost faith in their political leadership, particularly local councillors.

- Poor communication and ineffective client interface. There were limited or no existent platforms to give the community feedback regarding the services. This meant that service delivery lacked transparency and accountability.

- Ineffective management, which resulted in poor management in three spheres, namely financial, technical and general management.

- Poor housing administration and management. The housing projects were characterised by fraud, corruption, nepotism, absence of a local system of allocating houses to the needy, poor management of the housing list and the municipality’s inability to deliver the promised houses.

It is evident that community conflicts were a result of poor governance and service delivery. Municipalities have a vital responsibility for service delivery, but at times lack the capacity to deliver on their responsibility. Local councillors have a critical responsibility for addressing community complaints, especially if there is a delay or lack of service delivery. If they fail in this duty
they will be perceived as contributing to the conflict instead of alleviating it. There have been various strategies by national government to improve the co-ordination of local service delivery. The first one is Project Consolidate, which aimed at “finding innovative ways to optimize the impact of local government system, to improve and strengthen the co-ordinated actions of national, provincial and local government in key areas of delivery together with key partners” (COGTA 2010). Secondly is the Turn-Around Strategy which was introduced by the Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Sicelo Shiceka. This strategy aims to improve service delivery and reduce service delivery protest. COGTA strives to improve the capacity of local government but these efforts need to be sustained at local level, because this is where the greatest challenge is experienced.

2.3 Conflict theories
Conflict is a loosely utilized concept and, like all other social constructs, it can be studied and understood from different perspectives. In the present study, conflict will be defined as a relationship in which parties believe that their goals are mutually exclusive and therefore cannot be achieved simultaneously. Mutually exclusive perceptions lead people to employ tactics that will neutralize the other party, in order to ensure that their goals prevail (Anstey 1991: 2-4). This definition distinguishes between two types of conflict namely latent and manifest conflict. Pruitt and Kim summarize conflict as “perceived divergence of interest” (2004: 7). This definition implies that conflict is a subjective phenomenon and that the situation itself may not necessarily be conflicting, but the interpretation by involved parties may be mutually exclusive, therefore leading to conflict.

Dougherty et al. (1990) categorises conflict theories into microcosmic and macrocosmic schools of thought. Microcosmic schools tend to be sceptical of the individual’s freedom of choice and assert that individuals are sometimes not consciously motivated to participate in social and international conflict. Macrocosmic outlooks acknowledge that the individual’s actions are driven
consciously by a purpose to attain a specific outcome (Dougherty et al., 1990: 311).

Sandole (1993: 7-20) categorises conflict into four levels, namely, individual, societal/national, trans-societal/international and global levels. Sandole’s categories or levels can be understood in terms of microcosmic and macrocosmic schools of thought. For example, an individual level of understanding conflict pertains to internal dissonance, which is due to biological or psychological factors, and such conceptualization can belong to the microcosmic school of thought. Societal, trans-societal and global levels belong to the macrocosmic school of thought, because their understanding of conflict views an individual as an active participant in his reality, who is conscious about the choices he makes and the possible outcomes thereof.

The conceptualization of the present study is guided by both microcosmic and macrocosmic schools of thought, although there would be specific theories within each school of thought that are more relevant than others. This will be discussed in the following subsection, to streamline the applicable theories within this study. This thinking is informed by the premise that, even though the Ezakheni conflict was perceived as the conscious actions of involved parties, the internal psyche of participants cannot be disregarded, because it is possible that it had some influence on the actions taken.

Keashly and Warters (2000: 36–43) affirmed, and expanded on, Sandole’s work when they asked if conflict can be understood from different perspectives, namely, individual, social structure, social process and formal perspectives. Individual perspectives focus on individual behavioural factors and their role in triggering or containing conflict. Social structure perspectives view conflict as a result of the way society is organized. This perspective states that conflict is unavoidable, since people do not have equal access to political, economic and other resources and therefore people can strive to attain resources they believe are rightfully theirs in a democratic society.
Social process perspectives focus on social interactions between individuals and groups, by acknowledging that, though the seed of conflict may be present in the individual or group, development of conflict lies in the interaction. Formal perspectives focus on the inevitability of conflict, which researchers should study to discover the ‘natural’ conflict pattern, which will lead to better understanding and sustained conflict interventions.

Burton (1996:7) defined conflict as a struggle between two opposing views of interest or values which may lead to physical confrontation. Burton’s work is based on the notion that there is bound to be opposing views because of the world’s state of affairs, which does not provide equal access to resources to the world’s population. He claims that in a world where there are limited resources, there will most likely be two sides, which are those who control the resources and those that are forced to obey. In a democratic state such as South Africa, there are those who are chosen to govern and those who are governed. This sets a platform for latent conflict. Such thinking is in line with most of the macrocosmic school of thought and assists one in understanding that conflict will always be latent, but it is the responsibility of government to manage conflict so that it will not manifest itself in destructive and violent action.

The Ezakheni community conflict is about a community retaliating against its local leadership due to unmet needs. This community perceived that their basic needs, electricity, water and land, could not be met by the local municipality. It is because of this divergence of interests and intrapersonal factors of group leaders that such a conflict escalated into violent protest. In the following subsection, microcosmic and macrocosmic schools of thought have been categorized into two theoretical perspectives, namely, individual and social structure theoretical perspectives.
2.3.1 Individual perspective theories

Psychodynamic Theory

Freud's theory proposed that human behaviour was a result of unconscious dynamics (Barash, Webel, 2002: 97-134). Intrapersonal conflicts are perceived as a clash between the ego, id and superego. It is this internal tension that leads to the manifestation of conflicts through the utilization of defence mechanisms by the individual (Sandy, Boardman, Deutsch, 2000: 289-297). The theory extended to reference Thanatos or death and Eros, which implies life instincts. Freud purported that Thanatos was the reason for the internal and external destruction that individuals experience. In this case, too, the use of defence mechanisms facilitates the process of projecting the internal conflict, which can result in community conflicts (Barash et al., 2002).

If individuals experience internal dissonance, they cannot revolt against themselves, but rather will revolt against people or institutions which they perceive to be depriving them of their basic needs.

Freud did not believe in humanity’s intellectual capacity, which meant that he believed that humanity is doomed to destruction. He was criticized as being too deterministic (biologically) and giving little or no consideration to the influence of the environment on one’s development. Even though that is the case, his work did influence further research, such as that of Harold Laswell (Peleg 1999). Laswell recognized the value of understanding human motives, but felt that more attention should be given to diverting the internal motivations of conflict, in order for conflict not to manifest in violent action. He called that process “politics of prevention”. In his work during 1930, he attempted to show the persistent relationship between international conflict and personal insecurity.

It is this relationship between personal insecurity and conflicts that interests the present author, because the people that participated in the Ezakheni community conflicts had to have internal motivating factors. As much as society may create fertile ground for conflicts, it is important to recognise that such a context will not guarantee that conflict will take place, but instead
internal factors will interact with the social context and determine whether or not conflict manifests. Therefore psychodynamic theories bring to light the importance of thoroughly considering intrapersonal factors in striving to analyse and understand community conflicts.

**Frustration-Aggression Theory**

This theory assumed that aggression was always a consequence of frustration (Dougherty *et al.*, 1990:282-285). To be more specific, these theorists suggested two dogmatic views of the relationship between frustration and aggression. Aggressive behaviour is always preceded by frustration and creates readiness for aggressive behaviour (Ladd 2007).

According to Barash *et al.* (2002: 130), the hypothesis of frustration-aggression is explained as the increase of frustration due to human goals not being met. For example when human beings seek goals (such as food, services, political freedom) and are unsuccessful in their quest, it may result in increased frustration, which most likely would result in conflicts such as disputes and retaliation against those in power.

The Frustration-Aggression Theory was later modified to recognize that frustration creates a state of readiness for aggression that is an emotional state of anger and environmental factors are necessary for the aggression to manifest into conflict. Individuals’ experiences and societies’ expectations have been recognized as exerting a powerful influence on the relationship between frustration and aggression (Barash *et al.*, 2002: 132).

Ladd (2007) and Barash *et al.* (2002:132) criticised this theory as being too simplistic towards the understanding of humanity and its dynamics. They state that, although frustration may result because of discrepancies between the expected need and actual reality, societal structures can prevent frustration from turning into aggressive behaviour. The Ezakheni community members were frustrated because their basic service-delivery needs were not met by their local authority. In addition to that, they felt that there was no intention of meeting their needs, which is why they resorted to using conflict mechanisms.
Human Needs Theory

Human needs theorists believed that human behaviour is motivated by needs that human beings strive to fulfill (Sandy et al., 2000: 297-299). Human beings are perceived as striving, seeking beings. John Burton is a critical theorist within this school of thought. He stresses that unmet needs are the most frequent and serious causes of conflict (Francis, 2002: 33; Dunn 2004: 137). He proposed that investigating unmet needs can lead to a more constructive resolution (Ramsbotham 2005). In the case of the Ezakheni community, the unmet needs were categorised as service-delivery needs such as land, water and electricity.

Peleg (1999:109-114) stressed that human needs are at the core of conflict. He outlined the relationship between human needs and social structure. Social structure is important in fulfilling human needs, since they cannot be fulfilled in isolation. “Needs satisfaction is the mainspring of social change. Order and change in the world hinge upon the extent to which human needs are met or not” (Peleg, 1999:110). Peleg proposes that social institutions should be modified to fulfil the needs and not vice versa. His work further states that if individuals’ needs are not met by proper channels, such as government, which is responsible for service delivery, they will strive towards meeting their needs even if they utilise destructive actions.

Human needs theorists stress the important of satisfying basic human needs because “needs always exists, no matter what stage of development…they are universal and transcend cultures”(1999: 113).

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura, a respected theorist in this school of thought, proposes that the individual is an active being who interacts with his/her environment and that interaction through reinforcement produces learned behaviour. He believed that human behaviour could be understood as an interaction between personal factors, behavioural patterns and environmental factors (Coleman 2006: 125). Bandura did not believe that human behaviour can
have a unilateral causation of either being controlled by external factors or internal dispositions (Sandy et al., 2000: 299-300; Keashy et al., 2000: 38). This theory stresses that inter-group conflict is more than a result of misperception and misunderstanding, but is based on real differences between groups, concerning social power, access to resources and important life values (Fischer 2006: 177). The subjective process about the way an individual perceives and interprets the world can influence and exacerbate the conflict.

2.3.2 Social structure theories
Conflict arises from various social circumstances, which are sometimes independent of human intention and behaviour. While individual perspective theories are critical to consider in the study of conflict, it is important to analyse the structural circumstances that create a breeding ground for conflict because “an incompatible social relationship stems from structural conditions which produce competitive interests, value differences, and repression of basic needs” (Jeong 2008: 181). Social structure theories strive to transform the context that breeds conflict and they acknowledge the fact that there is a close relationship between them and individual perspective theories. Structure is characterised by the nature of the relations between major social actors. It is usually perceived as external to the individual, although it can set constraints for their options and choices.

Social structure theories include Karl Marx’s communist manifesto (1847); Galtung’s structural violence (1969); Pruitt and Kim’s conditions that precipitate conflict (2004). These theorists emphasise the structural conditions that create an environment which can precipitate conflict. Marx emphasizes the exploitative nature of the capitalist system, which creates competition for scarce resources amongst workers. Limited resources and inequitable distribution thereof is at the core of this condition and people’s perception (invidious comparison) of the situation also adds to the structural imbalance which promotes conflict (Anstey 1991: 40).
Galtung’s structural violence theory states that conflict is a result of interaction between contradiction, attitude and behaviour. In a manifested violent conflict, all the three components of the model have to be present. Contradiction is the underlying conflict situation; attitude is the perception that parties have about each other and the goal they are striving to achieve; and behaviour is the actual manifestation of violent behaviour (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 10-11). Galtung believed that the forces of power maintain the status quo and create a permanent imbalance of exploitation. Exploitation is a concept that is at the centre of Galtung’s theories, which is why he supports the theory about the world which is propagated by the dependency school of thought (Jacoby 2008: 40).

Pruitt and Kim (2004: 20–35) highlight conditions that are predisposing and precipitating factors for conflict, namely, features of the situation, features of the parties, features of the relationship between parties and features of the broader community and the surrounding parties. This concerns the complex relationship between groups and their environment. The environment is characterised by limited resources, people’s perceptions of limited resources (zero-sum perception), invidious comparison, status inconsistency, distrust and lack of normative consensus. Such conditions create a platform for conflict.

The social structure theories are relevant to this study because they stress the importance of social forces in understanding community conflicts. It is just as important to understand the individual factors that motivate one to take part in conflict. It is also imperative that the social circumstances that may compel an individual to act violently are understood.

The Ezakheni community conflict presented elements that could be understood by using social structure theories. Ezakheni was mainly characterised by white farmers during the apartheid regime. During the early stages of the democratic dispensation, the community that was once resettled out of Ezakheni wanted to come back, because this was the promise of the new dispensation. When more than six years of democracy passed and their
basic needs of land, houses, water, electricity and economic development were not met by the government, it created a platform for conflict. The community believed that the municipality was denying them their service-delivery needs.

2.4 Conflict management strategies

Bradshaw (2007:69) defines conflict management as an ongoing, non-specific process that addresses the observable behaviours of conflict. This explanation is challenged by Spangler (2003:23), who defines conflict management as processes that involve control, but not resolution, of deep-rooted conflict. He states that this approach is usually utilized when a ‘complete’ resolution seems impossible but an intervention to curb violence is still required. Bremner and Visser (2004) support Spangler by stating that conflict management is a process that is utilized in conflict situations in which basic social structures or systems are perceived to be legitimate, but not in situations where conflict might be the result of the breakdown or weaknesses of these social structures. For the purposes of this study, conflict management will be a facilitated intervention that assists in increasing the participant’s awareness of conflict and its impact and creates a dialogue platform from which stereotypes and other discriminatory terms may be addressed, with the intention of finding consensus on the problem at hand. This can result in conflict transformation or resolution.

Three theoretical approaches will be covered in this section, namely Human Needs (John Burton), Problem Solving (Pruitt and Kim) and Sustained Dialogue: a public peace process (Saunder). Conflict management theories will be discussed to identify the skills that may be needed by municipal officials and councillors to ensure that conflict is not perpetuated.

Human needs approach

Burton’s human needs approach stresses the importance of understanding needs in a conflict situation. He explains that unmet needs are the most frequent and serious causes of conflict. If the needs are not met the conflict may subside for a while, for numerous reasons (stalemate), but if the
resolution does not address the issue of unmet needs, the conflict will manifest again (Francis, 2002). He distinguishes between the two approaches of understanding conflict, that is, the power approach and the human needs approach. This study will focus on the human needs approach, because it has been deduced as relevant. The human needs approach views conflict as the result of the failure of societal structures to address fundamental human needs. Human needs, unlike resources, are infinite and are not in short supply. The present author can therefore conclude that if management strategies do not address the core issues of conflict, there is certainty that intervention will not be sustainable (Burton, 1990).

Anstey (1991: 176) cites Burton’s work from his book titled *Resolving Deep-rooted Conflict*, which indicates that human-needs driven conflict is different from normal types of conflicts based on competition of interest or even personality differences. These conflicts of values require skills that assist in moving beyond the “managing or regulating conflicts to reaching fundamental values and needs of parties involved” (1991:180). It is proposed that, for the above to be possible, an analytical problem-solving workshop should be facilitated by a team. This mechanism requires a team, because conflict is too complex for the burden to be on one person. The team will assist parties through infusing discussion with knowledge and information about human behaviour and conflicts generally and will keep the process within the analytical framework. This promotes resolution rather than settlement (Raider *et al.*, 2006: 701). The facilitation team is not allowed to make recommendations or assume an evaluative stance, so that participants can own the process and the outcomes, which improves sustainability.
Table 1: Differences between third-party intervention and analytical problem-solving intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional third party intervention</th>
<th>Analytical problem solving intervention</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting parties together.</td>
<td>Parties analyse their conflict in relation to human needs, values, interests, as well as that of the other party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggesting possible solutions to the parties.</td>
<td>Understanding the nature and consequences of their perceptions and those of the other party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urging parties to compromise</td>
<td>Continual costing of the consequences of their current strategies and policies and indulging in long-term forecasting concerning trends within society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on its power – enforcing any compromised settlement</td>
<td>Based on new insights, the parties can participate in searching for options which can lead to self-sustaining outcomes which satisfy the needs of all parties concerned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Nel-Weldrick, 2007:31-32

Table 1 differentiates between a third party conventional approach and the problem-solving workshop suggested by the Human Needs theorist. This approach can only be employed after the conflict has exploded into destructive behaviour.

*Problem-solving approach*
According to Pruitt and Kim (2004), problem-solving is a joint process that enables parties in conflict to find mutually acceptable solutions. During this process, parties exchange information about their interests, try to ascertain the issues that divide them, brainstorm possible alternatives that will bridge their opposing interests and evaluate these options for their sustainability. This process can be impinged on by the practical difficulty of facilitation, as
well as other issues which compound discussion, such as the divergent interests of personal agendas.

Pruitt and Kim (2004) distinguish between two outcomes of problem-solving, namely compromise, which is an agreement that is reached when both parties agree on the middle ground, and an integrative solution, which is a solution that reconciles the interests of both parties – a win/win outcome. The integrative solution outcome is the one that should be the core of any problem-solving approach that is facilitated (Bunker 2006:789). For an outcome to be achieved there needs to be some creativity and imagination from parties and facilitators. This would allow them to think divergently when they are brainstorming possible solutions. This outcome requires parties to be so open-minded that they are able to listen attentively, ascertain the underlying interest of the other party’s point of view and try to find superordinate goals.

The steps that they propose should be taken in a problem-solving approach, which will result in an integrative solution, are as follows (Pruitt and Kim 2004; Bradshaw 2007):

1. **Ask whether there is really a divergence of interest.** It is possible that the divergence of interest is illusory, because of misunderstanding between the two parties. This misunderstanding may be a result of a false impression of the other’s intention, a party believing that the other’s actions may be costly when they are not, and a party viewing the other’s intentions or goals as illegitimate when they are not (Pruitt and Kim 2004: 205). It is therefore important to clarify these perceptions and ascertain if a problem really exists.

2. **Analyse parties’ own interests and beliefs.** What are the underlying interests that are assisting parties to behave the way that they do, that is, what are the basic values and goals? The parties must then set high aspirations regarding the values or interests at hand and they must remain steadfast to them. This stage enables parties to be clear about the legitimacy of their interests before they can judge those of the other party.
3. Analyse each other’s interests and seek ways to reconcile the approach of both parties. This stage demands that both parties must be mature and do not see information sharing as a tool to destroy, but to build, a relationship.

4. Lower aspirations and search some more. Since at the above stage parties had to maintain their aspirations, this might have led to a deadlock. Therefore they need more mutually acceptable aspirations. This might suggest to both parties that they need to lower their aspirations and search together if they are to find a solution.

The approach by Pruitt and Kim (2004: 189-223) does give some direction, but it is very vague, especially when it comes to stages three and four. They are not clear whether or not this process is facilitated by the third party or the parties themselves when they see that the cost of escalating conflict is higher than trying to find a resolution.

Anstey (1991) elaborated on this process, by giving the necessary prerequisites for this process and also clarifying the fact that it is facilitated by a third party. He acknowledges that this is a framework that can serve as a guide to facilitators and that not all conflict necessarily flows through all these conflict management steps. The prerequisites for effective problem-solving are: clear and accurate communication; common objectives or goals; appropriate attitudes; information exchange; constituency flexibility and accountability; trust and fairness. Although these may not guarantee the success of the process, they do create a conducive atmosphere for success and possible resolution.

Figure one specifies the phases of problem-solving which are more practical and specific than those of Pruitt and Kim. It serves as an important tool for people working in the conflict environment. The challenge with this approach is that the author does not clarify in which type of conflict situation it would produce the best results.
**Sustained dialogue**

This is another conflict management approach that aims to create a platform for dialogue which will result in the resolution of the conflict. The premise for this approach is the importance of open communication between the parties in conflict. Such communication should be channelled appropriately because, if it is not, it can perpetuate the conflict. The phases of this model are a framework for practitioners and are not really unalterable. Sustained dialogue is a dynamic, continuous process among participants and their environment. The process is as follows (Saunders, 2001: 98 – 145):

1. **Deciding to engage:** this stage is the most difficult, because it requires one to take the plunge into unfamiliar territory which might not produce desirable results and, as such, it is most difficult to persuade parties to carry out a dialogue. The critical point is when both parties realize that the costs of not acting will be greater than the potential costs of acting. Sometimes this means that parties will be allowed to exhaust their fighting ability so as to see the need to begin talks. Once such a
revelation has taken place the other challenge will be for parties to accept that sustainable dialogue can be an instrument for change. The task at this stage requires answering the following questions:

- **Who will take the initiative?** Different people take the initiative by inviting a convener because the conflict impacts on their lives. What is critical, though, is the identity of the convener.
- **Who has the will and the capacity to engage in dialogue?** The task is to find sensitive and reflective individuals who are ready to talk; these individuals must be representative of their community.
- **Who can overcome the resistance of potential participants to meet and how can they overcome it?**
- **The context of the dialogue – what space, what conditions will govern it?** The process needs to be explained to participants in detail, so elucidation is imperative in creating a dialogue space, that is, the venue, time, agenda and group size need to be discussed at the invitation stage, to increase transparency and trust in the process.
- **Who can precipitate the decision to meet and how?**

The above processes should ideally take place separately with individual parties, to give them time to warm up to the idea, so that when they jointly engage they can at least be optimistic towards the dialogue.

2. **Mapping and naming problems and relationship:** Participants in this process do not just focus on problems but, more importantly, on the relationships that cause them. The task of stage two is the following:

- **Mapping the problems and relationships** - this would take most of the time because it is a thorough story-telling by both parties and it should be treated with respect by all that are participating in the process.
- **Narrowing and sharpening** – this would give guidance to the issues that are a priority to the participants.
- **Making the transition to stage three** – this is when participants may resist moving on, for various reasons, such as failing to accept that
the other party may have experienced pain similar to theirs and have needs similar to theirs. Participants may fear that further discussions will trigger feelings of injustice, grievance and anger. They may not have the emotional intelligence to accept such communication. The convener needs to address these issues holistically, because they determine the progress of the dialogue.

This process is intense, so it may require that groups are given homework, to assist participants in internalizing the process and channelling their reflections.

3. **Probing problems and relationships to choose a direction:** Participants are ready to work but still have their guard up. Even if this is the case, the task at this stage is challenging:

   - Confirming the problem they would work on. The participants should be guided to deal with one problem at a time.
   - Probing problems that they have decided to deal with in a way that brings to the surface the dynamics of the relationship affecting those problems.
   - Framing broad choices of direction to take in trying to resolve the problem.
   - Evaluating the choices and continuously eliminating the less appropriate ones.
   - Assessing where present relationships are going, the consequences of inaction and determining the need to change them by asking fundamental questions, such as: do we have the will within the group to design a way for changing destructive relationships; are the consequences of doing nothing worse than the consequences of trying to move in the direction of choice? (Saunders, 2001:123).

Determining the will to change is the ultimate goal of stage three and only participants can do that, but the convener can set the stage for them to explore their own readiness. With the guidance of the convener, the
participants will eventually realize that whatever might need to be done to resolve the conflict may not be possible in the current relationship between each other. Participants must progress to the fourth stage when they are all ready and able to think and work together in an operational way.

4. **Scenario-building - experiencing a changing relationship:** The specific aims of this stage are twofold, that is, to stimulate members into a fresh way of thinking and relating to each other, that will facilitate change and designing an actual scenario for change (Saunders, 2001: 129). It must be noted that the participants are representatives of a larger group. They must have a clear strategy for communicating with the larger group. Designing the scenario allows participants to play it out and think about the uniqueness of a real situation. The questions that they ask each other may make it easy to communicate confidently, clearly and comprehensively with the community at large, with themselves and on the strategy. Some of the tactics they can utilize in designing a scenario for change may be listing obstacles that can hinder their change and listing steps to erode those obstacles. Participants identify who might take those steps and they arrange these actions in an orderly sequence. Transformation can be seen to be present when participants ask questions such as ‘what can we do’ or ‘what can I do to ensure that you succeed in what you want to’.

5. **Acting together to make change happen:** One of the biggest challenges in this field, besides implementation, is to take the transforming insights and experiences that were generated within a small group dialogue into the community at large, to change relationships there. Whatever activities the participants were embarking on were within a safe and secure environment, where participants thought about what should be done to change the situation. Reality forces participants with novel ideas to think about what can actually be done. At this point, participants are taking inventory of the environment they must work in and the resources that they would need to fulfill such a strategy. If there are institutions and individuals that they should communicate with in order to understand the institutional life of the community, that process must be refined at this stage. What is also critical for the participants is
to define their role within the community at large. Saunders (2001) suggested that the group should respond to the following questions to ascertain their readiness for implementation:

- Is the situation in the community such that an attempt to change seems workable?
- What capacities and resources can the group marshal?
- Are the conditions ripe to launch the first part of the change strategy?
- The individuals and groups within the strategy – are they ready to participate in such steps?
- Are there preparatory steps that still need to be taken with individuals to help them improve their effectiveness in the process of change?

The sustained dialogue process promotes the cultivation of the culture of conflict management within the community, so that any intervention process can be sustained. This ideology was presented by Bradshaw (1994), when he recommended that people within the community could be identified as part of the conflict management process to be capacitated with skills and knowledge to address community conflict before they escalate into violence. The present author appreciates this approach, because it has a human-needs element about it. It also confirmed the present author’s thinking that “conflicts take place within relationships therefore relationships are a critical factor in management, resolution and transformation.”

2.5 Conclusion

The role of service delivery in causing conflict is somehow recognized, even though it is under the ambit of ‘human need’ and resources that individuals are forever seeking. This is a challenge, because if service delivery is not clearly articulated and discussed within the conflict theory framework, it may be possible that service delivery may never be viewed as a tool for conflict management, especially when dealing with a conflict of interests. More work still needs to be done in contextualizing conflict theories, because it may eliminate the uncertainty of whether ‘human needs’ or ‘resources’ can actually
be translated as service delivery. Otherwise, striving to understand the role of service delivery in escalating conflict within a conflict theory framework is merely an educated guess.

Conflict studies is a fairly young field, but the emphasis of the theories is more on national, international and global conflicts, which neglects intrastate community conflicts. This is a cause for concern, because conflict can be managed more on a micro scale than on a macro scale, but such theoretical investment is lacking. It is clear that a theoretical gap exists. Conflict is perceived to be the results of various factors, namely, politics, inaccessible resources and differing ideologies and these are factors that are difficult to influence. This means that there is a high possibility that conflict strategies emanating from studying conflicts caused by these sources may be ambitious and unachievable. Service delivery, however, is within reach and investing more in it can reap positive rewards.

Anstey (1991) depicts the importance of understanding structure in the study of conflict. He stresses the importance of communal values in breeding conflict, which is the community defence mechanism when it faces challenges of frustrated needs. This assumption is in line with the observational learning theory approach of thinking. Threats to important values (communal conflict) increase the likelihood of conflict, because each group holds its values in high regard. When these values are tampered with, respective groups protect them at all costs. Hanf (1989) is cited as categorizing communal conflict into relative deprivation and symbolic deprivation. Information is power and who holds it controls the situation and its probable outcomes. Controlling the national media and suppressing the views of the opposition can assist those in power to maintain their power for a considerable time. Not sharing vital information not only maintains the power struggle but also causes mistrust, which can result in a conflict situation. This mistrust may lead to ambiguity, which will also result in conflict, because previously acceptable behaviour may no longer be acceptable, since there are no clear ways (norms) of doing things, due to relationships breaking down (Anstey, 1991:40).
The Ezakheni conflict can be understood by using the conflict theories that have been briefly explained above. These theories are not strong enough to reveal if there is a relationship between community conflict and service delivery. It can be deduced from the theories chosen that the unmet needs that result in conflict can be service delivery needs. It is only when the causes of the conflict are understood that effective strategies can be employed to resolve or transform the conflict.
CHAPTER THREE:
EZAKHENI COMMUNITY PROFILE

3.1 Introduction

The democratic government assumed office in 1994 and inherited a fragmented and disjointed public service. Right from the outset, government proved its intentions of reforming the public service. However, and equally important, government was intent on ensuring the continuity of the rendering of service rendering. According to the White Paper on the Transformation of Service Delivery, in 1995 it was estimated that approximately eight million people from previously disadvantaged communities did not have adequate sanitary facilities, and that only 50 percent of South Africans had waterborne sewerage (Ramsingh 2008: 6-10). In 1996, it was estimated that approximately 15 to 516 million people did not have piped water. In 1994, it was reported that urban areas in South Africa are better provided with higher levels of service (White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service 1995: 7).

Conversely, the biggest backlogs are in rural areas, where services were virtually non-existent before 1994. If one has to compare the urban areas with the rural areas with respect to public service delivery, a number of differences become evident. The Constitution and the policies of the current South African government prioritize service delivery to all South Africans. To redress imbalances and inequities in service delivery in South Africa, the three spheres of government (national, provincial and municipal) are expected to broaden access to services at costs that are affordable to the public (National Conference on Public Service Delivery: Conference Report, 1997). Municipalities are also required to design appropriate levels of service to meet their customers’ needs and demands (White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery 1997). They are required to adopt innovative and efficient approaches to redress imbalances and inequities in service delivery (Intergovernmental Fiscal Review, 2001: 11).
Chapter Three discusses the selected case study as it relates to service delivery conflict in the Ezakheni Community. Bearing in mind the principal overarching provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), related legislations and policy frameworks for local government, this treatise proposes a hypothetical model for the reform and improvement of municipal service delivery.

The work conducted by CDE and CDS on community protest has served as a basis for this study, but with limited influence. The study will therefore take an explorative nature, which means that the research process will aim to explore the relationship between service delivery and community conflict. The findings will serve as a scientific basis for future studies.

3.2 Community profile

Ladysmith is located on the banks of KwaZulu-Natal's Klip River. Proclaimed in 1850, it was named after the Spanish wife of Sir Harry Smith (IDP, 2008/9: 7). It became a prosperous staging-post for fortune-hunters en route to the Transvaal gold-fields and diamond discoveries at Kimberley. Ladysmith made world headlines at the end of the 19th century, when it was besieged for 118 days during the most crucial stage of the Anglo-Boer/South African War. Its historic heritage is its main claim to fame, with many fascinating sites to explore (IDP, 2008/9: 7).

The Emnambithi/Ladysmith municipal area (KZ232) is made up of the following areas, towns, and settlements:

- the former Ladysmith TLC area, including Steadville and Ezakheni
- the former Colenso TLC area, including Inkanyezi
- two settlements administered by the Abantungwa-Kolwa Traditional Authority
- other settlements and privately owned farmlands include: Roosboom, St Chads, Rantjesvlakte, Roodepoort, Doornhoek, Emgazini, Mathondwane, Driefontein, Kirktullock, Watersmeet, Matteni, Burford, Watershed, Compensation, Hobsland, Matiwaneskop, Jononskop,
Besters, Bluebank, Elandslaagte, Van Reenen, St Joseph’s Mission, Cremin, Maria Ratzchitz Mission, Steincoalspruit, Fort Mistake and Lusitania. The municipality stretches over an area of 3020 square kilometres.

Ladysmith was rife with political conflict before the first democratic elections and after. The political conflict was between the IFP and the ANC. It was more deadly at Steadsville, which is a ward adjacent to Ezakheni. This political conflict might have been interpreted as a possible precursor of the Ezakheni conflict, especially since there was serious political intolerance in the area.

Figure 2: EMnambithi/Ladysmith Municipal Area depicted from the IDP (2007/8:9)

Ezakheni is a community that is part of the Ladysmith/Mnambithi municipality, which has 25 wards. It forms a large portion of Ward Eleven. This community was predominantly a farming community in the past, dominated by white farmers and Africans were farm dwellers. According to municipal official (Interview 23/06/2010) who were interviewed during the data collection
process, the people of Ezakheni were relocated during the apartheid resettlement strategies in the early 1950s and the land was made available to a few farmers. Public services within the area was structurally weak and scattered around Ladysmith, because the farmers could easily access these services. This resulted in Ward Eleven (Ezakheni/KwaMthandi) being characterized by backlogs in service delivery, because there were no community members to render services such as formal houses, water, electricity and sanitation, until after 1990, when the community members decided to return forcefully.

**Table 2: Population Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>120 486 (females)</td>
<td>104 966 (males)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial breakdown</td>
<td>89.9% (202 749)</td>
<td>Black African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1% (2 241)</td>
<td>Coloured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.1% (11 505)</td>
<td>Indian/Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4% (8 962)</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EMnambithi/Ladysmith Municipal Area depicted from the IDP (2007/8:9)**

Table 2 provides information on population, racial breakdown and gender composition of Emnambithi, which can have a considerable effect on demographics for future and present planning. The Black African group is the largest, making up 89.9% (202 749), and needs to be considered in decision-making processes (Ladysmith Municipal IDP 2007/8:9). All the reported conflicts within this municipality have been taking place within previously disadvantaged communities, which are predominantly African. Ezakheni is one of most remote and rural wards within this municipality and is predominantly inhabited by African communities.
Table 3: Age-group Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 1</td>
<td>10 097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 5</td>
<td>20 038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 14</td>
<td>47 270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 17</td>
<td>15 934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 – 35</td>
<td>70 479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 65</td>
<td>53 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66+</td>
<td>8 345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMnambithi/Ladysmith Municipal Area depicted from the IDP (2007/8:10)

Table 3 shows that the largest population is between the ages of 18 and 35 years. This is a critical period in a person’s life, when an individual is becoming an adult and taking responsibility for his own livelihood. It is important that an individual engages in activities that will improve his/her livelihood, for example, joining the tertiary institutions or employment sectors. It is important that the environment should provide opportunities to the young adults. In a community where such opportunities are not available or easily accessible, it can make a person vulnerable to social ills. The conflict was started by a group of young people within the above-mentioned age-group, when they resolved to reclaim the land which they believed that their families were evicted from during the apartheid era. Noting and considering this age group can assist planners in developing socio-economic programmes to improve community livelihoods (Ladysmith Municipal IDP 2007/8:11).

Table 4: Household income per month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None – R800</td>
<td>28 086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R801 – R3 200</td>
<td>14 508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 200 +</td>
<td>7 935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMnambithi/Ladysmith Municipal Area depicted from the IDP (2007/8:11)
Table 4 provides levels of income, which determines the extent of welfare required by an area and the ability of families to meet basic needs such as food, shelter and basic amenities. According to Statistics South Africa 2007, the estimated poverty line is R322 per person per month. This means that R800 feeds a family of not more than three members. It is clear from Table 4 that the majority of the population within this municipality lives below the poverty line, because the majority earns R800 or less. Some have no income at all Therefore it is possible for people to fall prey to social ills. Although the COGTA report 2009 states that poverty does not necessarily breed service delivery protests, it cannot be said that it does not create fertile ground for conflict (EMnambithi/Ladysmith Municipal IDP 2007/8:12).

Graph 1: Infrastructure Breakdown

Adapted from Emnambithi IDP 207/08:14

The information in Tables 2, 3, and 4 gives a picture of this municipality. Africans form the largest part of the community and this group earns minimal to no salary. This makes them a critical area of consideration when it comes to decision-making. To add to the above conditions is the quality of services that are delivered within the municipality. Access to water and sanitation is a challenge throughout the Uthukela district. It is a critical service delivery
output to improving the livelihood of local communities. The municipality should to engage the district, to ensure that water becomes a reality for communities, especially rural ones.

This profile breakdown makes the municipality vulnerable to service delivery conflict because of the apparent disparities. According to the Integrated Development Plan community sessions, the community cited these service delivery components as critical to their livelihood. This implies that they expect such services. Another challenge facing this municipality is the administration co-ordination between the local municipality, district municipality and provincial government. For example, the local municipality might not be responsible for delivering services such as water or land restitution, but the aggrieved community will use the local platform to stage their grievance. Therefore intergovernmental liaison is central in addressing and managing service delivery related community conflicts. COGTA (2009: 51) cites intergovernmental co-operation as one of the major factors that halts service delivery within a municipality. Even though policies are developed to mandate intergovernmental relationships, but it is the responsibility of the political and administrative leadership to ensure that policies are translated into action plans.

3.3 Background to the area of research

Ezakheni is a township within the Ladysmith (Emnambithi) local municipality which is part of the Uthukela district municipality, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It has a history of political violence that stemmed from past friction between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC) (Sinani Investigative Report 2007). The targeted conflict for this study is the role that is played by poor service delivery in terms of the Land Restitution Programme of the Department of Land Affairs, lack of local services to the ‘relocated’ township, Ezakheni, and poor governance from local councillors and provincial departments. The poor implementation of the Land Restitution Program triggered the conflict between the Zondi Clan and the KwaMthandi Trustees.
The Zondi clan were all the community members who resided at Ezakheni KwaMthandi, but paid allegiance to Inkosi Mkhipheni Zondi, while KwaMthandi Trustees were all the beneficiaries of the land that was bought by the Siwinile-Mthandi Trust. According to COGTA officials, the people who were relocated to Ezakheni were initially from Pietermaritzburg, which meant that they paid allegiance to Inkosi Nsikayezwe Zondi. When they were moved, his predecessor would visit the area to address traditional issues. These people were removed from Ezakheni because it was to be utilised for agrarian purposes. It was this condition that created an opportunity for another person to claim to be a traditional leader. In this case, the person was Inkosi Mkhipheni Zondi. He recruited people who would pay allegiance to him by promoting illegal land grabs during the facilitation of the land restitution process, which meant an increase in the number of people that supported him within the Ezakheni community. This posed a threat to the service delivery processes.

According to Land Affairs documentation (COGTA 2006), the KwaMthandi Trustees had applied for land and been granted the land at Ezakheni, but because this process was not implemented properly by the officials of Land Affairs, it left room for the Zondi Clan to take advantage of the process for their own benefit. This was perpetuated by the lack of services to the affected areas, while the surrounding areas in Ladysmith municipality were benefitting from local services such as electricity, roads and water.

Past intervention strategies by the Peace Secretariat, the Ladysmith police and the Department of Land Affairs were perceived by the protagonists as discriminatory, which aggravated the conflict. This meant that the conflict was not only about the Zondi clan fighting with the Mthandi Trustees, but also about the protagonists revolting against perceived discrimination from local government, police, the Department of Land Affairs and COGTA.

Local research studies by CDE concerning Phumelela and Khutsong townships and CDS concerning the Phomolong and Matjhabeng townships, have provided the writer with a foundation to build on in terms of studying the
role of service delivery, particularly at local and provincial government level, in escalating and mediating community conflicts. This information will be utilised, taking into cognisance the different geographical dynamics of the above studies to the present case study.

3.4 Motivation for Ezakheni as a case study

Ezakheni (KwaMthandi) is one of many communities within KwaZulu-Natal which experience service delivery difficulties, characterized by poor infrastructure, a high rate of illiteracy and delayed development. This community still has only two schools, gravel roads, a non-existent sanitation system and no electricity or water. The residents find it difficult to access public services necessary for their livelihood.

The community of Ezakheni had been rife with violence from late 1996 until the violence subsided around the middle of 2007. According to documentation by Xaba (2006), the conflict was suspected to be related to traditional disputes. An investigation conducted by Xaba, commissioned by COGTA, confirmed that traditional issues were part of the causes of the conflict. However, after studying the documentation, and facilitating community dialogue sessions with the affected community, service delivery could not be ruled out as a possible cause. The conflict did not start because the community members initially assumed that violence was their best strategy, though such factors shall be described in detail in the presentation of the findings (Chapter Five), but because of the interventions by different stakeholders which were not handled according to public service standards.

The traditional issues, cited in the Xaba (2006) report, did influence the conflict. However, since the conflict has been protracted for over ten years, many other factors started to interplay, which exacerbated the conflict. These were factors such as poor reaction by police to cases reported, poor service delivery by the municipality, particularly by the ward councillor, and poor service by public officials from the Department of Land Affairs and COGTA. The issues were compounded by the remoteness of the area, which made it
possible for community members to stage ambush attacks. These involved the Trustees and the Zondi clan. It was the interplay of such socio-dynamic factors that made Ezakheni a plausible and suitable case study for the present research.

Ezakheni is a “laboratory of community life” (Babbie 2006:56), which can be investigated using the case study method. This is still a challenge, because the information concerning the social issues is mostly oral and referencing would be difficult. Another factor is that there is limited academic material that integrates service delivery and conflict studies. This poses an obstacle to obtaining a theoretical framework for the study.

The factors that related to the land restitution process were not addressed according to policy mandate. There are three key pillars in South Africa’s post-1994 Land Reform Policy that reflect the constitutional pronouncement concerning land matters. These are restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. The key aim of land restitution is to restore rights to land to communities or individuals who were dispossessed of their land since June 1913, through racially motivated laws or practices. This is a rights-driven approach, since its overall objective is land rights restoration. However, skeptics claim that this has been done at the expense of attaining socio-economic development for the claimants. Land redistribution aims to provide communities with a grant they can use to purchase land for agricultural purposes, through the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme. Access to land for residential purposes is financed through the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG2) programme. The third pillar of the land reform policy is tenure reform. The broad objective of the tenure policy is to create a unitary non-racial system of legal tenure rights in South Africa’s former homelands. This has recently been legislated through the Communal Land Rights Act (CLRA) 2004, which aims to accord legal recognition of insecure land tenure rights. Tenure and restitution reforms are land rights based mechanisms established to either restore or accord legal recognition to informal land tenure regimes that African communities in South Africa hold. The mechanisms established in this process are highly legalistic, judicious and often disenfranchising for the target communities (Land Reform
Policy of 1997). The Ezakheni community experienced poor facilitation of these processes.

Interestingly, there has been an increase in media reports about service delivery protest. This was supported by the CDE, CDS and COGTA reports. According to the COGTA report of 2009, the increase has been steady from 2004 but there was a sharp decrease in 2006 and thereafter the increase continued. The sharp decrease in 2006 could not be attributed to specific variables because relevant studies were not conducted. The following figures show the increase in a chronological manner and compare the intensity within provinces.

Graph 2: Major service delivery protest by year (COGTA 2009: 12)

The COGTA reports cited the Municipal IQ, tool which stated that it is difficult to predict the occurrence of these conflicts because they do not necessarily occur in all municipality wards with the worst service delivery backlogs. There must be differences which create fertile ground for service delivery conflict to take place. The reports cite the interplay of factors such as population growth, urbanization, housing administration, lack of, or poor, complaints systems for the municipality, inability of councillors to interact properly with their wards and lack of service delivery monitoring systems within municipalities. Even
with the interplay of such factors, it does not guarantee the manifestation of such conflicts.

Graph 3: Service delivery protest distribution within provinces (COGTA 2009:11)

This pie-chart depicts KZN as being the fifth leading province in service delivery protest. This can be attributed to many factors, but the one that the researcher experienced directly was the lack of reporting of such phenomena. Municipalities are experiencing difficulties in predicting or reporting these protests, because of the lack of capacity that exists and other factors. This information motivated the researcher to investigate the role of service delivery within Ezakheni.

3.5 Limitations of the research
A challenge in this phase of the process was the translation of transcripts, because it meant that the information would be recorded according to the interpretation of the researcher. Thus language posed a threat to the objectivity of the study. According to Neuman (2006: 464) “it is advantageous
to be aware of this limitation because it shows the researcher’s awareness of subjectivity”.

The present applied both conceptualisation and coding as an integral part of data collection and data analysis. It was difficult to guide participants into the questioning. Beginning with a general question, the researcher had to think quickly and provide control of the focus group. The participants began to share ideas and it had to be ensured that each participant had a chance to be heard. The researcher had to provide direction on the comments related to one question, summarize them and ensure that there was agreement with the summary. The researcher tried to capitalize on unanticipated comments, probe appropriately and allow participants to move flexibly into unplanned aspects of the topic, in order to understand their thinking.

Another difficulty was the gathering of primary information for the study, particularly the case study of Ezakheni. It was noted during the research process that such a conflict had not been reported by the local and general media. This made the verification process difficult, but the researcher tried to verify the information during the data collection process by checking the information given by both focus groups with local and provincial government officials. In this manner, the information received was plausible in subjectivity and factuality. One must state that this was the greatest threat to the study.

3.6 Conclusion

Chapter Three has given the demographics of the targeted community, Ezakheni, which has displayed the possible socio-economic factors that may have influenced the conflict, but only Chapter Five will confirm whether or not such factors had an influence.

Chapter Four will describe the research methodology.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction
This chapter gives a brief overview of the concepts that influenced the data collection and analysis process. It was critical that such a chapter be included, because it assists in guiding the reader's understanding of the researcher and the chosen research processes. The methodology was chosen through a stringent process, which will ensure that the data collection and analysis added value to the research findings.

The data collection process was conducted from 15 to 28 June 2010. The researcher initially contacted the leaders of both groups telephonically and secured an appointment to explain the process thoroughly. There was initial resistance from the Zondi clan leadership to participate or lobby for his group to participate. This hesitation stemmed from the perceptions that the Zondis had about the researcher's Departmental intervention in the matter, which they said discriminated against them. The researcher explained that the research process is different from Departmental intervention, even though it may guide future interventions. The Trustees accepted the opportunity because of their dire need to tell their story.

4.2 Methodology framework overview
This section will introduce the theoretical framework that influences the methodology of the study. The primary aim of this study is to explore the effect poor service delivery had on escalating violence in the Ezakheni community. Since the study will be explorative in nature, the research methodology utilized will be qualitative. The choice of a qualitative research approach is influenced by the fact that this study will be the first within the Ezakheni community. Qualitative research methodology analyses social actions with the aim of trying to understand social interactions and the processes of creating and maintaining meaning in the world. In order for
qualitative researchers to achieve their aim, they should spend a considerable
amount of time with the research participants in their natural setting,
observing their interactions and non-verbal communication (Descombe, 2003:
267).

The argument of this research is that social science differs drastically from
natural science and therefore should be studied in ways that manage to
capture the complexity of human nature (Neuman 2006: 151). The research
approach analyses what is termed ‘soft data’, namely words, impressions,
photographs, symbols and interactions. Qualitative research is underpinned
by interpretive epistemology which is the knowledge that strives to understand
social life and discover how people create meaning. It is contrary to
positivism, which strives for the objective truth. This means that the
researcher is part of the research process, developing meaning along with the
research participants, while noting that only an individual can make sense of
his/her own context and that one can better understand individual meaning
from a perspective of a participant because it is subjectively constructed.

This approach is important when the unit of analysis is a group of people who
have been badly treated. The participants will be vulnerable and do not need
a researcher who will patronize their plight. Data from the focus groups and
individual interviews will be summarised and presented in Chapter Five. The
analysis process is just as challenging as the data collection process,
because analyzing soft data is more complicated than analyzing hard data.
Soft data is analysed through conceptualisation, coding and finding common
themes in the information received from participants.

The research used non-probability sampling, which is particularly purposeful,
and quota sampling because, for qualitative research, it is the relevance to the
research topic of the participants that is important, rather than their
representativeness. The data collection process will therefore target the
protagonist of the conflicts, the government officials who work or have
knowledge of the conflict, community leadership and ordinary community
members. Since qualitative research strives to understand human behaviour
from an individual’s perspective, which will result in generating a new hypothesis, the data collection process was designed as follows:

1. There were separate focus groups, comprising both the conflicting parties, namely the Trustees and the Zondi clan representatives. Each focus group dealt with three questions, namely the background to the conflict, if the conflict had any connections to poor service delivery and if the conflict could have been prevented. It must be noted that earlier planning for this study had projected the use of one focus group for both the Zondi clan and the Trustees representatives, but after evaluating the circumstance on the group, it was resolved that it would be more fruitful to have two separate focus groups.

2. Individual interviews with community members, officials from local government, COGTA, Land Affairs and political leadership were facilitated. The interviews gave an in-depth understanding of the issue of Ezakheni and allowed the researcher to comprehend the subject matter. The interview questions were guided by the focus group questions, but the researcher had an opportunity to probe for clarification and elaboration in order to get more information out of the individual interviewee.

3. Documentation such as the investigation report commissioned by COGTA in 2006 and the IDP of EMnambithi will be studied in order to assist with the demographic and socio-economic background to the case study.

4.3 Focus groups as data collection tools

Focus groups are structured as small group interviews. According to Richardson & Rabiee (2001:53), focus groups are “focused” in two ways. First, the persons being interviewed are similar in some way (e.g. limited resource family members as a group, family service providers as a group and local officials as a group). Second, the purpose of the interview is to gather information about a particular topic guided by a set of focused questions.
Participants hear and interact with each other and the leader. This yields different information than if people were interviewed individually.

A focus group is a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being ‘focused’ on a given topic. Participants in this type of research are selected using the criteria that they would have something to say on the topic, are within the age-range, have similar socio-characteristics and would be comfortable talking to the interviewer and each other (Richardson & Rabiee 2001).

The purpose of focus groups is to develop a broad and deep understanding rather than a quantitative summary. Focus groups are a highly effective method for “listening” to clientele and non-users of extension programmes. The emphasis is on insights, responses and opinions. Usually, there are eight to 12 participants. Multiple groups are recommended, since each discussion is highly influenced by who is involved and the comments that surface. Focus groups typically run for one to two hours.

4.4 Individual interviews as data collection tools
The basic individual interview is one of the most frequently used methods of data collection within qualitative research, where the researcher is provided with greater flexibility, iteration and continuity to elicit more information from the interviewee (Babbie and Mouton 289-293). This study has chosen this method to expand on the information that will be ascertained from focus groups and also to assist in the verification process. The platform of individual interviews allows the researcher not only to focus on the content of the conversation but on all the other factors that guide the conversation. The flexibility of this process enables the researcher to probe in depth into the subject matter. Such a process can even guide and improve the direction of data collection and analysis of the study.
All the interviews of this study were conducted in an area where the interviewee felt comfortable. For example, the interviews with community members were conducted at their homes or at their workplace. The interviews with the councillor and all the public officials were conducted at their respective offices. The interviews were all conducted in Zulu.

4.5 Data analysis
Qualitative research and, in particular, focus-group interviews generate large quantities of data, which tend to overwhelm novice as well as experienced researchers. A one-hour interview could easily take five to six hours to transcribe in full, leading to 30 to 40 pages of transcripts. Thus a central aim of data analysis is to reduce data. Data analysis consists of a number of stages, namely examining, categorizing and tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence, in order to address the initial goal of the study. Krueger & Casey (2000) build on this concept and suggest that the purpose should drive the analysis; they believe that ‘analysis begins by going back to the intention of the study and survival requires a clear fix on the purpose of the study’.

Following these concepts, the current researcher considered the first step in establishing a trail of evidence as a clear procedure of data analysis, so that the process is clearly documented and understood. This step would allow another researcher to verify the findings; it safeguards against selective perception and increases the rigour of the study. In order to achieve this objective, sufficient data was collected to constitute a trail of evidence. Although the main source of data analysis was the recorded, spoken language derived from the interview, reflection about the interview, the settings and capturing the non-verbal communication expressed by the members of the groups added a valuable dimension to the construction and analysis of data. This record was in the form of an audiotape. The transcripts and observational notes were written immediately after each focus group interview, even though taking notes is difficult at times, but the recording was a back-up mechanism. Recordings are extremely helpful for managing the
data, making sense of what is going on, getting rid of extra and irrelevant information and travelling safely through the maze of large and complicated paths of information.

The process of qualitative analysis aims to explore meaning of a situation rather than the search for objective truth, which is the focus on by quantitative research. Strauss & Corbin (1998) describe analysis as the interplay between researchers and data. They acknowledge that there is an extent of subjective selection and interpretation of the generated data. It is important to acknowledge that regardless of the type of research (qualitative or quantitative) an extent of subjectivity exists.

In order to minimize the potential bias introduced into analyzing and interpreting focus group data, Krueger & Casey (2000) point out that the analysis should be systematic, sequential, verifiable and continuous. Following this path provides a trail of evidence, as well as increasing the extent of dependability, consistency and conformability of the data, important issues for assessing the quality of qualitative data (Secker et al., 1995).

4.6 Challenges of the data collection process

The study had three critical limitations which hindered the research process. Firstly was the availability of written information and the verification of such verbal information. Information from respondents could only be verified through public officials, which is a challenge because this increased the subjectivity of the information provided. The second limitation, which was only realised once in the field, was the translation of concepts like service delivery and conflict. The translation at times meant providing examples, in order to improve the participants’ understanding. This resulted in participants paraphrasing what they had heard and forced the researcher to probe further. The final limitation was the literacy level of some of the participants. This was experienced during individual interviews, because there were no fellow group-members to elaborate further on their behalf.
4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodology used and the appropriate research design utilised that sought to give credibility to the entire research process, based on the aims and objectives of the study. The researcher attempted to justify her choice of research methodology tools. By the application of inductive logic and the multi-method approach, the researcher has substantiated the objectivity, reliability and the credibility of the entire research process.
CHAPTER FIVE:
PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction
Chapter Five will present the research findings. The data presentation will incorporate the analysis of data, even though there will be a summative analysis as the last section of the chapter. The chapter will be categorised into two sections, namely, the response from the focus group and the individual interviews.

The first section of this chapter gives the biographical data of the participants. The second section presents the background to the conflict, as narrated by the parties from the focus groups. This section is critical to the reader’s understanding of the area and the case study and therefore the narration was summarised minimally, because the researcher wanted the readers to have their own experience of this information. Chapter Five gives the reader an opportunity to conceptualise the case study. Some of the themes that emerged from the study were: miscommunication, poor administration of land restitution, power struggle and poor coordination of service delivery.

5.2 Presentation of data
5.2.1 Biographical data
The participants from both groups were asked if they wanted to meet as one focus group or separate focus groups. It was interesting that the groups decided to meet separately, because it implied that the issues between the two groups had not been settled to the satisfaction of either group.
Each group contained five community members, ranging in age from about 30 to about 70. The Zondi group was males only and the Trustees had two females and three males. The participants that were representing the Trustees had been in the area for more than fifteen years, while the Zondi representatives had some members who had been in the area for less than 10 years, but most members had been residing in the area for as long as the
Trustees. The sessions took the whole day for both groups, approximately five hours, from 10:00 in the morning to 15:00 in the afternoon.

5.2.2 Focus group data
There were two focus groups namely the Zondi Clan and Mthandi Trustees. The focus groups were interviewed separately because of the underlying tension that still exists between these two groups. The researcher decided to separate the focus groups to make participants comfortable with sharing information. The researcher was conscious of the possibility that the information shared in the focus group could be misinterpreted by another group, leading to further conflict. The narration from the focus groups will be summarised, but will leave room for the story to represent the perceptions of the speaker and his group. This is important in the context of this study, because one of the research objectives it to ascertain the perception of community members and officials about the role of service delivery in triggering community conflicts.

5.2.3 Background information to the conflict
*The Induna who was representing the Zondis narrated the following:* In August 1995 the community members, who were forcefully removed from the area due to apartheid resettlement mandates, decided to return to Ezakheni forcefully, which led to their being arrested. Thirty-six members were charged for the illegal invasion and occupation of Hammanskraal. Before convictions were made, the residents told the police that they were on the land at the Inkosi’s instruction. When sent to look for the Inkosi, who was at Ezakheni, it was discovered that the Inkosi was already at the scene where they were arrested. The next day the Inkosi hired his lawyer to bail them out, at R50 a person. They were informed by the lawyer that it was illegal to go back to Ezakheni but they still returned to Ezakheni because they had no other place to go. It was then that an official from Land Claims advised the community to form the Trust in order to be assisted by the government to buy land. The Inkosi was to join the Trust as a member of the community and not as the Inkosi. During the first election of Trustees (1995), the Inkosi was elected to the committee. At the meeting with the Magistrate at Ezakheni Court, 14
representatives were advised to reduce their number by one and they became 13. The Inkosi was not present at that meeting. Land Claims officials suggested that the Inkosi become the chairperson, but he was absent, which led to another prominent community member (Mr Mazibuko) becoming chairperson. This is when the conflict started, because the Inkosi felt that he was excluded from the processes. The relationship with the Inkosi detoriated and the process of registration was delayed. It was then decided that documents should be transferred from Zondi’s lawyer to another one, who also delayed the process. Several meetings were held, but with little result. Inkosi Zondi has since died and Land Affairs has acquired land for his people.

The current chairperson of the Siwinile-Mthandi Trust narrated the following: In 1984 there were people living on Ezakheni (KwaMthandi’s) farm – Hammanskraal. These people were under Inkosi Nsikayezwe Zondi of Mpumuza (Pietermaritzburg). Because people had no ownership of land, they were removed from Hammanskraal during the apartheid resettlement times. Inkosi Nsikayezwe Zondi fought for his people, but did not succeed, because he did not own the land.

In July 1984 people were given the option to move to Pietermaritzburg, but this became impossible. The resolution was to relocate them to Steadsville. This also became a problem, because people had livestock. People were then scattered. Those who had livestock went to Qinisa location, which is a rural community within the Indaka local municipality. The Qinisa community fought the Mthandi’s because the Mthandi’s wanted to retain their allegiance to Inkosi Nsikayezwe Zondi (Mpumuza Traditional Authourity) and refused to change to the Mthembu clan.

In 1994, political violence erupted and some people resolved to move to Maphevana and Tsakane locations. The group of disposed community members started to host informal community meetings, which dealt with discussing the issue of how to reclaim Ezakheni from the white farmers. On 19 August 1995, 11 community members decided to build structures at KwaMthandi and people started to invade the land illegally. On 10 October
1995 the Ezakheni and Ladysmith police came to arrest people, charging them with illegal land invasion. Each person was given bail to the value of R50. Zondi, who had visited the camping residents to show support for their initiative, arranged that his lawyer bail them out. It was at this time that Zondi started calling himself the Inkosi of Mpumuza. This confused the people, since they knew the Inkosi of Mpumuza as Inkosi Nsikayezwe Zondi. The Department of Land Affairs advised that they could be assisted to purchase land but not for individuals. This led to the decision to form a Trust. Inkosi Zondi refused to attend certain meetings, but eventually agreed to be regarded as a member of the community in order to fall under the Trust. The Magistrate explained that the Trust would have the same governing powers as that of the Inkosi over his traditional authority.

On 7 January 1997 buses hired by Inkosi Zondi brought people from other areas to the meeting. A complaint was logged with the Department of Land Affairs, because there was no clarity as to how the people were involved. Zondi’s lawyer was present and people were not allowed to have any input. Elections were controlled by the Department of Land Affairs and those elected had to be voted for, which led to a Trust committee of 14 members. The committee was given the task of demarcating the area and suggesting possible names for the Trust. Inkosi Zondi wanted to use the Mpumuza name, but this was not accepted since there was already a traditional authority named Mpumuza. He then elected himself as chairman and Mr Mazibuko to be deputy chair which was not accepted. Mr Mazibuko became chairman and Mr Shezi and Inkosi Zondi became deputies. The issue of a name was debated and some members supported the Inkosi. The conflict started during this time and it led to group polarisation. The Department of Land Affairs suggested that the Mpumuza-Mthandi Trust name be used for registration purposes until the community agreed on a new name. It was also clarified that the Trust was to be private and not tribal. After that, Inkosi Zondi refused to attend any Trust-related meetings, claiming that only he as Inkosi had the right to call meetings. A decision was made to replace Inkosi Zondi. His lawyer delayed in registering the Trust and was replaced by another lawyer. On 30 July 1997 a meeting was held at the Mnambithi Police Station with the
Department of Land Affairs and no resolution was reached. Inkosi Zondi withdrew from the Trust because trustees would not agree that he become the “umbrella” and be in charge of the Trust. This resulted in the formation of a new Trust, which co-opted three other members.

The community decided to call the Trust the Siwinile-Mthandi Trust. This was advertised in “Ilanga” for grievances within 22 days and not one was received. Later on, the Department of Land Affairs advised the Trustees at a meeting that the Trust could not be registered because Inkosi Zondi opposed the buying of land. The conflict started because there was no clarity on the procedures followed and there were no documents opposing the registration of the Trust. Government officials were seen to be siding with the Inkosi. Numerous meetings were held to resolve the matter. This resulted in a resolution that the Trust should allow 104 ha of land, on which Inkosi Zondi had already placed eight families, to be demarcated as his, while the Trust should re-apply to purchase a larger portion of land. The further purchasing of land was to be dependent on the increased number of people. The agreement was signed by the trustees and representatives of Inkosi Zondi. This agreement was read to the community at a meeting which involved the local police, the municipality and the Department of Land Affairs. The community was given a chance to pay allegiance to the Inkosi, with the condition that government would not pay for relocating. Inkosi Zondi claimed that the Trust was stealing his people. A petition was therefore signed by the community and a meeting was held to sift the members. A new list was developed and was to be compared to the old one.

The community had to sign the new list and the Department of Land Affairs and local police were to control the process. An official from Land Affairs raised the point that the security of individuals was important and they feared that people would be attacked. The Department had 228 buyers on the list and Bouwer farm was bought under the name Siwinile-Mthandi Trust.

The installation of Inkosi Zondi was raised and people continued to invade Trust land, disregarding an agreement. On 8 June the Department of
Traditional Affairs and Local Government explained to the Trustees that the Inkosi was to be installed and his installation could not be disputed. The Inkosi was installed on 20 June by the MEC for Local Government and Traditional Affairs. This gave the Inkosi authority to proceed with illegal land grabs and turned this conflict into a political one.

On 20 August 1998, Inkosi Zondi arranged for the police to interrogate the Siwinile-Mthandi Trust executive because he claimed that the Trustees refused to allow his people to come to his installation function. Land grabs continued and the Department of Land Affairs could not intervene on private Trust land. The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs was therefore approached. Land grabs became a problem and it was decided that the women approach the new-comers to discuss the matter.

On 8 October 1998 gunshots were reported. From that day the peace was destroyed. A gang of men started hiding out in the mountains and gunshots were heard day and night. The situation became worse when the gang started to enter residential areas and attack people. This led to numerous killings. During December 1998, the chairperson and four other members were attacked and their homes were burnt. Police cases on all incidents were opened but nothing was done. Even though nothing materialised from the cases, due to police ineffectiveness, it did not stop the police from arresting Trust members who were thought to have killed one of the Inkosi’s people. Law enforcement was perceived as one-sided.

The Trustees wrote to the Minister of Justice (Dullar Omar) informing him of the situation. The response was that the matter had been referred to the National Secretariat. Meetings were facilitated by the Peace Secretariat, but there was no progress, since no convictions were obtained.

On 13 December 1999 the Department of Safety & Security visited the area, but the situation was not resolved. Trustees decided that they would not participate in any further conflict resolution because they were not getting favourable results. In July 2002 the Title Deed issue was raised and representatives from the Department of Land Affairs read it to the community.
One of the Traditional Leaders disrespected the Trustees, claiming that they did not respect the Inkosi’s orders and land was taken because of the segregation between the Trustees and the Zondis. An official from COGTA clarified that the land belonged to the Trust and he was merely sent to investigate the 104 ha that the Trust was willing to give to Zondi.

In 2004 the Trustees arranged to call the Inkosi of the Mpumuza, but this process was stopped by Inkosi Zondi’s izinduna (traditional councillors). During October 2004, a letter was written to the MEC for COGTA regarding the problem with Inkosi Zondi. Zondi said that if the land belonged to the Trust then the Trustees must get the court to remove the people. During January 2005 it was discovered that Inkosi Zondi was landless. On 10 September 2005 the local police withdrew from the situation, because Inkosi Zondi had sent his lawyer to investigate the matter. A letter was read to the community stating that Inkosi Zondi had no rights to Siwinile-Mthandi Trust land and if illegal invasions continued through him, his leadership powers would be removed. The meeting resolved, further, that a court order to remove illegal inhabitants in the Mthandi area should be applied for.

It can be concluded that the matter in which the land issue was handled led to the conflict. The land restitution process was dealt with in a manner which contributed to the conflict, instead of mediating it.

5.2.4 Interpretation of background data

The following interpretation will consider the understanding of conflict in relation to service delivery.

The trustees expressed disappointment at the manner in which their issue was addressed by government departments, in general, and the Department of Land Affairs, the police and COGTA, in particular. They said that they felt like outcasts who are not assisted by anyone. Their understanding of service delivery was expressed as government striving to assist communities and people in every way. The issue of lives having to be lost before some sort of
intervention was made indicated poor service delivery or lack thereof. Even after the Trustees complained, the local councillor did not listen, nor did the local police arrest guilty people. The MEC installed the Inkosi and the Department of Land Affairs gave very vague communications instead of being transparent about the issue. One respondent said “we are like people living in Zimbabwe, a lawless land. It does not seem like the government even cares about us because they would not have allowed the situation to get out of hand”.

The Trustees explained that so much time had been spent fighting that not much development had taken place in the area. The roads were still not in good condition, water was still a challenge and many other services had not been attended to. It was during the month of August 2010 that electricity was being installed in people’s homes. This is a backlog, comparatively speaking.

The Zondis regarded service delivery as a process in which a community is given proper roads, clinics, schools, low-cost housing, water and electricity. In this ward, the Ezakheni community was experiencing a minimum of these services. After the incorporation of community members within the Trust, and the purchase of extra land to be used for farming, there has been hope for the community, because they have received assistance from local government. This will help preserve the livelihood of the community, but it is still not enough. It was not the lack of services that caused the conflict but it was the lack of understanding, by both parties, of the land restitution process. The Trust did not want to respect the Inkosi and this angered his people. One respondent stated that “service delivery is different from land issues”.

Both groups expressed the view that conflict in the community could have been prevented. The Zondi representative said that if COGTA had purchased land for the Inkosi and his followers, the move would have ensured that the Inkosi was accorded the respect that he deserved from the Trustees, government officials and his people. The Trustees stressed that the government should have responded sooner. Cases opened should have been attended to promptly by the police and the Inkosi should not have been
installed. This would have prevented the conflict. Respondents were making statements such as “we applied for land through legal processes but we were forced to compromise because the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs failed to own up to their responsibility”; “the Trust committee were disrespectful towards traditional leadership; even after the Inkosi was properly installed, they failed to respect the traditional by-laws”.

When respondents were asked if they thought the conflict could escalate and manifest in violence, the responses were as follows: “the conflict subsided when Inkosi died; I guess his followers no longer had the courage to pursue the violence”; “since we have additional land that is used for farming and the Zondi people have been given an opportunity to be reincorporated into the modified Trust, peace will prevail. But the traditional authority needs to be dismantled and the arrest of murderers needs to be finalised”.

Local government service delivery was not perceived as having played a role in this conflict. The local councillor was informed about the impending violence, but he did not see it as his duty to intervene. Pruitt and Kim (2006: 8) stated that the situation was prone to conflict when parties perceived a divergence of interest. In this case, the Zondi clan and Trust wanted ownership over the land for different reasons. Such reasons were mutually exclusive. If we consider the human needs theory, the needs of both parties might have been mutually exclusive, but they were still needs that had value for both parties. Therefore, when the needs were not attainable it was logical that frustration would result. Each party concentrated their attention on eliminating the other (Anstey 1991: 4).

5.3 Individual interviews
Questions for individual interviews were very detailed in comparison to those for focus groups. These questions were trying to ascertain individual responses concerning the research question, that is, the relationship between conflict and service delivery. The response of the individual interviews will be separated according to the category of respondents, namely community
members, community leadership and public officials. The researcher interviewed five community members, and one representative from the categories of public officials.

The following responses from individual interviews implied the following: poor understanding of the land restitution process; a power struggle between the Trust and inkosi Zondi; poor service rendered by COGTA, Land Affairs, the local councillor and police; inadequate resources. These are perceived as playing a role in triggering the conflict. The dilemma for the researcher is whether or not these factors can be categorised as service delivery or concepts outside of service delivery. The following questions strove to get the respondents to explain service delivery according to their own understandings.

5.3.1 Community respondents

Community respondents were selected with the help of the local councillor and municipal officials. After explaining the purpose of the research the councillor assisted in selecting the community participants. The community members were given an opportunity to consent to their participation in the study. Those that said they were uncomfortable were released from participating in the study. When the researcher requested a woman for an interview she was scared and was released, even after everything had been explained to her. Women in this area have been scared for a long time. The aim was to identify the themes that are common among the answers of the respondents.

Question one: How long have the respondents lived at Ezakheni?

The first question tried to ascertain how long the respondents had lived in the area and if they experienced this community conflict directly or indirectly. It was important to ascertain from the onset if the participants were responding from personal experience or social fables. The three respondents said that they experienced the conflict directly because they were part of the initial group that resolved to reclaim the land in 1995. The other two respondents started to live at Ezakheni in 2001, because the Inkosi gave them the land to
build their homes and therefore they did not experience the conflict directly. These respondents had been residing in the area for more than nine years and therefore their responses are valuable because they have direct or indirect experiences of the conflict.

*Question two: What cause the Ezakheni community conflict?*

The second question went to the source of the conflict. It was important that the reasons for the conflict be identified, to determine common themes among the respondents. The reasons thought to be the cause of the conflict were common among the respondents, with minor differences. The first two respondents felt that the conflict started because people failed or refused to understand the process of land restitution. During the apartheid era, the community of KwaMthandi were relocated to other areas, so that the land could be used for farming. These people suffered abuse at the hands of other communities, who claimed that they were not affiliated with the same political organisation which led to their considering going back to reclaim their land. A group of young people who were descendants of the community that was relocated decided to take this task upon themselves. This group of started liaising with the local councillor (IFP) and the Department of Land Affairs. The Department of Land Affairs assisted in the formulation of the Siwinile-Mthandi Trust. While these young people were camping at the targeted site, a man by the name of Mkhipheni Zondi approached them and applauded their efforts to fight for their rights. Later on, the same man claimed to be the Inkosi. He stated that the land restitution process would not be finalised if the area did not have an Inkosi. He emphatically claimed to be the Inkosi and that the land was under his management. The local councillor supported him because he was affiliated with the IFP. Matters were exacerbated when the former MEC for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (the late Inkosi Ngubane) installed Mkhipheni Zondi as Inkosi in that area, an action which was contested by the Trust beneficiaries. The conflict was perceived to be politically motivated, because all of those who supported the illegal installation of the Inkosi were affiliated with the IFP and the Trust committee was perceived as being ANC.
The local police were thought to be siding with the Inkosi and refused to handle any complaints from the Trust beneficiaries. Land Affairs failed to clarify the matter, so the conflict continued until it took lives. COGTA further promoted the conflict when it forcefully installed Inkosi Zondi, in spite of complaints. The Department of Land Affairs started to side with the Inkosi out of fear, because he was categorised as dangerous and he started having private meetings with the Department to contest the process of land restitution. This was condoned by the Department instead of its clarifying the process of land restitution. The Trustees were terrorised by the representatives of the Zondi clan but incidents were not attended to by the police.

The three respondents blamed political intolerance between the Trust and the Zondi representatives, carelessness of public servants in rendering services and a lack of integrity and resources which a large number of people expect to meet their needs. It was emphasised by these respondents that people were allowed by the police and Departmental officials to exploit the land restitution process and this resulted in the community conflict. This would not have taken place if people were not given false information by Departmental officials, e.g. that government could purchase land for individuals and that the land restitution process could not be finalised if the area was not under Inkosi ownership. The Inkosi was allowed to contest such a process and the information was not fed back to the beneficiaries.

*Question three: Did service delivery have a role in triggering the community conflict?*

Respondents were asked what service delivery was, according to their understanding, and if it had a role in the conflict. This question was difficult for the respondents to answer because it was subjective, according to their understanding of the matter being scrutinised. It became apparent that the definition of service delivery is not clear for a lay person in the South African context. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) speaks of public service delivery, which should be responsive to people’s needs. This can be
translated to mean that all spheres of government are responsible for service delivery, even though the responsibility for basic services has been placed with local government.

The respondents were of the opinion that service delivery is the government bringing resources to the people and the communities. It concerns government making sure that community members are employed in order to sustain their livelihoods. Since this area is mostly used for agricultural purposes, service delivery will be about government ensuring that agrarian resources are available for people to use. Government can assist by making sure that community committees such as ward forums and Community Police Forums (CPF) are established to deal with community needs. The researcher does not think service delivery had a role in the conflict. The conflict was caused by people’s arrogance and their refusal to accept the correct processes of land restitution. Maybe government could have responded earlier. When the respondent was asked which level of government he was referring to, he said all levels.

Service delivery was further described as the provision of electricity, water, roads, community halls, early education centres and jobs. This should be done by the national government, because they were voted for. These services do not adequately exist in the area. If all these services were in place, conflict might not have existed. Service delivery includes ensuring that communities have community centres. This community has no community halls and there is only one school. The conflict was not caused by the deficiency of such services, but the lack of understanding of the land restitution processes and the ability of other parties to exploit this situation.

The researcher asked if this was not a tall order for government and the respondents said it was not, because they had voted for them and it had been promised. The author was not sure whether poor services or lack of services influenced the conflicts. She thought it was just people’s ignorant ways that perpetuated the conflict and the fact that people are selfish and hypocritical. The provision of resources to the community at large is part of political
commitment. After being voted into power such political commitment must therefore turn to action. Land provision was part of that commitment.

All the respondents agreed that service delivery was not the trigger for the conflict. This made the researcher wonder why the land restitution process, the investigation of police cases and the intervention by COGTA was not considered service delivery by the respondents, because these can contribute to ensuring high-quality livelihoods for communities (Craythorne 2006; Memela et al., 2008).

**Question four: Can the conflict start again in the future?**

Since the conflict has not been destructive since 2007, and various interventions have taken place since then, it was important that a question about the possible future manifestation of the conflict should be posed to the respondents.

The first respondent said that he did not think the conflict could start again, because the issue of land had been resolved by Land Affairs when it purchased additional land and the Zondi faction accepted being incorporated into the Trust. The previous councillor (IFP) has since died and a new councillor (ANC) was voted for during the by-election process. The current councillor is also the chairperson of the Trust. The Inkosi that led the Zondi (Amanteshe) clan has died. The family of the deceased Inkosi reject the notion that their family is a traditional family.

The current councillor has assisted by lobbying the local municipality to provide resources for agricultural purposes, even though these resources will not be adequate to ensure the effective utilisation of the farm. Provincial government must be lobbied for further assistance. Something needs to be done about the illegal traditional council that continues to function in the area. It can be said that fertile ground exists for further conflict.

The second respondent felt that conflict can start again, since the issue of land has not been properly finalised. COGTA needs to assist in dismantling
the traditional leadership, because it continues to confuse. COGTA created this situation and therefore they need to address it. Government should not have installed the Inkosi; they should have bought land for him so that he could rule over it. The response time of government is sometimes long. The government should have intervened earlier, before the conflict became deadly. COGTA only responded after the Trust beneficiaries wrote a complaint to national government, but were still tardy in intervening, because their initial reaction was to outsource an investigative study. The conflict had not subsided and only later did they involve the Department of Community Safety and Liaison to facilitate a peace dialogue. This process took more than three years and this delay fuelled the conflict.

Since a new councillor has been elected there is constant community interaction, where issues are discussed openly. The Department of Housing and Transport needs to start projects to build proper housing and roads and increase job opportunities. There is only one school in the area and more are needed. People who were openly violent have since died and therefore there are minimal chances of this conflict re-occurring.

It is evident from the above responses that it was government intervention that assisted in curbing the conflict, with the help of fate, that is, the Inkosi passing away. Ayissi (2001) speaks about the importance of understanding conflict processes and intervening at an appropriate time. The phase that she uses as most proper for intervention is when the conflict has reached a stalemate or when the conflict is ripe. She states that environmental factors cannot be taken for granted in the management and resolution of conflicts. After 2008, when the Inkosi died and the conflict reached a stalemate, it was possible for the different departments to intervene and provide what was previously lacking. The challenge in this context was that the local government did not see it as their responsibility to intervene, because they regarded the issue as being that of the Department of Land Affairs. They failed to understand that, as a government closest to the people in matters such as this, it may not be the delivery of their services which will curb the
conflict, but their co-ordination and leadership in the process of ensuring that the conflict is managed.

5.3.2 Responses from various government officials

Municipal official

This official represented the municipality’s political leadership. He revealed that he had never lived at KwaMthandi, but at Steadville, which is opposite it. He is an ANC political activist within the area. The conflict caused by the issue of land, which started during the previous regime, when people who were living in the area were relocated for the minority white farmers to engage in commercial agriculture. When the people who were relocated wanted their land ownership back, opportunism crept in. This conflict was not politically motivated, as Ladysmith area is one of the most politically stable locations or wards. The conflict was over the contestation of land between the Trust beneficiaries and the Inkosi, with his followers. When the Inkosi died there was no contestation for his position, but his family claimed that they did not know of the inherited traditional authority (ubukhosi) within their family. This ward is dominated by the ANC and now has an ANC councillor.

The area has never before experienced protest against service delivery and there have been various developments since the issue of land was finalised. Infrastructures such as roads and bridges have been constructed, but there is still lack of water. Electricity is at present being installed in the ward. Even after Land Affairs bought more land, it was the municipality which assisted with the infrastructure to ensure that the land was utilised for agrarian purposes. This is because of the new councillor in the area. A factor that influenced the conflict was the delay in service provision and lack of transparency by departments interacting with the community. The municipal official does not think that conflict will start again, because people have realised that violence is not the solution.

The conflict could have been prevented if the other spheres of government, more particularly provincial, had consulted with local government in relation to the installation of the Inkosi and the land restitution process. These spheres of
government are not present to monitor the impact of their service and monitoring is the role of local government. Therefore local government should be fully involved in the development or planning phase of community projects.

Ward Councilor
The Ward Councillor felt that the conflict emanated from a poor understanding of land restitution processes. Initially it was explained to people that the process of acquiring land would force the community to establish a Trust committee that would manage (with the Department of Land Affairs) the procedures of acquiring this land. Since people were eager to acquire land, they adopted the idea. When Inkosi Zondi appeared to claim his traditional authority people were confused. People started to doubt the legitimacy of the Trust. They claimed that the committee was defrauding them and making them disrespect the traditional authority. It must be remembered that such people came from rural areas, where the Inkosi’s word was law and it was easy for them to believe all the utterances of the Inkosi. It did not help matters that the Trust committee was made up of young people who were perceived as clueless and disrespectful of traditional ways.

Service delivery played an important role in perpetuating the conflict. For example, the land grabs were reported to the police, but they did not respond in time. The consequence was people being killed. The murder rate at this time increased drastically, but investigation was not carried out to the satisfaction of the complainants. Sometimes the station commander would phone the Inkosi when he received a complaint. Thereafter the Inkosi would remove all the evidence. It was not clear if the station commander collaborated with the alleged criminals. The number of illegal firearms increased and this contributed to the conflict.

The previous councillors also contributed. When the attacks started, all the Trust beneficiaries were arrested (about 36) but Inkosi Zondi was not arrested. The court dismissed the case. The Zondis were not arrested, even with evidence. The Pietermaritzburg police helped by responding to the letter written to Dullar Omar, who was the then Minister. The local police used to
terrorise the Trust beneficiaries by saying that it was not their land but the land of Shaka. The delay by COGTA concerning the status of the traditional authority was another important contributor, even though there was a cease-fire. If COGTA does not address the matter of the Zondi traditional leadership, it may start the conflict all over again.

The conflict was eventually resolved through the buying of extra land and incorporating people who were not beneficiaries of the Trust. One can assume that it would not have gone this far if these interventions were implemented earlier. One cannot underestimate the impact that the death of the Inkosi had on resolving the conflict. Land Affairs employees were scared when the Inkosi was alive, so their communication was very vague and this confused people. COGTA needs to publicly announce the status of traditional leadership, as it has been liaising with the Department of Land Affairs for 10 years, without taking action.

**Police officer**

The respondent was not stationed in Ladysmith at the time of the conflict but has been involved since 2006, when the Department of Community Safety and Liaison facilitated intervention processes. The conflict was partly the result of fraud from officials of Land Affairs and COGTA. It is not clear what they hoped to gain by providing ambiguous information to the community. The police official supported his fraud accusation by stating that some of the Land Affairs officials who worked on the case had been suspended for fraud. Unfortunately, the police are usually blamed for everything that goes wrong in the community and it will be difficult to verify some of the complaints that have been laid against police officials who were present at that time.

The provincial police office introduced a task team during the peak time of the conflict, which was between 2005 and 2006. This task team was to improve local visible policing and objectively investigate the case. This task team worked closely with the community, which is why it is thought that the violence will not manifest again.
COGTA official
The COGTA official indicated that he might not be clear about the beginning of the conflict, because it only came to his attention at the end of 2005, when he received correspondence from the National Office of Justice, which delegated the matter to his office. During that time, the COGTA official was still the parliamentary liaison officer for the provincial MEC.

An investigator was commissioned to inquire into the matter and he reported that this conflict resulted from a landless Inkosi being installed on Trust land. The Inkosi then enforced his traditional by-laws, against the people’s wishes. He managed to get support and that exacerbated matters. Since the Department was still being structured, the case was referred to Community Safety and Liaison to facilitate a dialogue programme with the community.

The COGTA official felt that the conflict was political and service delivery was merely a tool for achieving political ends. The Inkosi was affiliated to the IFP and this municipality is an ANC stronghold. It was a strategic move on the part of the IFP to forcefully install Inkosi against the principles of government. It should be remembered that before the 2004 elections, the IFP was the government of KZN. In a way, no-one could hold them accountable for the decision they made. One can assume that the way service was provided to the community was according to political affiliation, but this is just an assumption. At least this was the complaint that one received from the beneficiaries of the Trust and Inkosi Zondi representatives. It is currently difficult to dismantle the traditional authority, because it is the responsibility of the MEC and is a sensitive issue.

Land Affairs official
The conflict was a result of poor understanding between the parties that wanted similar results, namely land for relocation. Although the land restitution process was explained to the parties, it was evident through their interaction with the Department of Land Affairs that little was understood. Initially, when the buying of land was contested, the Inkosi wanted land that he would rule. When this did not happen he complained to the Trust committee. This led to a
new committee being established and the Inkosi being incorporated as part of the new committee. This was still not satisfactory to him. The issue was simple, but with being lives lost and hatred growing, it ended up as a complicated situation.

Service delivery, to a certain extent, contributed, but to what extent is not clear. The Departmental challenge was the difference in the information that was provided to the same group. The transparency in the service provided slowly became opaque. Some of the officials that worked this case have been suspended due to fraud, but they cannot be exonerated from influencing the conflict. The influence of service in this conflict cannot be clearly pinpointed, because it is relative to the individual that is presenting it.

5.4 Interpretation of data

It was difficult to interpret this data because of its narrative nature. The disadvantage of the qualitative methodology is the volume of information received which the researcher must sift through in order to create themes or codes that will address the hypothesis. The overarching themes of this study were conflict and service delivery. Throughout the data collection process, the researcher had to be conscious of the aim of the research, which tried to ascertain the role of poor service delivery in community conflicts. It was therefore important to assess whether or not the respondents actually thought that the conflict actually existed. The assumptions that underpinned the study were that the conflict would not have taken place if the community was afforded the platform for participative governance and the departments working in the area adopted an integrated approach. It was evident from the data that the departments were rendering services in a disintegrated manner. This resulted in miscommunication that compounded the conflict.

The themes that were common throughout the data collection process were the following (Neuman 2006):

- **Miscommunication:** the Departments of Co-operative Governance and Land Affairs communicated ambiguously. This led to the division
between conflicting parties. It is evident from the data that the Inkosi believed that he could ‘own’ the Trust land and this was not clarified, which added to the confusion. The Trustees clearly stated that COGTA failed to listen to their warnings about the installation of the Inkosi on their land. These are just some of the examples of miscommunication.

- **Poor administration of land restitution**: this issue of was at the core of the conflict, because most respondents stated that if it was not for it, the conflict would not have occurred.

- **Poor co-ordination of the rendering government services**: the process of land restitution brought with it many difficulties that needed to be addressed in an integrated manner. As much as the Constitution (1996) and the Intergovernmental Relations Act mandates departments to render services in a co-ordinated fashion, the Department of Land Affairs and COGTA did not co-ordinate their services, nor did they involve the local municipality. It was therefore easy for the state departments to pass the blame concerning responsibility for the conflict.

- **Power struggle among the local leadership**: a power struggle can be easily fuelled by miscommunication or poor communication, because it creates the foundation for propaganda.

These themes are compatible with the themes that were the result of service delivery studies conducted by CDE and CDS. This implies that there is indeed a role that service delivery plays in community conflicts. It is important to link this implication with the understanding that the types of service delivery conflict studied had differences. The studies by CDE and CDS involved conflicts during which the community revolted against local leadership, whereas the conflict in Ezakheni was about the conflicting parties striving to eliminate the other in order to achieve their desired goals.

The conflict resulted from “perceived divergence of interest” (Pruitt and Kim 2004: 7). Both the parties in this conflict wanted to own land, but both had different and mutually exclusive ways of obtaining the land they wanted.
Anstey (1991) elaborated on the reasons behind the conflict, saying that not only would parties perceive their goals as mutually exclusive, but they would employ tactics that would aim to eliminate the opposing party so that they would be free to fulfil their ambition. This is what happened at Ezakheni.

The themes categorized above, namely miscommunication, poor administration of the land restitution process, poor co-ordination of government services and the power struggle, can result in internal dissonance and polarisation of groups (Sandy et al., 2000; Barash et al., 2002). This leads to the interpretation that resources are not enough for all the parties that want them. It is therefore critical that local leadership should create a dialogue platform, on which parties can openly discuss these issues and maybe even arrive at win-win strategies.

Peleg (1999: 114) explained that needs are at the core of social change and it is known that at the end of each conflict lies social change. Analysing the themes that were prevalent in the background information given by both groups it was clear that both parties wanted change. Both parties wanted to be the owners of land. A crisis resulted when their approaches differed. The Trustees wanted the land to benefit the previously relocated communities, whilst the Inkosi wanted the land to affirm his authority over ‘his’ people. In summary, the Trustees wanted to practise democracy, where everyone owned a piece of land, whilst the Inkosi wanted to dictate over ‘his’ people. These concepts could not co-exist in one environment without triggering conflict.

The social structure theorist would support this premise, because it can be translated to mean that the conflict is latent and only needs a triggering event to precipitate violence. It is important to note the role that is played by socio-economical or historical factors in setting the platform (Jeong 2008). The Ezakheni community is a previously disadvantaged community, with members who felt robbed when they were forcefully relocated from their land, to accommodate a selected minority of farmers who had power. This history set the stage for conflict. Aggression can be aimed at the authority in power or at
any group that can reduce the chances of attaining the goal of the possession of scarce resources. In the case of Ezakheni, both parties were obstacles to each other’s ambition to possess land.

The discussion thus far has shown that the factors cited by the respondents did, indeed, trigger and sustain the conflict. The resolution of the conflict resulted from various factors, namely the death of the Inkosi, the purchase of additional land and the facilitation of community dialogue. Not all of these can be categorized as service delivery components. This is where the researcher faced a dilemma. Can the components that have been listed by the respondents be categorised as service delivery and can it be concluded that service delivery impacted on the Ezakheni community conflict?

Land restitution is part of the services which are rendered by government. In some communities such programmes are more critical than other basic services. In Ezakheni, this was a fact. It was important for the residents to be given shelter before they could be provided with basic services. It was the administration of this process that was, in fact, an important factor in service delivery. It can be concluded that land restitution was important for the community of Ezakheni but it cannot be concluded that it was the only key factor that triggered the community conflict. Individual internal factors also played key roles in this conflict. Human needs clearly require that all services that are necessary for a person’s livelihood are to be provided. The services of the police, the government officials, the local councillor and the peace committee are all very important in sustaining the livelihood of the community.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) states that local government has a critical role to play in ensuring community sustainability and livelihood. The lack or poor involvement of local government through its official or local council can be categorised as poor service delivery. Local government might not have been responsible for the actual rendering of the services, but they are responsible for the co-ordination of services through their IDP processes. It was noted that the IDP 2007/2008 and current IDP did not have a section that addressed land restitution programmes, when such programmes are
prevalent within this municipality. Service delivery played a role in the conflict. The role might not be clearly defined and outlined because of the limitations of this study, but it also cannot be neglected or ignored.

5.5 Conclusion

It is difficult to conceptualise service delivery and even more difficult to get the respondents to understand it. The data did confirm that it was the services rendered by government departments that were at the core of the conflict, but did not mutually exclude other variables that might have played a role in this conflict.

Throughout this study, the researcher has found it difficult to find theoretical literature that would prove or disprove the hypothesis of the study. This is because this type of conflict is a relatively young field. The study has not fully explored the dynamics of this field. The literature concentrated on individual, societal and international conflicts. There is insufficient information in the literature on societal conflict to verify the role of service delivery, especially in a country like South Africa, where service delivery backlogs are a great challenge.

The data-capturing process was difficult, because of the language barrier. Some concepts, more specifically service delivery, were hard for the researcher to explain without imposing her own personal understanding, because of the lack of Zulu terminology. The study otherwise proceeded smoothly.
CHAPTER SIX:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction
The aim of this study was to explore the effect of poor service delivery on escalating community conflict at Ezakheni. The assumptions that supported the study were that if services were delivered appropriately and according to government standards, the conflict could have been curbed. It was further assumed that if government officials and community leaders (ward councillor and traditional leaders) played their role by facilitating mediation sessions, the conflict could have been prevented. This assumption brought to the forefront the issue of capacity of government officials and community leaders, that is, do they possess the relevant skills and capacity to intervene in a conflict situation, whether latent or manifest?

Service delivery was defined to mean local service delivery. In order to place it within the context of this study, it was conceptualised according to the broad principles which are stated in the Constitution of South Africa (1996), section 152, which defined the role of local government as “to give priority to basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community, and participate in national and provincial programmes”. These services must be provided according to the standards set out in public service legislation. It was important to consider the role of the provincial department because of its involvement in the case of the Ezakheni community conflict. Service delivery will therefore include the provision of such services, namely, land restitution, traditional matters and safety issues.

The community respondents stated categorically that the conflict resulted from the land restitution process. The dilemma that faced the researcher is whether or not to categorise land restitution as service delivery. Chapter Six will summarise the findings of the study within the context of what has been stated above and the objectives of the study.
6.2 Objectives of the study
This section will discuss and conclude on the findings, according to the objectives that have been set out in Chapter One. The objectives of the study were to:

- Investigate the relationship between service delivery and conflict.
- Ascertain the perceptions of community members with regards to the role of service delivery in the escalation of conflict.
- Ascertain the perceptions of public servants and other stakeholders, with regards to the role of service delivery in the escalation of conflict.
- Propose recommendations for future interventions.

6.2.1 The investigation and the perceptions of the role of service delivery in triggering and escalating community conflicts
The response from the two focus groups and from individual interviews confirmed, to an extent, that service delivery triggered the Ezakheni community conflict. The Trustees stressed that the mismanagement of the land reform process, the poor investigation of criminal cases, the lack of intervention from local government (Ladysmith Municipality) and the installation of the Inkosi were at the root of the community conflict. It was the result of these factors that led to basic services being delayed in this particular community. Basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation could not be delivered to a community whose ownership was still contested, because this made it difficult to determine the population of the area. This influenced the planning processes.

The White Paper on Transformation of Public Services Act (1997) states that all public services should strive to improve the livelihood of communities, be efficient and effective and be cost-effective. This includes services provided by all spheres of the South African government. Therefore there is no department that is exempted from working according to these standards. Such a declaration is an extension of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Taking the legal mandates into consideration, the services which were introduced to Ezakheni could have been rendered more efficiently
and appropriately. It can be concluded that it was not the lack of service delivery that was a challenge but the lack of proper co-ordination. The Constitution (1996) promotes co-operative government and even established the Intergovernmental Relation Framework Act (2005) that aims to guide co-operative governance because all the spheres of government need each other in order to succeed in delivering their services. Although this act was not in existence when the conflict started, the Prevention of Illegal Eviction Act (1997) states clearly that municipalities have the responsibility of mediating land-related disputes within their jurisdiction and the Constitution (1996) promotes co-operative governance. This meant that the municipality should have been involved from the beginning, because the consequences of the finalisation of the land reform will impact on their IDP.

Most conflict theories concern people fighting for scarce resources; people perceive incompatible goals and miscommunication as the sources of conflict. In the case of Ezakheni all of the above were present and revolving around the land reform issue. It can be concluded that land acquisition was perceived as an important starting point in improving one’s livelihood. Once people were able to ‘own’ land it could have created a base from which they could strive for more, so a person who was hindering the process was hindering people’s progress. It must be brought to the reader’s attention that all the respondents believed that the ownership of land was at the core of their benefitting from basic government services such as electricity, water and sanitation. Through land ownership they could even benefit when the government implement a low-cost housing programme.

The public service officials did not think that the conflict was a result of poor service delivery. Only the police official and the ward councillor felt there was a link between service delivery and the Ezakheni community conflict. This is because the police official was not stationed at Ladysmith during the peak of the conflict, which means he could not be implicated, and the ward councillor is the chairperson of the Trust, which means that whatever he said would be in line with the Trustees’ response. The other public service officials, namely the municipal, COGTA and Land Affairs officials stated that the conflict was a
result of the poor understanding by the community of the land reform processes. It is possible that they were protecting the integrity of their departments. These respondents cited political intolerance and poor investigation of cases by the police, which is an enigma, because such factors are integral to service delivery.

Investigating the role of poor service delivery is not an easy process, because it can end up implicating public officials and government departments, but it is still necessary for the improvement of community safety and stability.

6.2.2 Recurring themes in the study
The data had certain recurring themes, which will be summarised in this section. These themes are land reform, interference by traditional authority, poor co-ordination for the implementation of public programmes, miscommunication, poor governance and political interference.

**Land Reform**
The government’s land reform policy has three components, namely restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. In 2001, the government reaffirmed its commitment to redistribute 30 percent of agricultural land to blacks. While the government land reform process has improved, it is still far too slow for the beneficiaries. There are challenges with the budget for this programme, because the demands of the community far out-weigh the budget for land reform, which means that the government is struggling to meet its own political and developmental objectives. According to the research conducted by CDE, the target of 30 percent will only be reached after 54 years because of budgetary constraints. In view of CDE research “a quite extraordinary increase in budget, official capacity, interdepartmental co-ordination, and political consensus will be required to achieve governments targets” (CDE 2005: 13). This translates to the reality that many rural claims are still outstanding because they are complex, cost more and are expensive to process because of the large number of claimants. This means processing these claims will be much more demanding than providing standard financial
compensation packages in urban areas. This is the backdrop to the land reform context, of which the Ezakheni land reform process is part. It is clear that with the national constraints that have been presented in the CDE research report, facilitating this programme will be a challenge for the Department of Land Affairs before it even considers the unique circumstances of the area in question.

It can be concluded that since there are many black South Africans who are strongly attached to South African land, in general, and the lands of their ancestors, in particular, the number of claims can be overwhelming for the responsible department. Since South Africa does not want to follow in the footsteps of their African neighbours, who violently reclaimed the land from the white minority, they ‘nurse’ the land reform process so that it will not trigger civil conflict, which the country cannot afford. Not meaning to use the above as an excuse for unco-ordinated, poor service delivery by the Department of Land Affairs, it is clear that the stage is set for the land reform process to experience difficulties which can lead to an increase in dissonance. This could erupt into any type of conflict.

**Interference of the traditional authority**

The Ezakheni community was predominantly a farming community owned by a few white farmers. The people who lived on that land were labourers. The land was not affiliated to any traditional authority. It is this situation that allowed Inkosi Mkhipheni Zondi to manipulate the system and usurp the position of Inkosi. His reign was assisted and confirmed when he was installed as Inkosi of the Amanteshe traditional authority.

The interference by the he traditional authority was enabled by the officials of Land Affairs, who delayed and temporarily halted the land restitution because of Inkosi’s contestation that the graveyard of his ancestors was located within the Ezakheni community. The Department were not clear about who should conduct the anthropological investigation for the verification of Inkosi Zondi’s claim. The Department of Land Affair delayed referring the matter to COGTA,
who could have assisted in investigating further. The matter was left unattended until 2005, when COGTA conducted a survey to verify which inkosi had land and which did not. Inkosi Zondi was declared a landless inkosi in 2006, but he did not accept this declaration by COGTA. The departments did not have a strategy of how to rectify the problem that was caused by the situation of the Inkosi being landless, contesting the land reform process and promoting illegal land grabs. Ideally, the Department of Land Affairs, the police and COGTA should have co-ordinated their efforts and it might have been possible to reduce the interference of the traditional authority in the land reform process.

**Poor co-ordination for the implementation of the public programme, miscommunication, poor governance and political interference**

Throughout the study, poor co-ordination, miscommunication and poor governance were central to escalating the conflict. These factors might not have triggered the conflict like land reform did, but they facilitated the perpetuation of the conflict. In conflict language, these factors did not trigger the latent conflict, but instead promoted and sustained the conflict that had manifested.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) Section 41(1)h, promotes intergovernmental relations but this co-operation is not common in reality. Departments are guided by their strategic mandates and have to meet their annual targets. This may sometimes pose as an obstacle to co-ordinating implementation processes, because, in order for implantation to be holistic, departmental efforts must be co-ordinated right from the planning phase.

Miscommunication creates polarisation in groups that are in conflict. Once the groups are polarised into “us” and “them”, it is easy for the parties to automatically assume and believe the worst about the other party. For example it is assumed that the Inkosi was installed against the contestation of the Trustees because of the Inkosi’s political affiliation. There were COGTA documents to corroborate the installation of Inkosi Mkhipheni Zondi. It is the miscommunication that made both parties exempt from the possibility of
criminality being involved. It was the poor communication of the respective departments that made both the Trustees and Zondis lose confidence in the functioning of these departments. Neither group had faith in any of the government departments. This was partly the result of miscommunication from these departments. It is important to note that it is the officials who failed to communicate. This confirms the issue of a government official’s capacity to effectively render services.

Political interference and poor governance are intertwined. The late councillor responded to the problem according to political affiliation, instead of using his role as a ward councillor appropriately. It is a concern that the local municipality failed to intervene in the conflict and passed the responsibility to provincial departments. The community of Ezakheni was disappointed by the response that they received from all spheres of government.

The poor co-ordination of the land reform process made it difficult for further development to take place at Ezakheni. The community saw neighbouring communities progressing and it increased their anger towards government departments and those whom they perceived were standing in the way of their progress. It was difficult to access the departments that were perceived to be hindering their progress but it was possible to access the community members who were perceived to be standing in their way. Community members were easy, accessible targets. The conflict turned from being directed at governance structures to being directed at fellow community members.

This study found that service delivery had triggered the Ezakheni community conflict. It was also the interrelations of the provincial and local governments that started this community conflict.
6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations from this study

1. *Co-operation and co-ordination in implementing public service:* there is a need to improve co-operation and co-ordination in the implementation of public service. The philosophy behind the introduction of the IDP in all municipalities in the country was to improve co-operation and co-ordination. The constraint with the IDP process is that most municipalities do not have the capacity to facilitate it timeously. In most cases, the IDP is a document for audit purposes but it will not necessarily influence the delivery of service within the municipality. The municipal IDP should include the plans for land reform claims within their jurisdiction and should have a clear responsibility framework for such processes.

2. *Verification of the Amanteshe traditional authority:* the Departments of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Land Affairs should work towards creating a strategy for addressing the issue of the Amanteshe traditional authority. Since the Inkosi has died and his family have rejected having any knowledge of this traditional authority, these two departments should collaborate in investigating and finalising the matter of this traditional authority. Although the illegal land grabs and conflict have subsided, some respondents still felt that the traditional councils actions, if supported, could re-kindle the conflict and this needed to be prevented at all cost.

3. *A turn-around strategy for the Ezakheni community:* the local councillor has started lobbying the municipality for resources to develop this community, but this is done haphazardly and therefore it is important to develop a specific plan for this community under the IDP.

4. *Improvement of client or community interface platform:* the community needs many services in a short period of time. The municipality should create platforms for dialogue. The platforms can create opportunities for the community to exercise their rights and their responsibility for participative governance. This can ensure that community grievances are heard and addressed before they manifest as community conflicts.
5. **Establishment and maintenance of intergovernmental relations forums:**
   The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (2005) mandates the establishment of intergovernmental forums in all three spheres of government. It is even more critical at local government level, because it is this sphere of government that is closest to the people and is the level of government that is usually under pressure to answer to the community. Sometimes local government is forced to account for services that are not their core responsibility. Intergovernmental forums will serve as mechanisms to empower the municipalities with the knowledge of all programmes within their municipal jurisdiction. This can help in them to answer to the community they serve and can assist the whole government system to account to the community at large.

6. **Improving a municipality’s capacity for dealing with conflicts:**
   Municipalities need to be equipped with the capacity to address community conflict, both latent and manifest, in an integrated manner. KZN has a history of conflict and this cannot be ignored in future planning.

7. COGTA has a component within their Traditional Section that deals with traditional disputes; it is recommended that a section that deals with service delivery conflict or challenges be established in order to attend to service delivery conflicts.

### 6.3.2 Recommendations for future studies

Investigating the role of poor service delivery in escalating community conflict is a difficult because it merges two academic fields, namely conflict studies and public administration. The theoretical schools of thought that are prominent within conflict studies are not specific to service delivery issues, in general, or public service delivery, in particular. This posed a problem because it meant that the researcher had to place service delivery within the context of conflict studies. This was complicated by the question of contextualising service delivery within this study. Noting the above constraints, and with the increased prevalence in service delivery related protest that the public administration scholars should start to contextualise the
role that can be played by public service delivery in escalating, or possibly resolving, community conflicts.

Service delivery cannot take place in an environment that is not stable, safe and secure. The community of Ezakheni was stable until the land restitution process started the community conflict, which jeopardised future development plans. Therefore it can be concluded that poor service delivery can trigger community conflict, especially if the community does not have a mechanism to express their grievances.

6.4 Conclusion

Conflicts related to service delivery are a challenge to study and manage, not only because they are not well conceptualised, but because usually they are addressed only once they have manifested in destructive public actions. Structural and human needs theories expressed the idea that if human needs are not met and structures are not modified to attend to the needs, conflict will evolve into violence. This means that service delivery backlogs, poor service delivery and lack of service delivery should be important considerations in addressing community conflicts.

This study indicated a high probability that service delivery can, indeed, trigger conflict in communities.
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